

Repairing the Altar of the Lord

by Peter Brandon

Peter Brandon's sermon emphasizes the need to repair the altar of the Lord, symbolizing a return to the cross and genuine faith amidst worldly distractions.

Duration: 1:07:32

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:30

Topics: "Consecration", "Revival"

Description

Peter Brandon preaches on 'Repairing the Altar of the Lord,' focusing on the story of Elijah confronting King Ahab and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18. He emphasizes the need for the people of Israel to return to God by repairing the broken altar, symbolizing the cross and the necessity of genuine worship. Elijah's fearless faith and the miraculous fire from heaven serve as a call for believers to fully consecrate themselves to God, laying aside worldly distractions and embracing the true power of prayer and unity in Christ. The sermon highlights the importance of a genuine relationship with God, the significance of the cross, and the transformative power of repentance and faith. Brandon urges the congregation to seek a revival that begins with personal commitment and a return to the foundational truths of Scripture.

Transcript

1 Kings 18 and we shall read from this. Those of us who are not too familiar with the narrative will find it interesting to note that a very wicked king came to the throne of Israel whose name is Ahaz and probably he was one of the worst kings that ever reigned over Israel. When he came to the throne he not only disturbed the people of Israel but he married a gentile whose name was Jezebel and through her she seduced the people of Israel to worship Bel.

And something took place in Israel that was obnoxious to God. The house of Bel was actually raised up in Israel. And the scripture says that Ahaz did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

And then there came a man on the scene whose name was Elijah. He comes from nowhere, he comes onto the scene and he stands before this king and he says, as the Lord God of Israel liveth before whom I stand. Now that's the man of God.

The man of God doesn't stand before people, he stands before God. And a man that fears God will not fear men. The fear of man comes because we do not fear God.

And here was a man who was fearless because he stood before the Lord and he had a reverential fear for God. And then he goes off into a seeming oblivion, of course God knew where he was. And then in the 18th chapter, from hiding God says to this man of God, go and show thyself.

And he has just now challenged, according to 1 Kings 18, all the prophets of Bel. And he mocked them because through their prayers no fire came from heaven. And now the man of God is going to begin this great work of renewal and repair.

And it begins at verse 30. And Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him.

And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came saying, Israel shall be thy name. Now would you please note the word Israel.

That is very important indeed. And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. So there are two names, Israel and the name of the Lord.

And he made a trench about the altar as great as would contain two measures of feet. Now this is the only altar in scripture where there was a trench. That's why you will find that this is a totally unique altar.

And he put water in order and cut the bull in pieces and laid him on the wood and said, fill four barrels with water and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood. And he said, do it the second time. And they did it the second time.

And he said, do it the third time. And they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar and he filled the trench also with water.

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel and that I am thy servant and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me O Lord, hear me that this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou has turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stone and the dust, now notice what follows, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

So there are two words, the consuming and the licking up of the water. And those two words really need to be underlined in your Bible, if you are fond of doing that, because those two statements are tremendously important. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and they said, the Lord, he is the God, the Lord, he is the God.

And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Baal, let not one of them escape. And they took them and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kitchen and slew them there. Now you will notice that there is no compromise at all with this man of God.

He immediately slays the enemies of God. In one way this was what Saul should have done with the Amalekites, but he refused to do it. And alas, it was an Amalekite that slew him, isn't that so? Verse 41.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of abundance of rain. Now this is the strange paradox, there was no sign of rain. The fire had come down, but there wasn't a cloud in the

sky, but the man of God knew that there was going to be abundance of rain.

Why? Because the water had been licked up, and we shall see the significance of that in a few minutes. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink, and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel. And he cast himself down upon the earth, and notice this clause, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, go up now and look toward the sea.

And he went up and looked, and said, there is nothing. And he said, go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, behold there arises a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand.

Now notice, not like a man's foot, or a man's face, like a man's hand. Now we'll see the significance of that in a few moments. And remember Elijah was a man of prayer.

And he said, go up and say unto Ahab, prepare thy chariot and get thee down, that the rain stop enough. And it came to pass in the meanwhile that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girted up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. And he is the only man in history that ever beat a running race horse. And that man would have broken all records.

And he did that in the energy of the power of the Holy Spirit. How wonderful is our God. Now the Lord will bless to us the readings of the sacred scriptures.

In the Old Testament we find a very clear outline for blessing. Whilst in the Old Testament we find God's consequence, if those conditions are not met. And those of us who are familiar with the book of Deuteronomy, and especially with the second of Chronicles, chapters 6 and 7, will know that God gave them a blueprint for blessing, and also a blueprint for baroness.

And those principles go right the way through the Bible. And the principles that mark Israel are really the same principles that mark the church of God. We know that we are no longer under law, praise God for that, we're under grace.

But the principles of God, whether they're in the Old Testament or the New Testament, always abound. And so in the Old Testament we find that when the children of Israel were disobedient, God would make the heavens like brass. Or if he did not make the heavens like brass, there would be pestilence among the people.

And if there were not pestilence among the people, then he would command the locusts to devour their crops. But if the people of God would humble themselves and pray and seek the face of God, then God would again put his name among them, so that they might become a delightsome land. Now my brothers and sisters, I want to share with you tonight some few thoughts about baroness and about proponents.

If God is not blessing the witness of any local church, it is a sign of the disapproval of God. And it's as simple and as factual as that. If God is blessing the witness of a local church, so that the church is growing through confession, and that the church is being built up in their most holy faith, it's a sign of the approval of God.

God's smile is upon that group of people. You will never find a group of people who are spiritual, who are being edified, who do not multiply. Wherever you find in the book of the Acts, in the Old Testament or the New Testament, when God's people were edified they always multiplied.

But when they were not edified, there was this ugly thing called suppression. Now I feel sure that most of us tonight are here because we are hungry for reality. We are longing to see a genuine movement of the spirit.

We're all tired of gimmicks aren't we? We're all tired of professionalism, and we want to see a genuine movement of the spirit of God. Now if we want to see something that's genuine, we must get back to the book, and we must get back to God. And if we're prepared to do that, God will meet us and bless us, and it's as simple as that.

Now here tucked away in 1 Kings 18, we find some principles about the author of God that will show us a great secret in the realm of revival. And first of all I want you to note that the author here that's mentioned is a broken author. I want you to look at these prophets of Bel.

As you looked at the prophets of Bel, they looked fanatical, and they looked feverish with zeal. And I suppose in one way that is why that they were deceived by them. The Bel worship was not as sensual and as sexual as the worship of Asteros.

The Asteros God was a God of nudity, and it was a God that they looked at that created within their hearts sensual desires. Although Bel worship was a wicked form of worship, and it was totally anti-God, it had some morality attached to it. And I suppose that's why Israel was deceived by this wicked woman who was a sehufah, Jezebel.

But when the test came, and what a test it was, about fire coming from heaven, the prophets of Bel were put right on the spot concerning reality. And they made their altar, they made their prayer. In fact as you look at their prayer you see first of all they cried aloud, so they were fervent.

Then you find them dancing upon the altar and jumping upon the altar, so they're feverish. Then you see them being fanatical and they cut themselves with knives. They mutilated the flesh.

And therefore as we watch these prophets of Bel, they have something attached to them like the charismatics. They're fervent, they're feverish, they're fiery, they're fanatical. But there's no fire, there's no fire.

Now we must be very careful about the fever and the feverishness of human activity. It can look like a real spiritual movement, but my brothers and sisters there's a very little fire in it. In fact so much of it is flame fire.

So may I say this to all, do not get taken in by a show of the flesh. Do not get taken in by feverish manifestations. Remember the old saying, it's not in the bible but it's perfectly true, not everything that glitters is gold.

And we must remember this, that sometimes all of us get taken in by the exterior and by the manifestation of zeal that can come from the flesh. Now I want you to note now the man of God. First of all he says to the scattered Israelites, come near unto me.

I think that's good. The man of God who comes among the children of God, irrespective of their conditions, will never scatter. Any movement that scatters and divides the people of God is not of God, and it's a failure.

Every prophet of God that was used of God in revival always united the people of God and never segregated. Do you remember that nasty movement in Israel's history that was never healed? And do you know how it came? It came through the legality of Rehoboam and it came through the liberalism of Jeroboam. And from that moment Israel was divided and it was never united.

And it came because of the legality of Rehoboam who wanted to put pressure upon the Israelites beyond the law of God. And because they swung in one direction the other side went in the other direction. And so you had the liberals coming in through Jeroboam and thus you had idols.

And so brothers and sisters we must keep from those two extremes and we must carefully follow the word of God. But now the man of God he calls to the people of God and he says with all the love that was in his heart come near unto me. And they came near.

You see these prophets of Balaam they were so fanatical, they were so feverish, they were so caught up with mutilating the flesh that it frightened the people. They got scared. They wondered what they were going to do.

There were such demonstrations of the flesh that they must have said no they're going to kill themselves. And it scared them. Have you ever been in a meeting like that? I was in one meeting once and they were almost swinging on the chandelier.

I think you were almost swinging on the chand. It was terrible, it frightened me and I don't want to be in a meeting like that again. But here was this lovely man of God that says come near unto me.

And they come near. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down. Now we can say this with absolute authority.

The altar always speaks of the cross. No matter where you find it. Whether you find the altar that's mentioned in the new testament, in the hebrews or in the old testament.

Irrespective where you read of the altar it always speaks of the cross. And here is a man that's going to repair the altar that was broken down. Now why? There is one message that the devil hates.

One message and that's the cross of Christ. That is why the apostle Paul says the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glory of God, which is the image of God, should shine upon it. You see there is one message that satan positively hates and that's the gospel.

And the reason why he hates the gospel is because the centrality of the gospel is the cross. And any good gospel preacher will surround the cross in every address that he takes. When we get to heaven what is the theme of eternity? The great outpouring of the spirit? No.

The way in which the mighty lamb of God came into this world through the immaculate conception? No. The way in which the son of man will come and he will reign upon this earth as the mighty king? No. Will it be the way in which the bridegroom will come and take his children from the earth to be with himself before the cross of God falls upon the earth? No.

The central point of heaven will be worthy is the lamb that was slain. That's the point. And any movement that does not emphasize the centrality of the cross, my brothers and sisters, cannot really be in God.

It's the cross that's the heart of all God's dealing with this earth. And so you can see that he repaired the altar that was broken down. But there's something more about that repaired altar that was broken down.

The cross is not only God's dealing with sinful men and women, the cross is God's dealings, the center of God's dealings with his people. We shall never know what consecration basically means until we understand the cross. For instance, a man might listen to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ for years, and yet the revelation of it will never come to pass.

But there comes a moment in a believer's life when the cross of the Lord Jesus is preached and two great facts are seen. First of all, the fact that Christ died for my sins, and that gives me a shock. When I look at the cross and see the agony of the Son of God on that cross, and when I hear him saying, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And I realize that he was forsaken for my sins.

That gives me the biggest shock I've ever had. And I begin to say, Lord Jesus, did you die for my lusts, my lies, my private sins? Yes. And my sins caused your death? Yes.

How deadly is your sin? I say, but he doesn't read it. One moment the soul receives a shock, but the next moment the soul receives a surprise, that he loves me unto death. And when those two facts have gripped our hearts, then within our hearts there is that dualistic fact of repentance and faith.

And that's what makes the society. But then the child of God must come back to the cross. It is going to be truly consecrated.

And this time he must see at the cross not so much Christ dying for his sins, but Christ dying and he dying in Christ. Oh, if only we could see that. I suppose everyone in this room tonight sees quite clearly that when the Savior died on that central cross, he died for our sins.

But how many of us really see that when Christ died, we died in him. And when he was buried, we were buried with him. And when he was raised again, we were raised again with him.

And this is the grounds of our justification. And therefore in the sight of God, we have died in Christ, we have been buried in Christ, we have been raised again in Christ. You know sometimes I tease people in order to get this through.

I said to a dear brother that I knew very well quite recently, and he would pass from it in a natural way. I said, Matt, I heard that you were dead. What me? Dead? Yes, dead.

My word knows. Where did you hear that Peter? Oh, I said from good authority. Did I die? Yes.

Would the others know? Oh, I said lots of people would know. He said, where is your authority? And so I took him to Colossians. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are of us.

Where Christ is, it's on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth, for you're dead. You're dead.

And your life is hit with Christ in God. Oh, he said, that gives me a sigh of relief when I said, dear brother, Matt, it shouldn't. You should say, praise the Lord, I am dead.

If only we would live out that great truth, wouldn't it dear brother. But you know, the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ not only deals with our sins, it not only deals with our old man, the cross of Christ deals with the world. God forbid that I should glorify then the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

The same cross that links us with the Father is the same cross that separates us from the world. And the Lord Jesus Christ died, that we might be delivered from this present evil world, and do you know what that word deliver means? Just as the angel of the Lord went down to the city of Sodom, and delivered Lot and his family out of it. So the cross wants to deliver us from this system of this evil world, as it does.

Now brothers and sisters, I'm going back soon to the old country, but I don't want to say this to you in loud. I've been almost thunderstruck with amazement that Christian people in Australia are frequenting cinema, and watching films that are censure and sexual, and they're more concerned with the football match than with the assembly of God. What's happened? The altar has been broken down.

And instead of the cross of Christ bringing them to God, and the cross of Christ separating the flesh in their lives, and taking them out of this present evil world, it's all been broken down. And we've got the church and the world together. Now my brothers and sisters, could I say this plainly and bluntly? If you want to be just a spatial movement, and lose all your power, get in with the world.

But if you want the power of God, you see that the altar has been broken down and rebuilt. For that's the hatred of the world. Have a look now at this repaired altar.

It's a beautiful altar, and I want to share it with you now. And Elijah took 12 stones according to the tribes of the sons of Jacob. And so he begins his revival with the altar.

And quite frankly if you haven't got any sanctified imagination, you will never see the beauty of this revival. And there's the old prophet, the man that walked with God, the man who lived perhaps in a camel skin, very similar to John the Baptist, the weary prophet. And there he is, he looks at the altar and all he could see was absolute confusion.

There would be the blood of the fanatical prophet staining the stones of the altar. There were they were totally exhausted. And my dear friends, that's the flesh.

After all the energy of the flesh has been expended, that's what you say, nothing but confusion. And I can imagine the prophet smiling before this, a tinge of humor with this prophet. You remember the way in which he mocked them.

There's something real about this man of God. And he says, right now we must repair the altar of God. And he starts me.

Now how are we going to do it? Well in our building the apostle Paul tells us that we've got to make sure that we build upon a firm foundation. Now what is that foundation? The foundation is Christ. Well you say that's quite simple isn't it brother Peter? Oh no.

You see there in Corinth they were building on other foundations. They were building on Peter, they were building on Paul, they were building on Cephas. Who was Peter? Cephas.

He was a man who was subject to legality. He could sometimes submit to circumcision. And Paul was put into the flesh.

Who was Paul? He was the man who saw the truth of the one body. Who was Apollos? He was an intellectual. A man that knew the scriptures and was mighty in the scriptures, but had a very refined approach to things, and probably had a smothering of the Greek philosophy in his mind.

And so we have a man that's associated with legality. You have another man that's associated with the liberal truth, and another man that's associated with intellectuality. And they were building on this.

No wonder the apostle Paul said who's Paul is nothing. Who's Apollos? Nothing. One is just a sower and the other is just a waterer.

It's God that gives the increase. And if we're going to build we must not build on men, we must build on Christ. Now brethren and sisters you may feel that this is very elementary, but it's not.

You know we are living in a day when even Christians are getting taken up with a personality test. When I meet with them I hear them saying, have you heard this man, that man? Now that shouldn't be so. Thank God for the gift in this day.

But the center of all our thinking and the center of all our talking should be the Lord Jesus. We should build on Christ. And if we build on Christ we're safe.

But then how shall we build? What kind of structure shall we build? Well the assembly is the house of God. Now another thing that's really frightening. Now I do not know what kind of proves you hold here, but I just want to be God's simple servant.

If we do not now build on the word of God we're going to be sin today. Now we must be a group of people that stand four square on the book. And we must be book men and women.

Now this is what I'm finding. Truths that have governed the church for 400 years and never have been questioned, they're all being thrown in the melting pot. Some people are saying something like, oh well of course we don't need that now, that was all for Paul's time.

Well my dear friends if it's all for Paul's time we certainly don't need the New Testament very much apart from the poor God. Now could I say this to brethren who have the responsibility of ruling the church. Make sure that your respected local church follows the word of God.

And if you follow the word of the Lord, the Lord will bless you. We must, oh brothers let me say this, we must build that with description. Otherwise we're going to see an assembly pattern just dip into that.

And I can see it now with young and old. And once God has given us light, and thank God he has given us light, if we turn our backs upon it we become transgressors. And oh may it be if I may say this to you in love, that God will raise up a new generation of even young men and young women that will revere the scriptures and seek to obey them.

And then I want you to note not only the foundation, not only the structure, but the material. You could build, says the apostle, on wood, hay or stubble. Or you can build on gold, silver and precious stones.

Now if I had some gold in my hand I could put it in my small pocket and you wouldn't notice it. But if I had the same measure of hay you would need two cart fulls to be brought into the hall. You see one looks a massive amount of material, the other is insignificant.

But look at the difference in wealth. And what the apostle is simply saying is this. Don't build upon that which looks a lot.

Build upon that which is going to stand the test of the past. And one day we're all going to stand before the beamer, the judgment seat of Christ, and we're not going to be judged according to our sins, praise God, they've already been judged. We've passed from death unto life.

But God's going to judge our service. And every young man will have his service judged. Every young woman will have her service judged.

Every sister will have her service judged. Every brother will have his service judged. And we're going to be judged according to the material that we've put into our being.

Now my dear friends I cannot speak to you tonight because I'm doing the speaking, you're doing the listening, but I want to say this before God. If what I am saying now is in the power of the flesh, it will all be burnt up. If what I am saying now is before God and it's honoring God and it's according to the book, it will come out of the fire like gold, silver, precious stone.

Shall we build of a good material? Let's build on Christ. Let's conform to the book and yet lose that material that spiritual and not carnal. And then we shall become good builders.

He built the altar and he repaired the altar that was broken down. Now I want you to note it's a complete altar. Now I love this thought here.

Now first of all would you please note the unity of the altar. And Elijah took 12 stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob and to whom the word of the Lord came saying Israel shall be thy name. Now he didn't take nine and a half stones, for there were nine and a half tribes in Israel.

He didn't take two and a half stones. Elijah was a man that stood on his toes, he saw beyond all the apostasy of Israel and he could see the original intentions of God and he could see the 12 tribes and he could see the unity of the people of God. Now I know what some are beginning to say after I have quoted rigidly from 1 Corinthians 3, our brother Batman and his erring on the legal side.

Oh no, I'm not that. Every time we build an altar, every time we establish a structure for God, it must be wide enough to embrace all the children of God. And if it's not wide enough to embrace all the children of God, it's worse.

We must never build a sectarian altar. Now I can't embrace all that the children of God do, but I can embrace all the children of God and love them. And this is the reason why I am a disciple and you are a disciple, because we love all the best.

And immediately we only love a certain class of the Lord's people, in principle we become sectarianism, sectarian and that creates the spirit of God. But the fellowship of God's people must be wide enough to embrace all the children of God, like the 12 stones, that it must be narrow enough to exclude the world. And it's as simple as that.

I embrace all those that have been brought with the precious blood. I embrace all those that have been filled with the Holy Spirit. I embrace all those that have been baptized into one body.

But I completely exclude the world. Brothers, I want to ask a question. Do you embrace all those that love the Lord? And have you excluded the world? Could I say something from a bleeding heart now? One of the reasons why we have lost the power of God is because we have embraced the world and we're no longer separate.

And if we want the joy of the Lord and the love of the Father, we've got to embrace the children of God. But we want a fellowship that will exclude the world. And then we shall see God move it.

He built it with 12 stones. But then I want you to note with this author of completion, it's not only an author of unity, it's an author of transformative. Notice he uses the two names.

First of all, he uses the name Jacob, the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came saying, Israel shall be thy name. Now here the language is masculine. And what he is basically saying is this.

He looks upon the children of Israel not in their Jacob character. Now you say, what do you mean by that? The word Jacob means a supplanter. It means a seed.

And Jacob was the type of man, before the Lord dealt with him, that had fleshly manifestations. And he had these fleshly manifestations in his life for about 25 years before the Lord gave him. And when the Lord dealt with him at Peniel and changed his name from Jacob to Israel, then he became a prince with God.

And therefore the word Israel according to Genesis 32 simply means, as a prince has thou power with God and with men. So one moment it's an author of unity, it embraces the 12 sides. The next moment it's an author of transformative.

Here is a man that was once Jacob, now he's an Israel and he has power with God. And that's the kind of author that we want to be. Beloved, we shall never have power with men until we have power with God.

Could I let you into a secret that I'm sure would thrill your heart? In London, because the assemblies let the world in and we approached this new attitude to worldliness, saying to God's people that worldliness wasn't just abstaining from the worldly pleasures of the worldling, it was a state of mind. And we had what you are beginning to have. God's people enjoying the best of a world that was under the curse of God.

And what happened was this, the power went and the meeting dwindled until in London, 21 assemblies were closed, have been closed, 43 are in the process of that. But listen to this, in the midst of all that confusion, God's people are coming together for prayer. And I had a phone call from one of my boys who was in the Lord's works and he said, Dad, crowds are coming to an all-night prayer.

And they're crying to God for revival. Now that's not the movement of the flesh. People do not leave their bed and spend the whole night and early morning in prayer just for a flesh prayer.

That's a movement of Israel. And in the midst of all the apostasy, in the midst of all the decline, in the midst of removal and death, now there's a group of people who are becoming Israel. They have power with God and with me.

Wouldn't it be lovely to see something like that in Brisbane, here in Maryborough, in Diover. God's people being drawn together with this burden to cry to the Lord for a movement of the spirit of God. And whenever God's people become Israel, the fuel of them, God will bless them.

But then I want you to note, it's an altar of sovereignty. It's not only referring back to the converted name of Jacob, which was Israel, but you will notice, and with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord. Now I love that.

When we go through the scriptures, and this is a verse that we're always quoting, where two or three are gathered together, there am I in the midst of them, and we use what I have omitted, being gathered together in the name. And what is the name? The name is the Lord Jesus Christ. And what does that basically mean? Now if you turn to two scriptures, you will see the secret of it, so that we get the importance of it.

Look at Acts 4 first of all, verse 24, and then let's look at 1 Corinthians 12. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord thou art God. Now if you look at 1 Corinthians 12, verse 3, you will see the contemporary verse.

Wherefore I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus a curse, and that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now whenever you read of the term Lord, especially in the New Testament, where it's prefaced by the word Lord God, it always refers that the person who is praying is a slave. For instance in a Roman household there were two kinds of servants.

There was the servant that was paid a wage, and he always addressed his master by our word, foreman or overseer. Then there was a servant who was bought from each of thirty pieces of silver, and he always addressed his master by this word, sovereign Lord. And therefore the word Lord, sovereign Lord, always incurs slavery, and it always incurs that the person who is using the word is addressing someone who is an absolute sovereign Lord.

Now can you see what he means? He built his altar in the name of the sovereign Lord. Beloved if only we would get back to that. If only we would honestly call Jesus Christ sovereign Lord, so that the whole assembly came under the Lordship and the sovereignty of Christ, we would see a holy movement of the Spirit of God.

Now I've often said this, and I must say it again, you know dear friends, if you are an assembly of bread breakers, then we shall never see the blessing of God. If you have an assembly where there are thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty intelligentsia, and you have just fifteen or twenty of the family here, it doesn't matter how we shall preach, we shall see a very few people. Why? Because we have lost sovereignty.

You remember when the apostle was speaking to the Romans about the functioning of the body, he made sure all the believers' bodies were laid on the altar. Romans 12, I beseech you therefore men and brethren, by the masses of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice. When he is talking about the function of a local church in 1 Corinthians 12, he makes sure that every believer can say Jesus is Lord.

And how can you have a local church that's under the Lordship of the Spirit with members who do not know Lordship? You see, it will not work will it? And therefore if we are going to really see God moving, we must get back to the Lordship of Christ. And what about it tonight? Why not let's build an altar that has unity, transformative, unsuffering, and namely a city of God beginning to move. Then you will notice, and

this is very interesting to me at least, it's a trenched altar.

First of all, notice the orderliness of the altar, and with the stones, verse 32, he built an altar in the name of the Lord, and he made a trench about the altar as great as would contain two measures of feet, and that was a lot of feet. And he put the wood in order, and he cut the wood in pieces, and laid him on the wood, and said, fill four barrels with water. Now here is something that I believe is pinned with holy cement.

First of all, Elijah the prophet goes right the way back to Leviticus 1. There was Israel in a state of apostasy, all the animal sacrifices had been forgotten, and they were now worshipping the gods of death. But here was one man, although he seemingly stood alone, was going to stand four square on the word of God. I love it.

No wonder he stands on the mount with the Lord Jesus when there is the transfiguration. And this man goes right back to Leviticus 1, and he lays the wood in order, and according to Nehemiah, that was the wood of, a very beautiful of. Then he takes his bible, according to Leviticus 1, and he cuts it in pieces, and he lays it in order upon the altar.

And it wasn't a sin offering, it was a burnt offering. It was something holy for God. And then having done that, he says to the people, fill four barrels with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

Now here is something that's strange. If you're going to light a fire, you don't light it with wet wood do you? And this man of God had such confidence in the Lord, he was testing the people of God, and he was testing even their faith, and he was saying right now, fill four barrels with water, and they were big barrels, and pour it upon the sacrifice. And you can almost imagine the people saying, look Elijah, you're foolish, you'll never get the fire to come with a wet sacrifice and wet wood.

Right says the prophet, with a smile on his face, do it the second time. The second time, do it the second time. There they are, pouring the water upon the altar.

And you can imagine some of the people shaking their heads and saying, well you'll never get the fire now. Right he says, do it the third time. And now the whole of the altar is rinsed with water.

Why? Because he was going to show to them that this was absolutely real. He hadn't got a box of matches in his pocket, and he was going to light the fire. It was going to be absolutely real.

Beloved that's what we want today. Do you know dear friends, that's what the world wants, something that's real. Now I try to get among the people of Australia, and I can say this to the Lord.

When we are absolutely real, the man in the street is looking for absolute reality. And when he sees Christians enjoying the things of the world, he knows in the back of his mind they're wrong. I'll give you a case in point.

A young man came into the inquiry room, and we all prayed for this young man. And we, he was brought into the inquiry room, and we were sitting there together. And he said to me, this friend you know, he has brought me along to the meeting, would you explain what a Christian is? And I explained what a Christian was to him.

Well he said, that's funny. He smokes like I smoke. He goes for the pictures like I go.

He's got some nasty pictures up like I have. He swears like I swear. And the poor fellow was going down, he walked out.

Now what was wrong? He wasn't genuine. And the world is waiting to see a genuine manifestation of Christianity, and a genuine manifestation of Jesus. And do you know what I feel like saying, look brother and sister.

If you're not genuine, it's far better to get out in that world and enjoy it. Because the Lord's coming, and you've only got a few seconds in it. But if you are a brother or a sister, and you've got one foot in the world, and one foot in the church, please take that gluey foot right out of the world, bring it right into the church, give yourself to the Lord, and He'll bless you.

You see whilst we have got these kind of Christian scabs in the church, and that's what they are. One foot in the world, one foot in the church, and then they try and present the gospel. And people look, and they watch, and they say, well look I can see that person isn't genuine.

Got to be the right one. We've got to say, look come here, pour all the water that you like on the altar, and you'll say, God I shouldn't I Father. And after all the critics, he can argue about our theology, he can argue about our doctrine, he can quarrel about the gospel that we preach, but he can't quarrel about the power that's mentioned.

And my dear friends, there's no argument for a changed life. Here was this mighty man of God, moving before God, and he kills the people, and it's all done with a sense of humour. Do it a third time, and he did it the third time.

There's the water rolling over the altar on the side. But now I want to ask a very awkward question. Where did they get the water from? They had three and a half years of drought.

They were all looking for water. Obadiah was looking for water, Abab was looking for water. You say well Carmel was right near the sea brother Peter, it must have been sea water.

They were never allowed to use sea water on a sacrifice, it always had to be running water. Where did they get the water from? Obviously some of them still had water in their streams, but only a few. Elijah said right, there's God's point, part on that altar, there's the sacrifice, there's the wood, there's the blood.

Now if you want to see God moving, your part is to lay everything on the altar. One or two of them slip through the crowd, and with their skins straight, squeeze the water on the altar, and it's a matter of life being given. Risey says the consecration is not complete, do it the second time.

And a few move through the crowd, and they squeeze the water on the altar. It's life that's going on. It was more precious than gold.

And everything was being laid on the altar. Now he says the movement is not yet complete, do it the third time. And now they squeeze every drop of water upon the altar, until they are completely given in consecration.

And my beloved that's what he wants. Now I'm going to ask a question before we start this. One unconsecrated young man can spoil all the blessings.

One unconsecrated woman could spoil all the blessings. Eight hands, one sin, causes all to fall. And are we going to lay the altar, on the altar, the water of consecration tonight? Wouldn't it be lovely if we all went home to our little bedrooms tonight, and in the quietness of that room, we gave the Lord everything.

We took our business, we took our loved ones, we took our home, we took everything that we had, and we said Lord I'm going to give it entirely to this. And when we've done that, it's only our reason. All right we see now that it's a drenched altar.

But now I want you to notice it's an approved altar. If you look at verse 36, you will see first of all under this heading, the prayer of simplicity. And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things that thy were.

Hear me O Lord, hear me that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again. It was a simple prayer. You will notice there is an omission of any demonstration.

There is no dancing. There is no crying aloud. There is no cutting of the flesh.

There is no prolonged prayer. It's a simple prayer. It's a prayer that came from his heart.

It was a prayer that got us. Why? The water was all on the altar. Then I want you to note not only the prayer of simplicity, but I want you to note now the power of divinity.

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and lit up the water that was in the trench. Now notice the fire of the Lord fell. But where should the fire have fallen? Quite frankly the fire should have fallen on the prophets of Baal.

It should have fallen on Ahab, and it should have fallen upon Israel, because they were upon it. But where did it fall? It did not fall upon the objects that deserved it. It fell upon the object that did not deserve it.

It fell upon the Lord. And isn't that the picture of kindness? When our precious Lord was wholly given to God on that cross, the fire of judgment fell, but it did not consume the people. It consumed his blessed life.

And what a fire it was. And he exhausted the judgment of God, and that's why we have the prophecy. Brethren, I don't like the word for it.

It spikes. I love the word to prophesy. It means to remove thy sacrifice.

And because the wrath of God was exhausted in his beloved son, now sin can be righteously put away, and the sinner can be declared righteous. But more, you will notice that the fire, it consumed the burnt sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the dust. But notice what it means.

It licked up the water. Can I repeat that? It consumed the bullet, it consumed the wood, it consumed the stone, it consumed the dust, so that there was nothing left. It licked up.

It was the power of evaporation. It licked up the water. And we'll look at that in a few moments.

And then you will notice we have here the penitence of sincerity, and when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and they said, the Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God. And that's when we get the blessing

of the Lord. When God's children lay everything on the altar, and the fire falls, then the people will cry out, the Lord, he is God, the Lord, he is God.

And my dear friends, we shall never see that, until we see the children of God fully given to God in Christ Jesus. But then I want you to note the punishment of necessity. Look at verse 40.

And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Israel, let not one of them escape. And they took them, and Elijah brought them down to the brook kitchen and slew them there, every one of them. You see there was no compromise.

Everything that was against God was dealt with in justice. That's what it was. Can I repeat that? Everything that was against God was dealt with in justice.

That was the man of God. And then I want you to note the prostration of his importunity. And Ahab went up to eat and drink, verse 42, and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel and cast himself down upon the earth, and he put his face between his knees.

Now don't miss that posture. The putting the face between the knees is a posture that illustrates what the New Testament calls laboring servanthood. And it's the idea of a man being stretched out in prayer.

And that was Elijah. Wherever you read Elijah in the New Testament, he is a man of prayer. And he's always associated with prayer.

But not just ordinary prayer. Elijah is always associated with fervent, essential prayer. Beloved, you know I used to remember the days when I was 19 and I first started to preach.

Going behind the platform in the old days in London and seeing the old brethren pray. And sometimes I used to see 60 of them all kneeling down. Many of them were sick with it.

Never forget it. And those dear old men of God, I don't know the Lord always gave them, or nearly always gave them a long life. Most of them were 70-inch head sun man.

And they used to hit the chair. And I can hear them now, Lord we want souls tonight. And the tears used to drip down their cheeks on their beards.

And they cried to the Lord for a movement of the Spirit. No wonder we saw so many dying. I wish we could see that.

You know we've got too much polish now. Too little power. In the scripture we read, when they had prayed the place was taken.

But today when they had prayed the place was taken. I wish really you know we could get back to the past. Here was a man, I love him.

I feel like saying to him, you know Elijah we love every bone in his body. He's got his head between his knees and he's crying. Crying to God for blessings.

And he says to his servant, when he says there's no sign of rain, he says go again seven times. We all know that's the number of seven. It's perfect testing.

You can't go into that now. And when he came back he says, well what do you see? He said a little cloud out of a man's hand. Why? I was at men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands.

Without wrath and without shame. This mighty man of God had those hands that were in love come near unto me. He had hands of faith without guidance.

He believed God was going to send him. And what did God do? What they had laid upon the altar got licked up. Transformed it into a little cloud like a man's hand.

And with that hand he sends the abundance of wrath. He licked up five loaves and placed more fish into it. The place I found him.

And there were 12 baskets all day when it was eaten. And my dear friends what you lay on the altar the Lord will give it back to you a hundredfold. He'll lick it up.

He'll transform it into a hand of blessing. And there will be the abundance of wrath. Beloved we haven't got a stone altar tonight.

We haven't got a bull of praise God. Our altar is a cross and on that cross the holy hand of God. And do you know what he wants? He wants every one of us to come to that cross.

Come to that wounded side. And squeeze every bit of water on the altar. And give him everything.

Now could I share with you a burden and anchor? You know in my own country when we speak to God's people they take it serious. At least now they are. And they will go home and have deep feelings of God.

And when we come together we sense the presence of God in the midst. So that when we are preaching sometimes a man will stand up and break the silence and say could I be saved now. And we have to stop the meeting.

And some nights when the dear friend plays the organ no one will leave. The awe of God fills the building. And the whole meeting is transformed into a prayer meeting.

And in that prayer sometimes we hear sinners crying for mercy. It's like heaven upon earth. But beloved this is what I say and I'm sure I can share it with you.

God's people hear it. But they say nothing about it. They still go on in the things of the world.

Go home, switch on the television and they forget the world. And we have the meeting. And it's all so shallow.

Now I'm coming to the end of my step. Wouldn't it be lovely if here in Mary's house we took it here. We went home.

We said tonight Lord there are things in my life. There are things in my home. And there are things that we are practicing that are not of God.

I know that. And I know I'm not an absolutely committed Christian. And tonight everything is done.

And I lay myself down at the tears of Peter the second. When we started to preach the gospel we could then see the fire falling. And we would see the rain coming.

And we would glorify God. May God help us today.

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