

A Prepared Heart

by Phil Beach Jr.

A prepared heart, achieved through repentance, is essential for experiencing true comfort and the presence of God in the Christian life.

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Scripture: Isaiah 40:1

Topics: "Heart", "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Preparation of the Heart"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the necessity of a prepared heart for receiving the Holy Spirit, highlighting that true comfort and spiritual fulfillment come through repentance and humility before God. He explains that comfort cannot be found apart from God's direct dealings in our lives, and that preparation through repentance is essential for experiencing the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Beach Jr. warns against superficial practices that lack genuine transformation and encourages believers to seek a deeper relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. He draws from Isaiah and the ministry of John the Baptist to illustrate the importance of preparing the way for the Lord in our hearts. Ultimately, he calls for a continual state of repentance to maintain a heart that is receptive to God's presence and power.

Transcript

Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you for Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. We thank thee, O God, that you are the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man could come unto you but through the Son, Jesus Christ. Now, Father, we acknowledge tonight that we are hungering and thirsting after you, for we have gathered together for no other purpose than that, to receive from thy hand, to receive from thy Spirit, to learn of thee by thy Word.

Lord, it is our desire to be filled with thy Spirit, baptized by thy Spirit. Lord, that we would be energized by the very working of your Holy Spirit within us. Lord, we acknowledge tonight that we are indeed powerless apart from you, but Lord, under the influence and the power of the Holy Spirit, we recognize that through Jesus Christ, we can do all things, and that all things have been given unto us that pertain to life and godliness.

Father, we call upon you to grant to us tonight the Spirit of wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding, and revelation regarding yourself. Open our eyes, Lord. Help us to see, Lord, the way, the way, Lord.

Help us to know your way according to the Word of God. For we know, O God, that our ways fail. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is death and destruction.

There is a way that seemeth right unto me. There is a way that seemeth right unto flesh, but it is not your way, it is my way, and my way can never work. My way will always fail.

Lord, help us tonight to discover your way, your method, that we may yield ourselves to it, submit ourselves to it, and therefore become recipients to the promise of thy Word, which is to all those that you shall call, that you shall save, that you shall place your spirit upon. Lord, we just thank you and praise you. We ask in Jesus' name, Amen and Amen.

I'd like to begin by reading in Isaiah chapter 40. Isaiah chapter 40. The Bible begins in Isaiah chapter 40 with wonderful words regarding comfort.

Now, I just want to begin to write down some of these words on the blackboard because these words have significance to us. They all relate one to another. Beloved, there are people today who are looking for comfort, but you see, you can't look for comfort apart from the way in which God provides comfort.

So, what we're going to do is look at a number of scriptures tonight and just discover God's way for the Holy Spirit. Now, remember, if the Holy Spirit is what you want more than anything in your life, the Holy Spirit of God. Beloved, I want to let you know that the Holy Spirit of God and a relationship with Him and communion with Him is more important than anything.

There's a lot of people that are running around the country today and they're doing nothing more than putting on a fleshly show and entertaining God's people and trying to teach them cheap shortcuts to the truth of God's Word. And let me tell you something, it's not going to work. It's just phoniness.

It's not going to work. There is a way that God has prescribed in the Word of God and as God's people come back to the Word and humble themselves before God and realize that only as we get the blessing of God through humbling ourselves, through falling before the Lord and through allowing Him to give us a pliable heart and a pliable spirit, only then can we really receive the promise that God has given to us. It's not through manipulation.

It's not through the power of man or the might of man, but it's through the precious way that God has prescribed in His Word. Now, I would like to, first of all, begin by reading verse 1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. So, we're going to begin by writing the word comfort on the blackboard.

Now, you and I can both recognize that this word comfort is a very significant word. Many people today are looking for comfort. I want to be able to show you tonight that true comfort does not come apart from God's direct dealing in your life.

You cannot find comfort apart from God's dealing in your life. And God's dealing in your life will not only produce comfort, but it will produce mourning. Many times people want comfort without mourning.

They want joy without sorrow. They want songs without weeping. They want revival without repentance.

They want Holy Ghost from heaven without the axe being laid to the root of the tree. And it is my conviction and my firm belief, and I also believe that it is backed up by the Word of God, that God is preparing His people to be a recipient to the precious, wonderful gift of the Holy Ghost in ways that we've

never known before, but we must go God's way. So, let's begin.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortly to Jerusalem and cry unto her. Now, look at this.

We have comfort and we have cry unto her. Now, we're going to begin to develop a thought here, and we're going to see that God's Word shows that there is comfort for His people, but the comfort does not come apart from the message that God has for her. In other words, the comfort results when the message of God's Word is cried to us and then we become a recipient of that Word and allow that Word to affect us and to produce in us what is pleasing to God, and then that glorious comfort comes.

Now, watch this. And cry to her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Now, here is a very interesting scripture in verse number two, and of course, verse number two is a scripture that points us toward the wonderful redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It brings us to the glorious fact that through Jesus Christ and because of His death and resurrection that He experienced for the sins of the world, we indeed can experience comfort. But now, there is a way in which we can experience the comfort, and this is what we're going to begin to see here. Verse number three, the voice of Him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Now, we who are familiar with the Bible recognize that this is a verse, verse number three, Isaiah chapter 40, which John the Baptist fulfilled. He and His message was the voice that was crying in the wilderness regarding the message of preparing the way of the Lord and making straight in the desert a highway for our God. Now, notice what this message is going to produce.

Here we see, first of all, that there's comfort. Then we see that the Bible is telling us that we are to cry or that the Word of God is to cry unto her, to cry unto God's people, and then we see the message that is being cried to God's people is preparation. Now, see, we're building here, we're building the counsel of God, we're understanding all that is involved in the work of God.

You've got comfort that God promises, then you've got a message from God to us, cry unto her, and then you've got the word preparation. Now, the word preparation here is a word that suggests that which is necessary in order to make a way, that which is necessary in order to make a way. So we see, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Now, I want to suggest now, and then we will show you in the Scripture, that the preparation that Jerusalem, remember Jerusalem is the people, Jerusalem is the people that God is speaking to, and of course, we are the spiritual Jerusalem at this time. We are the spiritual Israel, and God is speaking to Jerusalem and He's promising God's people comfort. He's promising them incredible divine comfort, but then He is encouraging them to take heed.

This Bible often mentions in the book of Revelation, He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying unto the church. We could possibly say tonight, let God open up our ears that we might hear what the prophet Isaiah is crying unto us. Now, the beginning of Isaiah's cry begins with preparation.

Now, I believe that the ultimate preparation is repentance. Now, repentance prepares the heart, does it not? Repentance is that act whereby as a result of the Holy Spirit ministering to us, as a result of the Holy

Spirit convicting us, as a result of the Holy Spirit showing us a sin in our life, the preparation occurs because as a result of the Holy Spirit showing us something, God gives us and grants us the privilege of being able to repent. Now, the word repentance is very simple, it just means a turn around, a change of mind.

Repentance has to do with the Holy Spirit showing us an area in our life that is not right with Him. It's not right with Him. And to repent means to recognize this, not because you have the power to know this, but that's what the ministry of God's Spirit is.

The ministry of God's Spirit shines light. So, repentance, listen, repentance is proper response to God's light. Repentance is proper response to God's light.

Now, the reason why the Bible says in the book of Timothy that we are to pray that God would grant the one who is astray, grant to them repentance, is because you cannot repent apart from God convicting you. In other words, repentance has to be initiated by God. You can't repent of darkness unless light shines and shows you that the darkness is there.

You see? So, the very fact that we are able to repent ought to bring joy in our life because it is a sign that God loves us so much and God cares about us so much, He is willing to shine the light of His all-searching Word and His all-searching Spirit into the depths of our soul so as to reveal to us an area in our life that we need to repent regarding. Now, see, remember, this repentance is the act of preparation. Now, see, remember, as we get into John the Baptist's message, what are we preparing? Prepare the way of who? The Lord.

So, it is a heart, listen closely, it is a heart that is prepared through repentance that becomes a recipient to an ongoing revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'll say that again. It is a heart that has been prepared by repentance which is turning away a change in mind, a responding to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.

It is that kind of heart that is a humble heart, it is a meek heart, it is a contrite heart, it is a broken heart, it is the sacrifice that God accepts. A broken and contrite heart God will not despise. You see, so it is very essential for us to understand now that when Isaiah 40 opens up with comfort, we cannot see comfort, real, true comfort that God wants to bring us in this context.

We can't see comfort apart from hearing the cry of God to prepare our heart through repentance which is a change in our mind when God reveals to us that we're set on doing our own thing. Now, remember, the change of one's mind is not the deliverance from the sin. Only Jesus Christ can deliver us from sin.

It is not me saying, I'm not going to do this anymore, but it is essential for me to say that before God intervenes and delivers me. So the place of repentance in the life of the believer is that attitude of the heart which expresses our desire to be free from what is not pleasing to God and to become a participator with the life of Christ. In place of rebellion, I find submission in Christ.

In place of bitterness, I find joy in Christ. In place of hatred, I find love for Christ. But I can't find that love in Christ unless I'm willing to say I don't want hatred.

That's where repentance is. That's where repentance is. It's the change of mind.

It is a change in mind. It's a change in thinking. This prepares the heart for the Lord.

So consequently, the full blessing of Pentecost, the full blessing of Jesus Christ, can only be experienced on a daily basis when the heart is in a state of daily preparation through repentance. Now let's read this over again. Before I tell you, something about John the Baptist has been stirring my heart.

John the Baptist. Oh, bless his heart. God bless his heart.

I know he's blessed now. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

May I suggest to you tonight that the only kind of preparation that is pleasing to God, that will bring about true comfort from God for Jerusalem, is the preparation that occurs when a heart truly repents as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit, revealing and stirring up things. And as that heart just falls before God and says, Oh God, have mercy upon me. Have mercy upon me.

Deliver me, Lord. Make straight, make straight my crooked heart. Change this crooked way in me.

God, I want deliverance. Lord, I do not want this anymore. I want to turn, Lord.

I want to be pleasing in your eyes, oh God. Thank you for revealing to me this area in my life. Thank you, Lord.

I call upon you. I thank you, Lord, that you're my redeemer and that you live and that greater is you that's in me than the devil and the flesh and everything else in the world. There is true preparation.

There is the heart that is constantly being prepared and I suggest to you that such a heart will always find comfort in the Lord Jesus Christ. And actually, the comfort is the Holy Spirit for He is the Comforter of God. Now, notice another element here in verse number four.

True preparation results in verse number four coming to pass in our life. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low. Now, we have comfort promised to Jerusalem as Jerusalem hears the cry of God's Spirit to prepare the heart through repentance and then we have number four, we have pride being dealt with.

It is impossible for the heart to be prepared, listen, it is impossible for the heart to be prepared for the lowly one of Galilee to live in it and take up his abode in it and abide in it and manifest his life through it if the heart has not been lowered. You see, that's what this language is referring to. Every valley shall be exalted.

That is, the humble shall be exalted. The valley is the low place. When we humble ourselves in God's eyes and we lower ourselves and we come before Him and we bow before Him and acknowledge the areas in our life that we want Him to deal with, that's an act of humility.

That's making a valley in our heart. And God promises that if we make a valley in our heart, He will exalt us, not lift us up and promote our name, but He'll exalt us, this is how He does it, by giving to us an impartation of His glorious life. That's how He exalts us.

He exalts us in Christ. See, the believer's exaltation is Christ. That's the believer's exaltation.

There's no higher place to live than to live in fellowship with the Son of God. There's no higher place. Every valley, every mountain and hill shall be made low and the valley shall be exalted and the crooked

shall be made straight and the rough places plain.

Now see, that's what the work of repentance is. The work of repentance is we make the crooked straight. We make the rough plain.

We make the high, haughty spirit low and we take the valley and we exalt it in Christ. There you go. There's the heart that is repentant toward God.

The heart that has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ and has acknowledged its sin before God. Now let me tell you something, repentance is not an act that we do once in our life. A repentant heart is a heart that lives in the state of humility before God.

Now verse number five, what is the result of such a work within the believer's life? And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. What is the chief ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer? Who is the Holy Spirit to be revealing to us? The glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want your soul to see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and His majesty and His excellence, ah beloved, I want to encourage you to fall before the Lord and to just cry out to Him and thank Him for the blood and thank Him for the redemption and thank Him for the grace and thank Him for the cleansing power and let Him do a work in your life.

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Now as we turn our Bibles to Luke chapter 3, we can see that this very Scripture that we just read was fulfilled by the message of John the Baptist. And that is why we can make this little diagram on the board because John the Baptist showed us exactly what the prophet was signifying.

Luke chapter 3, beginning in verse number 3. Verse number 2, Enes and Sophias being the high priests, the Word of God came unto John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan preaching, listen, the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. So therefore, I suggest that when men and women in the New Testament were baptized in water, it signified that they were accepting the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins.

Water baptism signified that a person was acknowledging that they were a sinner, they were acknowledging that their sins had separated them from God, they were acknowledging that unless they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, they were damned forever in an eternal hell that burned with fire and brimstone. That is what water baptism signified. That's what John the Baptist's baptism was all about.

It was a baptism that prepared the heart through repentance, dealing with pride for true comfort, which would come through the presence of the Holy Spirit and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the Holy Spirit to come into the life of the believer. He came preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. It's funny that some Christian, I don't know, I guess they're Christian, only God knows, but some denominations believe that you have to be baptized in water for the remission of your sins.

But you notice that's not what it says. He says that it's the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. So it's not the water that takes our sins away.

The word baptism means to be immersed into. But it's when we are immersed into true repentance, that's what washes our sins away. Because a heart that truly repents, in other words, a heart that says, I don't want to be a sinner anymore, I want to be saved by grace, that is the baptism of repentance that makes us a recipient of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ.

And that's what cleanses our sins. So be careful if anyone ever tells you you need to be baptized in water, and it's the water that takes your sins away, because that's not true. It's an erroneous doctrine that was concocted out of somebody's brain.

Now, in verse number 4, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his path straight. What did John do? He came preaching the baptism of repentance. So I suggest to you that the baptism of repentance is the preparation that Isaiah spoke of that was necessary in order for the Lord to come in His fullness through the Holy Spirit.

Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said He to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of Him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance. Now, what John the Baptist was saying was this, if you are truly repentant in your heart, then the fruit will be evident.

In other words, these Pharisees that were coming to him were phonies. They weren't genuinely repenting and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. And begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father, for I say to you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Verse 9, And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees. Every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. And then John the Baptist begins to speak in verses 10 through, well, actually it's all the way down to verse 19.

He speaks about the practical implications of repentance. When somebody repents, it means a change in action. That's what repentance is.

A change in action. And he shows these Pharisees and the people asked him in verse 10 saying, What shall we do then? And he answered and said to them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none. And he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

True repentance affects our behavior. It affects our actions. Then he says to the publicans to be baptized, Master, what shall we do? And he said to them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, What shall we do? And he said, Do violence to no man, Neither accuse any falsely, And be content with your wages. Can you see this? Here, true repentance, true preparation of the heart truly brings about a change in one's actions. And then of course, we find in verse number 16, John answered saying unto them, Oh, I indeed baptize you with water.

So what John was saying is very clear. I am introducing you to salvation. I am introducing you to repentance which qualifies you to be washed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

But one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. There it is. Once a person experiences the baptism of water, which is the baptism of repentance, and becomes a new creation in Christ, a new born again believer, one who has trusted in Christ, one who has gone down in the water, signifying that his old life has been washed in the blood of Jesus, and he's going to arise in the newness of Christ's life, then that believer is to inquire as to receiving from the Father that glorious gift of the Holy Ghost which brings that believer into a full experience with God.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. And what happens when He baptizes you with the Holy Ghost? Whose fan is in His hand and He shall thoroughly purge His floor. Ah, when the Holy Spirit comes, there is a purging.

What a glorious work the Holy Spirit does. The Holy Spirit comes in an incredible way, and the true purging that God once wrought in our lives is accelerated because the Holy Spirit comes and shines light and ministers to us. He will gather the wheat into His garner, but chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.

And many other things in His exhortation preached He unto the people. We find in Hosea 6, verse 3. That's in the Old Testament. We're about ready to close.

Hosea 3, verse 6. Hosea 6, I'm sorry. Hosea 6. Here's another place where God speaks of this same principle of comfort is promised to those who prepare their hearts to repentance, trust in the blood of Jesus Christ, and then become qualified to be a recipient of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And then once one receives the gift of the Holy Ghost and is filled with the Spirit of God, that's not a one-time experience either.

Then the Apostle Paul encourages the Ephesian believers who had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, who were saved by the blood, he encourages them to be continuously filled with the Spirit then. So it's being saved, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then cultivating through obedience and through a love relationship, a relationship with the Holy Spirit, and receiving a daily infilling of God. So it's never a thing where I've got it, but it's a thing where you're saved, you've got the Holy Ghost, and then you are pursuing by the grace of God a daily relationship with the Holy Spirit.

And that's, I tell you, if these things got a hold of God's people, and this is what they sought for daily, their lives would be changed. Their lives would be changed. So we find in Hosea 6, Come and let us return unto the Lord, for He hath torn, and He will heal us.

He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. There it is.

There's the message of come to the Lord Jesus Christ and receive the healing, receive the salvation. Then shall we know, this is after the Lord comes, and after He brings about a new life within us through the new birth, then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. See, there is a time when you become saved, and then after that, there is a time when you must follow on to know the Lord, and to seek Him with all your heart through asking the Holy Spirit to come in His fullness into your life.

Then shall you know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning, watch this, and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth. Now the latter and the former rain represent the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Ghost, which Jesus promised to all true believers.

We also find in Zechariah chapter 10, another wonderful promise in God's Word. Once again, I emphasize that in context, I don't have time, but in Zechariah chapter 9, verses 9 through 17, prophetically speak of what we just mentioned here. Prophetically speaks about a people who have hearts that have been prepared through genuine repentance, they've been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ, and then after that, after that, verse number 1, Zechariah chapter 10, ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, so the Lord shall make bright clouds and give them showers of rain to every one grass in the field.

Now it says to every one, who's he talking about? Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain. So everyone who asks shall receive. Everyone who seeks shall find, and everyone who knocks, the door shall be opened.

This coincides with what Jesus taught. Remember the parable that I mentioned on Sunday morning? He mentioned about the bread and the friend who had a friend come and he needed bread, and then he went from the bread to ask and you shall receive. He himself is the bread of life, but how do we know him? Through the Holy Spirit.

Why does he give us the comforter? Because he's leaving, but the comforter will come and he'll come back to us in the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, he comes back to us, and then the Holy Spirit reveals to us the things of Christ. And one more scripture, Luke.

Luke. Oh, I'm sorry, it's in Acts. Acts chapter 1. Acts chapter 1. This is Jesus speaking right before He resurrected and went up or ascended, and He said, and being assembled, verse 4, Acts chapter 1, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith He, ye have heard of Me.

For John truly baptized with water. Remember what the water baptism was all about. John introduced you to saving faith.

He introduced you to repentance, which brought you into a relationship of becoming a child of God. In other words, John introduced to you the message of salvation, and then once you become introduced to Me through the message of salvation, then I, Jesus is saying, I want to introduce you to the Holy Spirit. I want to introduce you then to the Holy Spirit.

For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Then of course, they wanted to know, is it time for Israel to be restored? And Jesus went right back to it. Verse 8. It's not for you to know the times and seasons which the Father hath put in His own power, but ye shall receive power.

After that the Holy Ghost has come upon you, and ye shall be martyrs. Now I know it says witnesses, but the Greek is a word that we get the word martyr from. So when you get the Holy Ghost and you really begin to flow in the Spirit of God, that's the end of your life.

That's why we're a martyr. You die. You cease.

See, the Holy Ghost doesn't compete. You either run yours or He runs it. See, and that's what He's bringing us to.

The place of absolute surrender before Him. And you shall be witnesses unto Me. And so on and so forth.

So to sum up the teaching tonight, we want you to see that comfort is promised to God's people, but it's God's way. It's not our way. We're always looking for comfort our way.

God's way is this. Comfort comes when we hear the cry. The cry to prepare our heart through repentance.

And repentance results and occurs when God searches the heart by His Holy Spirit. As God searches the heart by His Holy Spirit, pride is dealt with, selfishness is dealt with. Anything that is not right in your heart, God deals with.

Only as you respond to God's dealing and allow Him to have His way, then you experience... First of all, you experience the new birth if you're a sinner. That's how a person gets saved. They become a child of God.

But this process of repentance and turning from sin does not end. This is something that has to reoccur in our life because once we become a Christian, we still have to be willing to turn and repent from things that the Holy Spirit shows us. And it's only as we stay in this state of repentance and prep, our heart stays prepared before God, that we become recipients to the mighty baptism of Jesus Christ.

And then we become recipients to a daily infilling of the Holy Spirit. And you know the Bible says that we can grieve and quench and resist the Holy Spirit. So all of these things revolve around this continual work of preparation and repentance in the believer's heart.

So I want to encourage you tonight to recognize that God has great things for you. And as you learn and discover in God's Word, God's way, and you allow Him to work in you His way, then you can claim and believe God for the fullness of His Holy Spirit and you can enjoy His fellowship always. So I want to encourage you to ask God for the latter rain.

Keep your heart prepared by letting God search it. And then don't be surprised if God does things greater than you ever asked.

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