

Are You Playing the Fool Part 2

by Phil Beach Jr.

God wants us to be desperate for Him, empty of selfishness and self-love, and filled with His love and presence.

Duration: 52:35

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:1

Topics: "Warning", "Humility", "Love", "Teachable Spirit"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the transformative power of love in his sermon 'Are You Playing the Fool Part 2,' urging believers to empty themselves and serve others as a true expression of love. He highlights the importance of a teachable spirit, recognizing our spiritual poverty, and the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit to avoid becoming enslaved to worldly desires. Drawing from the story in 2 Kings 4, he illustrates that God desires empty vessels to pour His love and presence into, contrasting this with the dangers of being filled with self-serving ambitions. Ultimately, Beach calls for a heart that aches for God's love and a commitment to serve one another in humility and truth.

Transcript

The request regarding do you love me was in direct relation to, if you do then, empty yourself, serve yourself. Serve, pour your life out for others, feed my sheep, tend my sheep. And that indeed is the characteristic of love, is it not? Self-serving, self-emptying, selfless commitment to one another.

And it's so important to remember, beloved, that when we approach this subject of love, we have to approach it with a teachable spirit. We have to approach it with the idea of, Lord, I really need you to teach me about this love. One characteristic that is so important to possess in our lives as Christians, is a teachable spirit.

Being able to recognize our limits and our lack, what we don't have. And then looking to the Lord to teach us and instruct us. Being teachable is very, very important.

If you'll remember last week, I spoke a message entitled Playing the Fool. And I closed that message by, by the way, we have the message back there, don't we? Okay, there's two copies back there. If anyone wants more copies, just let us know and we'll make them.

But I closed the message by reading a section in Second Kings, Chapter 4. Second Kings, Chapter 4, you remember that? Now, I'd like to just reread this section and then build on this message. Second Kings,

Chapter 4. This will be Playing the Fool, Part 2, okay? Playing the Fool, Part 2. We had looked at the story in the book of Matthew, if you remember correctly. I believe it was Matthew.

Let me see here if I have the, if I have the, if I have the reference from last week. Well, nevertheless, it's a familiar portion of scripture where Jesus talks about a man who prospered. And he said to himself, what shall I do? And he said, I'll tear down my barns and I'll build bigger barns.

And then I'll tell my soul, eat, be merry. And then Jesus said, you fool, this night, God requires your soul. We showed how this attitude and mindset is very, very dangerous.

And it keeps us from running the race that is set before us. This idea of being full and being satisfied with the things of this life. And how God wants us to be storing up for ourselves treasure in heaven and not laying for ourselves down here earthly treasures only.

Then we made a transition from that to Second Kings, Chapter 4, where we're gonna read now. And this section of scripture in Second Kings 4, 1 through 6, teach us a very important spiritual truth regarding the heart condition. That we must pray God gives us if we are to become filled with his presence and his love and his power.

This condition that we're going to read in verses 1 through 6 is the result, it is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit in our life. Delivering us from the heart position that is found in that parable that Jesus talked about. You cannot possess the position in Second Kings, Chapter 4, if in fact we are ensnared by the condition of the parable that Jesus taught about the rich man whose barns were full.

You can't have both at the same time. The Lord has got to deliver us out from the former to bring us into the latter. It's impossible to possess two.

The former position represents the state that Jesus spoke saying, woe unto you that are full. Now, it is not possessions in and of themselves that result in Jesus speaking those scathing words to us. But it's when possessions possess us.

It's when something other than Christ and wanting to know him and be transformed into his likeness has got a hold of us. Something that means more to us than that. You can be a poor man and still be possessed with the things of this world.

You might be obsessed with dreaming about wanting things. So, it's not a poor person who is spiritual and a rich person who is carnal, but it is the heart that is gripped with the attitude of the parable that Jesus taught. So, be at ease.

So, eat, drink, and be merry. So, enjoy and indulge in the things of this life. Everything is fine now.

Everything is comfortable now. I've got plenty of what I need. You can have that condition and still be poor.

So, we saw last week how the Lord says that's playing the fool. Now, he delivers us from that and now the heart condition begins to occur that we find in 2 Kings 4, beginning in verse 1. Now, there cried a certain woman. We pointed out that this woman was crying.

It indicated despair. It indicates that she had come to the end of herself. She knew that unless God intervened, there was no hope.

God must bring us to the place where having been delivered from finding pleasure in this world and finding fullness in this world, we begin to recognize God alone is the answer. God alone can meet my need and we see blessed are the poor in spirit. We see our poverty.

We see our utter bankruptcy before God, spiritually speaking. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. The mourning there in the Beatitudes indicates a heart condition like that of this woman in 2 Kings 4. The mourning that Jesus spoke of and pronounced a blessing upon follows the former scripture which says blessed are the poor in spirit.

When we see our spiritual poverty, when we see that we're bankrupt, it produces a mourning in us. It produces a sense of, oh my God, I am in desperate need of you. I am broken in my heart, oh God.

And Jesus said when that kind of mourning occurs, we shall be comforted. God will comfort us. So these are spiritual realities that the world is seeking to seduce us from.

The world seeks to keep us from the place where we recognize our need for God and then we begin to cry out to God day and night. Beware of anything in your life that is taking the place in your life that only God should have. Beware of anything in your life that is giving you a feeling of security or giving you a feeling of comfort that is preventing you from seeing your real need for God.

I don't care what it is, beware of it. Don't let anything rob you from that naked recognition, oh my God, I need you. We have a tendency as humans to find something to keep us from that state of desperation because we don't like that feeling of desperation.

We don't like that feeling of helplessness. We don't like that feeling of not being in control. So we grasp for things.

We grasp, we grasp, we look for things in order to comfort our heart, in order to give us a sense of security. But God says, I want to be your security. I want to be.

That's why the Lord will providentially sometimes remove and change circumstances and events in our life. And when we first experience it, we feel like our whole life is being shaken and we can't understand why is God doing this? It's because He wants, He's jealous for us. And He doesn't want us to start looking anywhere except to Him to find comfort.

Everything God does toward us is springing out of love. So there was a certain woman who was crying. Point one, the hard attitude that the Lord is wanting to produce in us is one of desperate need for God.

Even though we are certain of our security in Christ, we are certain of His love for us, we are certain of the finished work of Christ, yet along with that rest and security, there must be an ongoing continuous desperation for God. It's a balance between the two. It is not a desperation without hope, but neither is it a hope without desperation.

It's the balance of the two heart conditions. This woman was of the wives of the sons of the prophets and she spoke unto Elisha saying, Thy servant, my husband, is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord. And the creditor is come to take unto him my sons, my two sons, to be bondmen.

The second point of growing in our need for God is we are desperate because we realize this is very important now. This is a very important issue to remember. Listen closely now, right? We realize that

unless the Lord comes and meets our need, unless He becomes the answer to our heart's cry, we will become the slaves to another master.

Oh, may God grip our heart with this revelation. The desperation of this woman was springing out of the fact that unless this prophet intervened, she and her family would become the slaves to another master. And until God can work within our hearts the realization that unless we have come to where Christ is all and all and we are experiencing Him and His power on a moment by moment basis, we will fall into slavery to something other than God.

Something will master you if God is not there on the scene moment by moment filling you, enabling you, strengthening you and empowering you to love Him and to do His good pleasure. Has that revelation gripped your heart? Have you come to see the truth that Jesus said, I am the vine, ye are the branches and except ye abide in me, ye can do nothing. The illustration of the vine and branch teach us the utter dependence that we have on the Lord Jesus for everything.

But this dependence that we have on the Lord is completely contrary to the mindset that we have when we're in ourself and in the flesh. And so the Lord must do a great work to bring this revelation into our hearts and into our lives. So you see what happens when the Lord delivers us from playing the fool, our whole life is transformed and changed.

We are now after treasure in heaven. We are now after the Lord Jesus like Paul in Philippians 3. Now we count all things but done. Whatever things were gained to me, Paul said, I consider worthless in comparison to knowing Christ.

You see the transition in the heart. We're no longer after things, we're no longer after ourself, we're no longer after the fulfilling of our own desires. We are no longer simply living mere human existences, living in the passions of our flesh, striving for the things that people who don't know the Lord strive for.

But there's something remarkably different now with the person and people who have been dealt with by the Lord and have made the transition from playing the fool to being after the Lord. Desperation, a cry for God, and a recognition that unless God comes on the scene and I am strengthened by Him, I will become the slave to something. It might be an earthly appetite, it might be a dream, it might be a bitter feeling.

Whatever it is, you'll become a slave to it. And Paul taught us that we are to be the love slaves of Christ alone. Are you the slave to something other than Christ? Does something master you? And Elijah said unto her, what shall I do for thee? The only time God feels comfortable in asking His people, I'll reward that, the only time God feels comfortable in asking you, what shall I do for thee? Is if He sees in your heart the same kind of desperation, the same kind of despair, and the same kind of crying that was in this woman's heart.

Because if this is not present and God says what shall I do for thee, what do you think we're gonna ask God for? Look, we're gonna ask Him for something that has nothing to do with the furtherance of His glory and of His kingdom and of His honor. But rather it will somehow be connected to the furtherance of our own desire, our own selfish ambition. We will ask Him for something that we might obtain in order to consume it upon our own desires and lusts.

That's why the Lord is not saying very often to His people in this hour that we live in, what shall I do for you? It would be suicide for the church. When God brings us to the place where our hearts are aching like

this woman, He says, what shall I do? And then He says, tell me what is in thine house? And she said, thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil. Then He said, go borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, empty vessels, borrow not a few.

And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and thou shalt pour into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from Him and shut the door and upon her and upon her sons and brought the vessels to her and she poured out. And it came to pass when the vessels were full that she said unto her son, bring me yet a vessel.

And he said unto her, there is not a vessel more. In other words, there are no longer any empty vessels. And the oil stayed.

That means the oil stopped coming. Here is a vivid picture, beloved, that can only come to us through revelation, that can only come to us if God opens our heart. If God gets in us this kind of a heart, He asks us the question, what shall I do for you? And He says, what is in your house? What is in your house? Now, He's not referring here to the home that you live in.

He's referring to your house. And in the house, there is oil. There is the presence of God.

He is there. The answer to those who come to the place where in desperation they see their need for God lies within the very gift that God has given to us, the gift of the Holy Spirit. It lies within the oil.

The oil is the answer to my debt problem. The oil is the answer to the possibility of becoming a slave to another master. The oil, the presence of God, God's Holy Spirit is the only hope that we have in order to deliver ourselves from this inevitable slavery that we will fall into.

But notice, it was not only the oil in the house that was necessary, but it was an empty vessel. If we have oil in our house, but no empty vessels, the oil does us no good. And so therefore, not only do we have to be aware of the gift of the Holy Spirit and cherish the Holy Spirit and walk with the Holy Spirit, and pray that we not grieve the Holy Spirit or quench the Holy Spirit, but we must pray that God will keep us empty vessels.

For the Scripture says that only as long as there were empty vessels did the oil pour, but as soon as there were no longer any empty vessels, the oil stopped pouring. There is a continuous promise that God has for His people, and that is a continuous influx and outflow of His Holy Spirit into our lives. The only time the Holy Spirit stops coming and stops pouring and stops filling us is when our vessels get full.

That's it. Now, in the story, they became full of oil, but let me ask the question this morning. What are your vessels full of? This brings us right back to the parable that Jesus spoke in Luke.

I turned right to it, thank you. Luke chapter 12, I hadn't been able to find it, but here it is. Luke chapter 12, verses 16 through 21.

The parable about a ground of a certain rich man. That hard attitude indicates our vessels are full, and if our vessels are full, we come under the scathing words of Jesus, woe unto you that are full. And if we have full vessels, the oil, though it is right there in the house, though it is right present with us, though it is right there closer than a brother, closer than a sister, it will not meet the need of our heart, it requires empty vessels.

Verse 21, so is he that lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. He that lays up treasure for himself is the kind of person whose vessel is full, but not of God. It's full, but not of passion for the treasure of heaven.

Now, it might not be full of earthly things, as I said earlier, you can be a poor person and still not be rich toward God. It is the heart principle that Jesus is dealing with in this parable. Not so much what you have or what you don't have, but what has got you, what is possessing you.

We saw last week in Philippians chapter three, Paul's heart cried. How he'd come to the place where he considered anything that was gained to him to be loss in comparison to Christ. That is what it is to be an empty vessel.

Anything that is to my gain in a selfish way, anything that is to my benefit in a selfish way, anything that is to my advantage that doesn't have to do with Christ and his place of preeminence in my life must be considered rubbish and dumb and worthless to us if we are to know the state of an empty vessel through whom the oil of God can flow and fill us to overflowing. And such is the goal of God in the lives of his beloved children. Process after process, trial after trial, test after test, difficulty after difficulty.

God is pouring our vessels, emptying our vessels, stirring up things in us that we had no idea were there cluttering and taking too much space in our life. And you can't have the flow of the spirit when there's too much junk in our life. And so therefore God is our shepherd, is constantly, constantly bringing us through processes and dealings and difficulties and changing things in our life all for the purpose of bringing in us more of a heart like that of Paul so that we can have more of a groaning like that of this widow woman so that we can experience more of the infilling and outflowing of his holy oil in our lives.

Blessed be the Lord forever and ever. Amen. Blessed be God.

Now, I want to mention a few things here if I can find them. I jotted them down. What? Got more notes here.

That's the problem. I pretty much remember. I like to always check myself.

Ah, here it is. What is the Lord wanting to empty us from? Selfishness. Let's turn our Bibles to Matthew chapter 22.

I'm praying the Lord Jesus will take the word and shine light into our hearts and enable us to grasp his heart this morning. Matthew 22, verse 37 and 38. David read this scripture this morning.

And Jesus said unto him, that is the one who asked him the question, what is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is likened unto it.

Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Beloved, to sum up in one inclusive statement, when we understand this inclusive statement, everything else fits in.

A vessel that is not empty, sufficient enough for the Lord to continuously fill it with himself and his holy oil is simply a vessel that has not been freed from self-love. To love the Lord thy God with all of our heart, mind, strength and soul, and to love our neighbor as ourself simply means we must be free from self-love.

The opposite of self-love is agape love.

The opposite of God's love is self-love. And so therefore the answer to our need this morning and every day is a greater participation in the love of God which results in a greater ability to lay into death self-love by faith in the finished work of Christ. All of our problems spring out of too little of the knowledge of the love of God.

And all of our success in the Christian life springs out of the gift of love that has found its place working in our life by faith. If I'm successful, it's because God's love has got a place in my life and it's controlling me. And if I'm unsuccessful, that means there's something in my life that is taking the place of God's love.

God's love perfectly fulfills the whole law. There is no commandment against love. So to sum up everything, the empty vessel is a vessel who through the chastening and scourgings of God, Hebrews chapter 12, verse number five, and ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children.

My son, my son. Now that word son there is not the Greek word that is used to identify a young child or an infant. Nephos, neophos, but it's tenken, my son.

That is, God is addressing us as mature sons. But in order to address us as mature sons, he must remind us not to despise his chastening nor faint when we are rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loves, he chastens and scourges every son whom he receives.

So to be an empty vessel is to become subject to the Lord's scourging and chastening in order that we might be given opportunity to be delivered from all of the childish, selfish passions that we have in ourselves. Anything that we're doing that contradicts God's will springs out of, ultimately, a visage of love for ourself. So God says, don't despise my chastening.

Don't be weary when you are corrected because it is imperative in order for the maturity of being delivered from selfish love to come about. You see, turn your Bibles to John chapter 13, please. Beginning in verse one.

Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. Now, we talked a little bit about this earlier. Having love that loves to the very end is so important.

There is such failure in marriages today, in families today, and in church families today because we have not come to know this love that loves to the end. We only know the honeymoon love, the good feeling love, the casual acquaintance love. It's easy to love someone that you don't know.

It's harder to love someone when you walk together and live together with people and start to share and bear one another's burdens and faults and difficulties. Then our test is there. Are we going to, by faith, lay hold of God's love, which loves to the end, or are we gonna stumble with our own human love? Now, notice what Jesus said here.

In verse number four, he riseth from supper and laid aside his garments and took a towel and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. This is one of the most profound demonstrations of the nature and character of our Lord that is in all of the scripture.

He was all-powerful, almighty. God had given him all things into his hands. He was about to go back to God, and what does he choose to do in order to express his last, final word to his disciples? Does he perform a miracle? Does he want to establish his place of authority in their life? Does he want to remind them of how powerful he is, how charismatic he is, how glorious he is? No, what does he do? He takes his clothes off, wraps himself with a towel, and bends down.

Now, mind you, he's bending down at the feet of those who will be scattered, those who will forsake him, Peter who will deny him three times, the others who will run their own way. When the heat of the cross focuses in and the hour of decision comes, they all leave him, and he knows this because he's God. He knows this, but what does he do? He washes their feet.

He demonstrates the greatest quality of spiritual maturity any human being can possess. It is not to flash your gift in the public. It is not to wax elegant with your preaching skills.

It is not to lay hands on the sick and have men marvel at how the power of God is with you. It is to take the garment of humility and service, wrap it around yourself, and in Christ's life and love and name, wash the feet of the saints. Now, it's no coincidence, God help us to see, that Jesus washed their feet.

It was the feet that got dirty in the days when they walked around in sandals and bare feet. We are not to reject people when we see their dirt, when we see their struggles. We're to wash their feet.

We are to wash their feet, not tell them to leave because they've got dirty feet. Are you washing the saints' feet or are you holding it against them? Beware when you hold the dirt on the feet of your brother against him. You've got more dirt on your feet.

How can you condemn your brother because of the dirt on his feet when your dirt is more? Jesus washed their feet. Jesus answered when Peter said, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Verse six, Jesus said, what I do thou knowest not now. Let me tell you something, brothers and sisters.

Jesus was not here instituting. Now, I have no problem with saints who wash each other's feet. I really don't.

If you wanna wash your brother and sister's feet, fine. But Jesus was not instituting feet washing here. What I do thou knowest not.

What do you mean? I mean, it was quite clear what he was doing. He was washing feet. You don't need some special revelation to understand that.

He was doing something far beyond washing physical feet. He was engaging in the ministry of washing the dirt off his brothers. But thou shalt know hereafter.

Listen, Peter said unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus said, if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Can you see the profound revelation here? If we don't allow Jesus to wash our feet and we don't allow one another to wash our feet, we have no part with him.

This indicates a profound spiritual truth that is directly connected with love. The love of God in Christ compelled Christ to offer himself as a sacrifice for the world and not to condemn us, not to claim guilt upon us, but to wash us, to cleanse us, to cover us, to support us. That love working through Christ worked redemption in us.

And now we are commissioned by God himself to wash one another's feet. We are commissioned to come to Christ that he might give us the ministry of life working in us so deeply that we can wash each other's feet and through love and truth and mercy, iniquity can be purged in our lives. But if we take Peter's attitude, you're not gonna wash my feet.

You're not gonna correct me, Lord. You're not gonna help me, Lord. Or if we have that attitude toward one another, you're not gonna wash my feet.

You're not gonna get in and see the dirt in my life. You leave me alone. Far be it that you should wash my feet.

Sounds humble, doesn't it? But really it is pride. It is a serious pride. We must be subject to the Lord's ministry of feet washing and we also must be subject to one another's ministry of washing each other's feet if we are to grow into a holy temple mature in the Lord.

And that's what Jesus is talking about here. Now how does this connect with empty vessels? How does this connect with the story in Luke? Very wonderfully. The story and parable in Luke represents a hard attitude that has nothing to do with the love of God.

It is holy after itself. That's when you store up treasure for yourself. The transition is when God works in us, we start to cry out for him.

We see our need. Our hearts begin to cry out for the treasure of Christ and we come to realize we need the fullness of his love now. That delivers us from ourself, but it also necessitates coming to accept the ministry of Christ through his word, through the Holy Spirit and the ministry of Christ through his body, washing, assisting as we help and grow with one another in Christ.

John chapter 13, verse 34. A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another as I have loved you. How did Jesus love them? He just did in the previous chapter.

He's talking about feet washing there. You see? I just loved you by washing your feet. Now wash one another's feet.

What was he doing now? He wasn't just cleaning their toes. He was washing. Are the part of the body that touches the earth.

We must come to see the ministry that we have one toward another of washing each other's feet. Now, feet washing occurs through two elements. Actually three.

Truth, love, and mercy. Speaking the truth in love. This never means that we become tolerant to anything that is not right in the eyes of the Lord.

This is not a call to accept sin. What it is a call to is number one, truth. Number two, mercy.

By truth and mercy, iniquity is purged, the Bible says in the book of Proverbs. Truth, mercy, and love. We wash each other's feet through the ministry of Christ, working through our life in love, in truth, and in mercy.

We serve one another in love, truth, and mercy. And as we serve one another in love, truth, and mercy, we are actually engaging in washing one another's feet. And slowly but surely, the dirt is coming off.

The dirt is coming off. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another. The problem with obedience to the Lord is a love problem.

Jesus said in John 14, 21, if you love me, keep my commandments. More love, more obedience. Obedience is simply born out of love for God.

The more we love him, the more we obey him. So you see, to obey God's will and word hangs upon love. Love, not tenacity, willpower.

I'm gonna do what God says. No, it's relationship. You know, when a couple is married, it's not, I've got to obey you.

No, it's love. I want to walk together with you. I want to support you.

I want to be tender toward you. I want to obey you. Not because I have to love.

It's all about relationship. That's what God is seeking, a relationship with his people. So the greatest need we have is to be subject to God's ongoing dealing that we might be emptied from that which fills us so that we might be filled with ever-increasing measure with God's holy oil, God's holy love, God's holy spirit, and thereby be true servants of God and servants one toward another.

One toward another. First John 3.16. First John 3.16. Hereby perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. First John 4.9 and 10.

In this was manifest the love of God toward us because that God sent his only son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we love God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Verse 19, we love him because he first loved us.

If a man say I love God and hate his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him that he who loveth God love his brother also. You see it, beloved? There it is.

May the Lord help us to hunger for him and give us ongoing revelation regarding this great call to love him, to be filled with his love. And I challenge you this morning by God's love to ask God to teach you about his love to let you know about his love to the point where your heart literally aches for love, not just for God, but for those born of God. Does your heart ache for people, for members of your own body? Do you long in all purity, do you long to embrace with the arms of Christ that you'll wanna see people and love people and together feast on Jesus? It's a gift.

It will come if you ask. It's costly. You'll lose everything.

But what is there to possess in light of Christ? May God give us this revelation this morning. Amen.

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