

God Calls Things That Are Not as Though Were

by Neil Rhodes

God delights to take our lives and produce change in us, revealing His son in us and giving us a new life that is exterior of our own.

Duration: 56:01

Scripture: Acts 3:19, Hebrews 3:12

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Faith Development"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by referencing Romans chapter 4 and the concept of God calling things that are not as though they were. He addresses two audiences - the main sanctuary and a group of teenagers in the annex. The speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit's strength rather than our own. He uses the story of David being anointed as king by Samuel to illustrate how God can use young people, despite their lack of education or societal expectations. The speaker encourages the teenagers to embrace their complexities and reminds them that they are growing physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church Pulpit Series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. You're welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends.

However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. We won't say who that is, but it's definitely not the person you're thinking it is. Turn with me to Romans Chapter 4. Keep your hand in Romans Chapter 4. I'm going to read another scripture to you before we go there.

God calls things that are not as though they were. This afternoon, there's two audiences that I want to speak to there. This audience right here in the main sanctuary and in the annex.

But there is a second audience that is watching this afternoon, and that is a core group of teenagers up on the fourth floor in the annex. And they are sitting there with Pastor Patrick. I shared with Pastor Patrick that there was a word in my heart that I wanted for the young people, the teenagers.

And so they're sitting watching with us today at Jumbotron screen. We welcome all you teenagers this afternoon, many of them up there on the fourth floor. We thank God for what he's doing in through your lives.

But I know that God will touch all of our hearts this afternoon. Father, I thank you that you have a word in season for your people today. I'm asking that you keep me, Lord, away from that which is not of your Holy Spirit.

And keep me on track with that which you want to communicate this afternoon. Lord, I yield my heart to you. I come to you as a yielded vessel.

It's not about what I want to say. But Lord, it's what you want to say to your people this afternoon. Now I ask for an anointing and an anointing from on high.

Lord, anoint our ears that we might hear your word, I pray in Jesus' name, amen. God calls those things that are not as though they were. Now, on Friday night, I shared here and I shared an example.

And I'm going to begin this afternoon with the same example. I have spoken to the couple. And because there's going to be no name mentioned or time frame or any of the circumstances, they gave me the green light just to share something that took place with them and myself.

Actually, it's more about me than it is about them. But a couple came to see my wife and I and about their relationship and the problems going on in their home. And the problems were so horrendous.

And we sat there and it was just so enormous, the difficulties and normally when we come into a session just to sit down with people, we always pray. We say, God, you have to show up. You're the one that has the answers for people's hearts and lives.

And we always open up in prayer and invite the Lord Jesus to come and be that honored guest among us. And we did that. And so they began just to unburden.

And they're a delightful couple, by the way, but the difficulties are so horrendous. I got to confess to you that as we were going through and we're listening, the longer I listened, the more discouraged I became. And I was thinking to myself that these things are so enormous, I don't even have a word for them.

I could give them some nondescript scripture or, you know, I could pretend. But actually, I was sitting there and they came to the place as they were just sharing, you know, after many years of intense difficulties. And beloved, I'm not even going to touch them because that was part of my commitment to them that we wouldn't touch the areas.

But you need to understand that these difficulties were so intense that I sat there and finally they came up with an answer. They're the ones that said, Pastor, we think that because of all the difficulties that are going on for so many years, that actually the answer would be as if we divorce. And in my heart, I'm thinking, I agree.

I don't see any answer for them. And I was searching. I was praying.

I sit there and I'm nodding. I'm saying, yep, yeah, I'm listening to everything. But in my heart, I'm praying.

I'm saying, God, you have to show up. And so I got up. I took a walk.

I went out down the passage and I just prayed. I said, God, I do not have a word for these people. You have to show up.

And so I came back and God gave me this word in the book of Hebrews. It's Hebrews chapter 3, verse 12. Let me just read.

Don't tell me you've got your place in Romans. But let me read this to you. The Hebrew writer just spoken and said, how many people had just died in the wilderness because of unbelief? And verse 12 says, take heed.

So the writer is saying, take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. And so I began to share this word with them and said, you know, if you decide to go your separate ways and see in my heart, I kind of felt like they should go their separate ways. So here I was sharing this word.

And I said, if you go your separate ways, understand that you'll be going in unbelief. And so they listened to the word. It was almost it was it was something else.

As I shared it with them, a miracle was taking place before my eyes. This couple began turning in their heart from absolute difficult circumstances and situations. They began turning, looking at each other.

So I thought, God, I've got a gold vein here. So I kept preaching. Yep, you're going to keep going in unbelief.

We serve a God, the God of impossibilities. And God can do anything. And they kept turning.

Next thing they're repenting to each other, asking each other for forgiveness. They're holding each other's hands, saying, will you forgive me? I love you. I didn't mean any of those things.

And then they give each other a kiss. Hallelujah. I close in prayer and they're gone.

And I'm sitting there and saying, what was that all about? And God spoke to my heart. It actually wasn't about them. They were a tool because I wanted to get to your heart.

You see, you're sitting under the Word, but you've got unbelief in your heart. You're sitting there in agreement because you've got unbelief. You do not believe that I can heal this marriage.

I'm after your heart. And God just used that as a tool. And I just began to think, how many times do we sit in Times Square Church and there's a powerful Word that is coming and we can agree to the Word.

But we have unbelief in our heart that God can change our situation. And we're sitting there with unbelief. Are we in agreeance with the Word of God? It's a powerful Word.

Hallelujah. Great Word. But is it changing us? Is it turning our hearts? I saw this couple turn and face each other, begin to weep, repent, ask for forgiveness, kiss, pray, and go home.

And I'm sitting there with unbelief in my heart. And God was just saying, you see, this is what I can do. I am the God of the impossible.

And He said, even if you don't believe it, I want you never to sit in a situation and bring me down to a place of unbelief. You see, the Hebrew writer, when he talks about an evil heart of unbelief, that word evil there

means a contagious disease. See, unbelief is contagious.

You talk to the 12 spies who came back, 10 of them infected a whole nation. 10 people infected a whole nation because unbelief is so infectious. We just sit around some people and if there's unbelief in their heart, I'm telling you, we end up infecting other people around about us with the same unbelief.

And God said, don't have a heart of unbelief. Every situation, if you bring me down, that I have to deal with your heart. This situation was for you, not for them.

I already had in mind what I wanted to do in their lives, but I was after your heart. That every time you sit down with anybody, you lift me up. I am King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

I am the God of the impossible. I can call anything into existence that I desire. I spoke of the worlds came into being.

All the universe came into being. I can change any person's life at any single time. This is the God that we serve.

There's not a situation that God can't deal with in our hearts and in our lives. Now in Romans chapter 4, this is what the Apostle Paul is saying in verse 16. He says, therefore, it is of faith that it might be by grace to the end.

This is verse 16. That the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. Now look at verse 17.

As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations. Before him whom he believed, even the God who quickeneth the dead. You see, beloved, many times God will wait until there is, we've prayed prayers, but he will wait until there's nothing left in us to work an answer.

These are some of the hardest things because he's going after unbelief in the heart. And he will allow us to get farther and farther away from the situation so we can come to that place in our lives when we know it is nothing of me. This is what he's talking about with Abraham.

He brings him to a place where he is in his body. He is incapable of producing seed. And then God says, I'll make you a father of many nations.

I'm the one that quickeneth the dead and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Every dead area in my life is possible change with God. Every single place in my life, God can make a change.

We have got to preach the God of the impossible. If we bring him down to the God who only can work through human effort, then we don't have a God at all. We've got to have a God who can answer every situation, every call, every problem.

You have got to face the word of God this afternoon and understand that you serve a God that can change your circumstances. That you have a God who can change your life. This is the gospel that we have got to preach.

If we do not preach a gospel of a God who is the God of the impossible, folks, we're in unbelief. And so he begins to share those things with Abraham. He says, I can call those things which are not as though they were.

Now I'm not talking about just circumstances. I'm talking about a changed life that God wants to do in our hearts and our lives. He was fully persuaded.

There was no division in his heart or his life. Turn with me to Galatians. Paul picks us up again in Galatians.

Galatians chapter 1, look at verse 11. Galatians 1 verse 11, he says, But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it, and profited in the Jews' religion above many of my equals in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. So here's the apostle Paul, and he's saying, You've got to understand what my life was like. He said, my life was, he says, beyond measure I persecuted the church.

I was a murderer. I wasted it. You've got to know that my life, I was more zealous than everybody else around about me in the religion of my fathers, but my life, God took a look at my life.

I wasted the church. I was a persecutor. I was an ungodly person in the sense that I went after the church of Jesus Christ.

You see, many times we look at our own lives, and this is what the apostle Paul is saying, he says, if you go by my life, why would God want me? Why would God want to do anything in my life as I was the one who persecuted his very church, his very body? I was the one who went after the church. I went from place to place, taking them and putting them in prison, and many of them were put to death. So if you take a look at my life, the apostle Paul is saying, why would God want to use anybody who persecuted the church and wasted it? So he's drawing the difference here.

He's saying, I want you to understand that God does not go by what he sees in us. Here is a man who is absolutely persecuting the church, but look at verse 15 says, but when it pleased God, he said, I want you to understand that the greatest pleasure of God is that he can take your life. Many of these young people are listening, you're probably looking at your own life and say, why would God want to use me? I'm so full of complexities and problems and difficulties.

They're growing up and there's so many things going on in their lives. Some of you are sitting here saying, well, why would God ever want to use me? If he understood what goes on in my heart, my life, why would God want me? There's nothing inside of me that God wants. But the apostle Paul comes and says, you don't understand the pleasure of God.

The pleasure of God is this. He says, when it pleased God, it's in the heart of almighty God. He says, the pleasure of God is to take the worst individual.

He says, it's the pleasure, the delight of almighty God. So here is this person wasting the church. God sees it.

He knows what's in the heart. He knows what you're thinking before you even think it. But you've got to understand the pleasure of almighty God.

He delights to take a soul where there is no hope. He delights to take a life where there is nothing going for that individual. God delights to take a person who looks in the mirror and says, why was I ever born? I hate the way I look.

I hate what I'm doing. I hate where I'm going. God takes pleasure because he and he alone is able to come and do a work.

And so Paul says, when it pleased God, it's the pleasure of God beloved this afternoon to take your life and produce change in you. It's the delight of almighty God. He's happy to do it.

You sitting there absolutely condemned, but God is sitting in heaven saying, you don't understand my delight. My delight is to take your life. My delight is to take you and use you and put my spirit within you.

So the apostle Paul says, when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, he's not even looking at what I've done. He's taking me from way back. He says, before I was even in my mother's womb, God had a plan in progress.

Oh, thank you, Jesus. Before Neil Rhodes was ever born and before he ever became an apprenticed hippie, before he ever did anything that was wicked and unclean, God said, oh, it's going to be my pleasure to do something in that loser. I was born with a big L on my forehead, loser.

But God, God takes the losers of life. And he says, oh, it's my good pleasure to take you and begin to mold you and make you something. He said to separate me.

That word separated, you know, literally it means when there's a crime scene, the police come with that yellow tape and they separate that whole environment. And if you were to take a look in an environment, it's like a detective going in and finding all the clues and coming absolutely to the conclusive decision that you, the person who committed the crime. That's what it means.

It's to come to an absolute, total conclusion, separated. But God takes a look at this and says, I know that you are guilty of every single crime. The devil says against you, you're guilty, but I declare you not guilty.

I declare you, I separate you for myself. All the devil might separate you and point out every single thing of the crime scene in your life. Young person, the devil has got you surrounded with yellow tape and he's pointing out every weakness in your life.

And he's right. But I want to tell you, there is another separated area that God says, but I have a different plan than the devil. I've got a different purpose for this life and I will separate you unto myself.

Paul says, it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and then called me. Do you know what the word called means? It means, would you walk alongside with me? That's simply what it means. God is saying, I'm separating you.

I know what you're like. I know your past. I know everything about you, but I'm asking you to come aside.

Would you walk with me? Would you walk with me in life? Would you give me your life and let me walk with you? And I'll show you the things that I hasn't seen or heard. I'll show you these things. Would you walk with me? That's what that word called means.

It means simply to participate in God's work, to walk with him. And then he goes on in verse 16. He says, to reveal his son in me.

You see, beloved, the delight of God is this. God's delight is to give us a life that's exterior of our own. We're weak.

We can't do the things of God, but the delight of almighty God was this. This is what he spoke to Abraham in essence and promise. He said, and it's the promises, a one-way promise.

God couldn't make a promise with us and us to him because we can't keep it. So he makes a one-way promise. And he says, I'm going to promise to you that the days are coming when your life is going to so change.

I'm going to give you something that you could never do yourselves. Your life is surrounded. It's hedged up by the enemy and there is nothing you can do about it.

But God made a promise. He said, one day there's going to come a time that I am going to put a new life inside of you. There's going to be another life.

It's going to be the life of the Holy Ghost and he's going to dwell inside of you. And there's going to be a new strength. You see, beloved, it has to be outside of me.

It cannot be anything that I can do. And so it's like Michelangelo. Michelangelo, he goes into the marble yard and there's this one piece of marble right on the side.

Cracked, marred, rejected. All the other sculptors just avoiding this piece of marble. You listen to me, young person watching on the fourth floor.

You listen. There's this marble, cracked, marred, pockmarred on the side. All the other sculptors are rejecting it.

But Michelangelo walks into the marble yard and he takes a look and he says, Oh, look at that piece over there. No, you don't want that piece. That piece is set aside for destruction.

That piece is set aside not to be used. It's cracked. It's marred.

Nothing can come out of that. But he walked over to that piece of marble and Michelangelo said, No, you've got it wrong. In this piece of marble, I see the face of an angel.

And he took that piece of marble and he went into his studio and he began to chip away and polish and chip away and polish. And one of those days as it came to completion, he brought out this sculpture and completely robed and covering. And on that day, all these people gathered around.

And out of the marred piece of marble, he pulls down on the cloak that covers it. And out comes this beautiful angel that was sculptured. And everybody is amazed that he could have seen such beauty in that which is marred.

I want to tell you today that there is a God in heaven. And he sits in a studio of his own making. And he said, I'm going to reveal something to you.

And God, before the eons of time, had a plan in mind. He saw all these pieces of marred marble rejected and placed aside for destruction. And God said, No, wait a minute.

I see the face of an angel. I'm going to do a work in these people. And so he begins this masterpiece of work.

And when he comes and Paul unveils it, he says to reveal his son. You see, when God pulls down on the curtain and he opens up, we see Jesus, beloved. The masterpiece of God is Jesus.

It's not just, it's not me. It's Jesus in me, the hope of glory. The master of God is that Jesus would live inside of me with a power and a grace and a forgiveness.

It's the soft part of Jesus that lives in me. I've got a hard heart. My heart is always hard.

It's, it's, it's, you can irritate this old heart of mine in just a moment. I could be walking across the street as I was telling him on Friday and just someone bumped me and, and everything inside of me just begins to, I was telling him on Friday, it's amazing how I can walk down the street. I think that I have a right to walk straight, but then so does every else.

Every other New Yorker thinks that they've got the same privilege. Why is it always me that's going, okay, praise the Lord. All right.

Why am I dodging every single person as I'm walking through? Everybody walks one mile in New York city. I walk five miles. So I'm always dodging all around.

But you see, there's something that irritates me on the inside. I just want to knock him. Oh, I, I praise the Lord.

I say, oh, thank you, Jesus. And I walk on by, but inside my heart, I want to just give them a, just a little knock. If I had a little bit bigger muscles, a little bit greater, I probably would do it.

But I want to tell you, see that's inside of me. There's no good thing inside of me. There's hard.

I get irritated. There's these things of the flesh that God doesn't like, but he saw something else. He saw something.

He saw another strength. He saw something else that is made inside of me. And it's the face of Jesus.

It's the spirit of the living God. You see beloved. It's never about us.

It's always about Jesus and the power of the Holy ghost that rises up inside of us. Is God living inside of me? That's the hope of glory. That's where my strength is.

That's the miracle that God himself would leave his throne in glory and come and live inside of you. That's why whenever I walk down the street, Jesus is not over there. Sometimes I just come like talk to him as though he's walking next to me.

But in actual fact, he's inside of me. Hello, Jesus. I love you.

You're walking inside of me. That's where he dwells. This is the temple of the living God.

Hallelujah. This is the work. You see beloved.

This is the strength of God. This is what befuddled the world. They couldn't understand that somebody who is so weak becomes strong.

Is it in them? Not in them, but it's Christ in them that gives them a grace and a strength. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by as by the spirit of the Lord. So when looking in the glass, you begin to see if I look at myself, I don't see anything at all taking place.

But when I look beyond that and I see Jesus, I say, God, that's who I serve. I look in the glass and I begin to see Jesus in me. Then there's a strength and there's a power and there's a grace that comes with it.

Now, this is illustrated and this is the word that I have for the young people. Turn with me to Samuel. Turn with me to 1 Samuel chapter 16.

God calls those things that are not as though they were. I am not righteous, but he says in Christ you are. I'm weak, but he says in my son, you are strong.

I'm hard, but in my son, there's a soft heart. We can show and demonstrate the world our love, not because we are lovely, but because he lives inside of us. Now, in chapter 16 of 1 Samuel, it's a tremendously interesting chapter.

And I'd love to spend time on all the aspects, but basically we see Samuel coming down and God has sent him on a mission to go and anoint a new king. And so in chapter 16, he comes to Bethlehem. That's where David was born, in Bethlehem.

And so in verse 5, he says that all the elders, verse 4, all the elders of the town, they tremble that he's coming and said, do you come peacefully? And he said, yeah, I come peacefully or peaceably. I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord. Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.

And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and called them to the sacrifice. So here is Samuel. He's going into the town and this is going to be all the elders come around him.

And so he said, no, I've come to sacrifice. You sanctify yourselves. And so he calls all the people together.

This is, this is a whole town affair, folks. There's everybody's out there, Samuel. And he's come out to, and he said to Jesse, sanctify your sons.

And all the sons get sanctified in the whole household. And they come to this, this place to, to make the sacrifice. Except there's one person missing.

There's one person who's a teenager. And they don't want, they don't trust teenagers. Leave the teenager in the sheepfold.

Let him take care of the sheep. This is not an educated kid. This is a kid who's in the sheepfold.

Well, you know, those teenagers, they got more problems than you can count. David is about 17 years old and he's left behind in the sheepfold. So they bring across in verse six, they bring Eliab.

And Eliab is the firstborn of Jesse's clan. And he is, he is this great looking guy, strong one. The chief of all the brothers, tall and handsome.

And so we take a look and if it's tall and handsome that God is looking for, I'm not the one. I might be tall, but my wife says you're not very handsome. So it wouldn't be me.

And then comes Abinadab, the generous one. And God says, no, I don't want the tall and the handsome one. What about the generous one, Abinadab? And no, verse eight, God says, nope, it's not Abinadab.

What about Shammah? Nope, he's the wild one. We're not going to use him at all. And so they go through all these children, all the sons of Dave, of Jesse.

And in verse 11, Samuel said to Jesse, are here all thy children? And he said, well, there remaineth the teenager. And he keeps the sheep. Well, the younger, he's the youngest.

And he says, he keeps the sheep. We didn't bother about him. There's so many complexities with this kid.

He's a teenager. There's so many things going on. Too many problems growing up.

They, one day, they were a kid. The next day, part adult. Adolescence can be the toughest time for young people.

They're growing up in so many different areas of their life. They're growing up physically. Changes are taking place.

And it's all these changes physically going on in the teenager's life. One day, he thinks he's cool. The next, he just wants, he's like a kid.

His voice is breaking. No one believes in the 17-year-old kid. Boys are so obsessed today with their sexuality.

Girls are obsessed with appearance and relationships. Teenagers. Teenagers.

You remember your teenage years. Some of you haven't left them. You remember the difficulties.

You know what it was like. You didn't know whether you're coming or going. One day, everything was great.

The next day, the world was coming down on your shoulders. Nobody understands these teenagers. Nothing.

No, we don't want to use him. Leave him with the sheep. Let him get his education in sheep maintenance.

Then, look at verse 13. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren. And listen, this is what makes the difference.

Here is the difference of every one of our lives. And you listen to me, young people. You might be filled with complexities.

You might not like the way that you look, the way that you act. You might wish you'd been born in another family. How many kids go through that? Oh, I love my mom and dad or my mom or just my dad.

But I wish I'd been born in another family. All the complexities of life that go through their mind. I want to tell you, they are a complex bunch.

They are growing in their mind at school, in their body and spiritually. They are being pulled and tugged from every side. And so we don't trust them because they're a little schizophrenic at times.

We don't understand, but God understands. He says, I can call those things that are not as though they were. I can take a 17-year-old kid and when he gets the Holy Ghost on him, things change.

God says, I know what's going on. I can take any human being and when they call out to me and they get the Holy Ghost. You see, this is the difference.

If you're just looking in the mirror, looking at yourself, you're never going to make it. But God says, no, look in the mirror and see Jesus. See that God is the one that keeps us and sustains us.

And so Samuel comes to him and says, anoints him in the midst of his brethren. And the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. That's what makes the difference in your life and my life.

It's people who are open up to the Holy Ghost. You need the Holy Ghost. You need the power of the Holy Ghost every day of your lives.

We need to have the Holy Spirit and work in our hearts and lives. We need the unction. We need his strength.

We need his wisdom. We need his power. Every day, I tell you, I lie not.

Every day I pray in the Holy Ghost. I know that I need him. In me, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing.

That's why every day when I walk from my home to the office, I walk. I walk and I pray in the Spirit. I talk to him.

I tell him, Lord, Lord, you know, you know, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. I walk by people. People don't even see me at times.

Well, Pastor Neil is rude. He didn't even say hello. That's because I'm talking to somebody else.

And it's not because I'm spiritual. I need it. I need to be communicating with the Holy Ghost every day.

Beloved, you need the Holy Ghost. You can't do it in your strength. We need, that's what makes the difference with these kids.

I'm going to show you the difference. Because here is a man who comes to King Saul. King Saul has a devil now coming into his life in verse 14.

But here comes the servant. Saul, 17, verse 17. So the servant says, provide me now a man that can play well and bring him to me.

Here's the king. He's got a devil that's troubling him. And the servant says, now listen, you've got to understand something.

This is David. He hasn't been to college. He looks after sheep.

This is a kid. He hasn't got a vast education. He's this teenager full of complexities.

They don't even consider him to be part of the family to come before Samuel. Oh, leave David there. But something changes.

The moment the Holy Ghost comes into his life, something changes. Now God begins to see him differently. And look at verse 18.

So the servant says, you've got to understand, when you read this verse 18, this has not come to pass in his life. None of this is evident in David's life. It's not because he's some superstar at this point in time.

He's a 17-year-old kid with the Holy Ghost. And with the Holy Ghost, God begins to say, now this is what I see. Now look at verse 18.

Then answered one of the servants and said, behold, I have seen. Oh, I've perceived. The word there, seen, means to perceive.

I have seen. I've perceived something. Not just seen with the net.

I've perceived something. This is perception. Oh, I've perceived.

I've seen something. I've seen a son. I've seen a kid.

I've seen this little 17-year-old kid. There's something about this kid, the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, that is cunning and playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war. This is a kid.

He says, but he's a man of war, prudent in matters, and a comely person. And listen to this, and the Lord is with him. Beloved young person, I want you to know, when you go into the schools, God is with you.

Proverbs 123 says, turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, and I will make known my words unto you. So when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon David, they begin to perceive something different.

The moment we get the Holy Ghost, God sees us differently. Oh yeah, in the natural, we're weak, we can sin, we stumble, we fall, there's areas of weakness. That's true.

But when the Holy Ghost comes into our life, God calls those things that are not as though they were. And this is what he's saying to David. Now listen to what he says, first of all.

He says, cunning and playing. That word cunning and playing, the word cunning means yada. It's also to know.

It's not something that he's learned. It's not a learned art. It can be learned.

David did learn to play the harp. He did learn to play a musical instrument. But the sense of what the Scriptures are saying here, that there is just something that is known.

It just comes when the Holy Spirit comes. You just know. This man is cunning in playing.

In other words, God makes out of this person a worshiper. I don't know how it happens, but the moment you get Jesus, you instantly know how to worship. It's not a learned behavior.

Oh, they might learn songs, but the worship of our heart comes by the Holy Ghost. These kids, I'm telling you, rap goes out the window and in comes praises. Something happens inside of them.

They become a worshiper. God says, I see something more than just a kid who likes rap. Now that's gone and in comes praise.

God, the first thing when the Holy Ghost comes into your life, He makes us worshipers. We'll stand and praise Him as we heard this morning in the most tough, trying, difficult times. Can we worship God at the dungate? In our own flesh, we can never do it.

But there's something about the Holy Ghost. When the Holy Ghost comes inside of our lives with His power, one of the first things that is inside of us is a sense of worship. That when we get in tough places, worship Him.

Young person, when you go into your schools, I want to tell you, stand and worship God. Never be afraid. The Holy Ghost is with you.

And when you stand in those school hallways, you can walk down the hallway going from class to class with a worship in your heart. Hallelujah. Glory to God.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. There's something that God does in the heart by the Holy Spirit and it's worship of Him.

Number two, a mighty, valiant man. That mighty, valiant man means God will make bold champions. He says, I'll have a warrior.

God makes bold champions, bold to witness for Christ. It's an amazing thing when the Holy Ghost comes in, we don't shut up. There's something inside of us that wants to communicate to others.

Amen? When the Holy Ghost comes in, it's like the other day we're sitting having a cup of coffee and here comes, we went to a gym to go do some workout and we had this trainer for a few sessions and he's an ungodly man. But we told him that we go to church and we're born again believers and we want to get muscles. And so he said, that's a great combination.

But we're having a cup of coffee and here comes this man. And he says, oh, hello, because our sessions are over. And so we're still friends and we sit down.

And just this last week, we sit down. And so he says, oh, can I join you? I said, absolutely. Come and join us.

We love you to join us. In fact, I bought his coffee for him. What do you drink? I'll get you a coffee.

He said, sit down. He says, what do you think about this war in Iraq? And I said, oh, am I glad you asked me. Next 45 minutes began to unleash on him why all this stuff is going on.

We said, you want to read Matthew 24. Oh, and Peter says the world is going to burn with fervent heat. He says, you're making me depressed.

I said, not as depressed as you're going to be without Jesus in your life. See, when you get the Holy Ghost, witnesses, this is what young people you are. When you go into the schools, God will be with you.

That's the whole identification is that God is with you. And he'll make you a bold witness, a mighty, valiant man. It goes on to say a man of war.

And that I tell you, beloved, is bold partners with God. For the Lord is the man of war. And the Lord is his name, Exodus 15, verse 3. In other words, God says, I will, I want you to fight the battles I want to fight.

No more fighting the battles that you want to fight. We're going to go after the things that I want to destroy in your life. He says, I'm going to show you be a man of war.

God will come by his Holy Spirit in those areas that have resisted change. Those strong cities in your life that resisted all attack. I'm telling you, God says, these are the battles that I want to fight.

When the Holy Ghost comes in, he says, we will go after every strong city in your life. You're going to be a man of war, but they're going to be my battles. No longer are you going to struggle with these things.

These are going to be my battles. Now you come alongside of me and let's go to war against these things by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost wants to defeat every stronghold in our lives.

And this is what he says about David. He has this kid, 17 years old. And this is what God sees.

This is what he's doing. This is the face of Jesus that is in each one of us. He says he's prudent in matters.

That word prudent simply means bold discernment. It's amazing how these kids know religion. They know what's fake.

They know that there's just an instinct. The Holy Ghost. I'm telling you, you listen to the Holy Spirit.

Some of you people just turn on this junk on television and it seems like there's no discernment. But I want you to know when you get filled with the Holy Spirit, he tells you, uh-uh-uh-uh. Don't do it.

When you're walking down the street, he says, uh-uh-uh-uh, don't go there. It's the Holy Ghost. He gives you discernment.

We have no discernment on some things. Sometimes we act so dumb, so stupid. We go places that we shouldn't be going.

And we do stupid things because there's no discernment. But when you get the Holy Ghost, when the Holy Spirit is residing on the inside. It's his voice and he comes alongside of you.

And you can be walking down the street and you want to go over here. He says, uh-uh-uh-uh. It's the Holy Ghost.

He gives you the quickening power, young person. You understand and start listening now to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He'll keep you safe.

You want to go to those guys? No, don't go to the group over there. He'll lead you. He'll start steering your life.

Our God is a God of discernment. Some of the things that are hurting you. The difficulties you've got into is because you went ahead of the Holy Ghost.

If you'd listened to God in the first place. You wouldn't be in the financial mess or the marital mess or the difficulties you're in. You wouldn't have the problems.

But listen to me. That might have been so. But today the Holy Ghost is saying, I'm going to show you the way out.

It's time to listen to the Holy Spirit and say, I will lead you out. I'll give you the kind of discernment that you need. And listen to this.

He says, a comely person. That word comely does not mean facial features. Hardly ever in the Old Testament does it mean what a person looks like.

It has more to do with character. God puts in his character where there is no character. Inside of me, I am no good.

I'm not a good character. I've often said to Pastor Carter and Pastor Patrick, I'm glad we didn't meet when we were not saved. I was a bad character.

But when you get saved and the Holy Ghost comes inside of you, he brings the character of Christ. He establishes us in righteousness and in true holiness. He puts character within us.

Now listen, young people. This is what God sees when the Holy Ghost comes into your life. We are so bound.

And I'm going to close. We are so bound by what's going on in the law courts and shutting God out of the schools. It's almost like when I was reading the scripture, it's almost like we are the children of Israel on the sides.

And there's this Goliath. Notice it's after this, after this chapter, that God calls a teenager. Carries this giant of separation of church and state.

It's a giant, beloved, taunting us. It seems like we are powerless to bring this giant down. It seems like we can't get into the schools.

Oh, we'd love to get in the schools and preach. We'd love to have Bible classes in it. We can't.

They pass laws to keep you and I out. But I want to tell you, there are teenagers today. There are teenagers that God is calling.

They can go up against the giants. They can go up against the giants of church and state. And God is raising up David's in our day.

They are in the midst of the battle. They're in the hallways of the schools. Young person, I want to tell you, you can rise up and with the little that you have, because God doesn't see the way that you are.

He sees what the Holy Ghost is in you. And you're a mighty warrior with God. You go against the giant.

You can stand against those things and throw them down by the power of Almighty God. Beloved, this is what God calls us. This is what he sees.

I'm not changing into some great good person, but I've got the world changer living inside of me. And he subdues everything inside of my life. Little by little, it's the Holy Ghost subduing everything in my life and bringing about the righteous life of Jesus Christ.

Let me close with this verse. Turn with me to Acts. I know I've been a little passionate and excited today, but I tell you, I want to see this giant come down in our schools.

I am so excited what God is doing with our young people. Church, we need to pray for them. We need to pray and stand with them.

And as God is working in our hearts, he'll work in our teenagers as well. Acts chapter 3, verse 19. In Acts chapter 3, verse 19, it says, this is Peter and he's preaching.

And he says to them, he says, now, listen, you need to repent. You need to repent. Turn around.

Turn around. Turn around from where you're going and turn to God is what he's saying. And therefore be converted that your sins may be blotted out.

When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And so this is what he said. Now, listen, if you turn, if you repent, if you come to God and say, God, this struggle that's in my life, I want to turn around.

I want to give these things to you, God. I want you to change my life. This is what Peter is saying.

He says, you repent. He says, I'll come and I'll blot all your sins out. He says, God will come and he'll take all your sins.

He'll wash them out. He'll cleanse them. He'll just take all, he'll blot everything out.

You repent. God blots out your sins. And then he uses a word.

He says that times, that word times is kairos. It means life changing moments will come from the Lord. Times of refreshing.

I love the word refreshing because it means the whole literal sense of the Greek of this word. Refreshing means exhaustion. You're exhausted.

But God says, when you repent and you let me blot out of your sins, he says, I will come to you in life changing moments. And he says, I'm going to give you new breath. You're exhausted out of breath.

He says, I'm going to breathe in you new breath. I'm going to give you of my spirit. They that wait upon the Lord, what does it say? Shall mount up with wings as eagles.

Beloved, they shall run and not be weary. This is what God has. He calls things that are not as though they were.

Yes, I'm exhausted. But when the Holy Ghost comes in, when I come to him and he gives me times of life changing moments, he says, I'll put a new breath inside of you. Every area that is producing death.

I'll breathe life into that area. Man, when he was made, was made as out of the clay and then God breathed into him and he became a living soul. God says there are areas of spiritual death in every one of

us.

He says, but if you know that you're exhausted, you come to me. He says, you need the Holy Ghost. You need the power of my Holy Spirit upon you.

He says, I'll breathe life into those areas of death this afternoon. Let me ask you a question. Do you need the Holy Ghost? Do you need the power of the Holy Ghost in your life? Are there areas that you want to surrender to God? Are there areas that have got you so exhausted and you need a touch from almighty God? I want to tell you unequivocally today, you need the Holy Ghost.

You need the breath of almighty God to touch those areas in your life and produce life. Young person, when you go down the halls, I'm inviting you to come forward to Pastor Patrick right now. He's going to pray for the Holy Ghost to come down upon your lives.

Young people in room nine on the fourth floor, you stand right now, go forward to the altar where Pastor Patrick is waiting to meet you and he's going to pray for the Holy Ghost to come upon your lives. He's going to raise up a David out of your life. He's going to call the things that are not as though they were.

And beloved right here in the main sanctuary, that's exactly what God wants to do in your life. Are there areas that you need touching by God? My invitation is simple. Do you need the Holy Ghost? Then we're going to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to fill us afresh this afternoon in the name of Jesus.

Make a boldness out of us and give us a strength that is not our own. Amen. Let's stand together.

Father, I just pray while Pastor Patrick is ministering to the youth. I pray now for the sanctuary. It's early, Lord.

It's we're closing the service early. We have a time to come to this altar and say, I need the Holy Ghost. Lord, in my life, in my life, I absolutely acknowledge every day.

I need you to breathe in me in areas where I'm weak. Oh, I need you, Holy Spirit. Lord, reveal your word.

You said two things in Proverbs 123, that if we repent, if we turn to you, that you would give us your spirit and that you'd reveal your word to us. You'd quicken us in your word. Now, Lord, that's what I'm asking today for every person in this house.

In Jesus name. Amen. I'm going to invite you, beloved.

Go to the exit, both sides on the balcony as we sing the song. Start making your way. You come to this altar this afternoon.

You believe that you need the Holy Ghost. I'm going to pray the Holy Ghost fill you. Put a fresh boldness where there's been timidity in your life.

Hallelujah. I, God promised. He said, therefore, being by the right hand of God, exalted and having received of the father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this which you now see and hear.

The promise of God is this. Exalted to the right hand of the father. He sat down.

It's finished to that church, the young church. I'm going to give them the power of the Holy Spirit. Your spirit into them.

He'll bring the character of Christ into their lives and you shall receive repent and be baptized. Every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And you shall, you shall, you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

If you've never received Jesus Christ, this is your time just to turn and say, God, I give you my life. Then we're going to raise our hands and we're going to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us afresh that my day and my walk with him will be empowered every day. He's promised never to leave us nor forsake us.

Do you believe that? Pray this with me first and Lord Jesus, I do come to you for times of refreshing. I need you to breathe life into me, into all those dead areas. So I confess to you, I give to you all these areas of weakness in my life.

And I thank you washes and cleanses me of all my sin. Now, Lord, I believe that I believe my sins are blotted out. I opened my heart.

I raised my hands to you. Now, Holy Spirit, you've been given to us by promise. I open my heart to you.

Holy Spirit come into my life and fill me right. Mercy in Jesus name. When you get the Holy Ghost, something inside God will give you a prayer language.

That prayer language will begin to flow. I pray in my prayer language every day of my life. I don't understand it in the natural mind, but my spirit does.

And as the Holy Ghost, as I walk with him, I pray in my prayer language. And God, I just sense the working of the Holy Spirit, quickening the word of God to me, direct to me, giving discernment. That's the life of the Holy Ghost.

So we're going to say thank you now. We're going to lift our hands. We're going to praise him.

And as you do, just start speaking in your prayer language and just start worshiping the Lord. Father, we give you thanks right now. And we thank you in Jesus name.

Hallelujah. Just give him thanks, beloved. Just raise your hands.

Just give him thanks. And just begin speaking in your prayer language.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/3/SID3181.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/neil-rhodes/god-calls-things-that-are-not-as-though-were/>

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