

The Author of God

by Peter Brandon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the cross of Christ in experiencing revival and being separated from the world.

Duration: 44:46

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:30

Topics: "The Cross of Christ", "Revival"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes the significance of the altar of God in his sermon, drawing from 1 Kings 18, where Elijah confronts the idolatry of Israel under King Ahab. He highlights the need for a repaired altar, symbolizing the cross, as a foundation for revival and unity among God's people. Brandon warns against the fervor of false worship, exemplified by the prophets of Baal, and calls for a return to genuine faith that embraces all believers while excluding worldly influences. He stresses that true power with God comes from understanding and living out the transformative nature of the cross, which leads to spiritual fruitfulness and revival. The sermon concludes with a call for prayer and unity among believers to seek God's blessing and revival.

Transcript

Now tonight I want to talk to you, dear friends, about the altar of God. It's a strange subject to be speaking about, especially in reference to the forthcoming mission, but I believe this is the word of the Lord and I want to share it with you from 1 Kings 18. 1 Kings 18 and we shall read from verse 30.

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 Ahab 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 Baal. And something took place in Israel that was obnoxious to God.

The house of Baal was actually raised up in Israel. And the scripture says that Ahab 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, 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 many. 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 Baal 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 12 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 seed. 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 wood in order and cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood and said fill four barrels with water and pour it upon the 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 stones 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 Chisholm 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 strange. 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 thee not.

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 racehorse 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 reading 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 chapter six and seven will know that God gave them a blueprint for blessing and also a blueprint for barrenness. 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 about. 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 crop. 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 delightful land.

Now my brothers and sisters I want to share with you tonight some few thoughts about barrenness and about fruitfulness. 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 confessions 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 subtraction. 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 are 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 order.

I want you to look at these prophets of Baal. As you looked at the prophets of Baal 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 Baal worship was not as sensual and as sexual as the worship of Astaroth. The Astaroth god was a god of nudity and it was a god that they looked at that created within their hearts sensual desires. Although Baal 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 seducer Jezebel. But when the test came and what a test it was about fire coming from heaven the prophets of Baal were put right on the spot concerning reality. And they made their altar they made their prayer.

In fact as you look at their prayers you see first of all they cried aloud so there was fervency. 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 Baal 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 strange 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 beautiful. 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 as clear as that.

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 idolatry. 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 Bill 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 chandeliers. I think you would say almost swinging on the sands.

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 has 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 because the centrality of the gospel is the cross. And any good gospel preacher will surround the cross in every address that he prays.

When we get to heaven what is the theme of eternity? The great outpouring of the spirit now. 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 wrath 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 a gospel. It's the cross that's the heart of all God's dealing with his people. And so you can see that he repairs 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 him. 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 realized 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 love? My lying? My private sins? Yes. And my sins caused your death? Yes. How deadly serious sin must be.

But he doesn't leave you there. One moment the soul receives a shock but the next moment the soul receives a surprise that he loved 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 us a child of God.

But then the child of God must come back to the cross if he's 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 truth out.

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

My word no he said. Where did you hear that Peter? Oh I said from good authority that I died yes. Would the others know it? Oh I said lots of people would know it.

He said where's your authority? And so I took him to Colossians. If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above and not on things on the earth for ye are dead.

You're dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Oh he said that gives me a sigh of relief. Well I said dear brother Matt you should say praise the Lord I am dead.

If only we would live out that great truth wouldn't it be a blessing. 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 glory save in 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 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. Has it done it? Now brothers and sisters I'm going back soon to the old country but I do want to say this to you in love. I've been almost thunderstruck with amazement that Christian people in Australia are frequenting cinema and watching films that are sensual 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 social 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 it. For that's the secret of revival.

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 hairy prophet. And there he is he looks at the altar and all he could see with absolute confusion there would be the blood of the fanatical prophet staining the stones of the altar.

And there where they were totally exhausted. And my dear friends that's the flesh. After all the energy of the flesh has been extended 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 building. Now how are we going to build? 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 withstood him to the faith.

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 smattering 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 intellectuals. 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 problem. 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 gifts in the church. 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 frightened us. Now I do not know what kind of truths 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 disintegrate.

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. And people are saying something like that 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 four gospels. Now could I say this to brethren who have the responsibility of rule in the church. Make sure that your respective 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 which is scriptural. Otherwise we're going to see an assembly pattern just disintegrate.

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 reveal 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 power. 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 building. 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 burned 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 let's lose that material that's 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 unto whom the word of the Lord came saying Israel shall be thy name.

Now he didn't take nine and a half stone for there were nine and a half tribes in Israel. He didn't take two and a half stone. 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. Ah brother Pat Brandon is erring on the legal side. Oh no I'm not brother.

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 brethren and immediately we only love a certain class of the Lord's people. In principle we become sectarianism, sectarian and that grieves 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 but it must be narrow enough to exclude the world and it's as simple as that. I embrace all those that have been bought with the precious blood. I embrace all those that have been sealed 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 are no longer separately.

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 moving. He built it with 12 stones. But then I want you to note with this altar of completion it's not only an altar of unity it's an altar 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 masterly.

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 cheat. 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 really broke him. And when the Lord dealt with him at Penuel 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 altar of unity it embraces the 12 tribes. The next moment it's an altar 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 altar that we want to build. 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 approach 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 God.

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 is in the Lord's work 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 an early morning in prayer just for a fleshly exercise. That's a movement of the spirit. And in the midst of all the apostasy in the midst of all the decline in the midst of removed lampstand.

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 say something like that in Brisbane.

Here in Maryborough in Biola. God's people being drawn together with this burden to cry to the Lord for a movement of the spirit of God.

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