

Are You Playing the Fool Part 3

by Phil Beach Jr.

The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting God in times of trouble, and recognizing that He is our refuge and strength.

Duration: 50:35

Scripture: Psalm 46:1, Matthew 7:24

Topics: "Warning", "Faith in Trials", "Trusting God"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of recognizing God's presence and love in our lives, urging believers to cast their cares upon Him and to be aware of the trials that may come. He warns against playing the fool by failing to prepare spiritually for the challenges ahead, highlighting the necessity of being rich toward God rather than indulging in self-centered pursuits. The sermon encourages a deep reliance on God as our refuge and strength, especially in times of trouble, and calls for a humble response to life's difficulties, mirroring the faith of the Canaanite woman who persisted in her request despite being tested. Ultimately, Beach Jr. reminds the congregation that true fulfillment comes from being filled with God's love and grace, rather than succumbing to bitterness and pride.

Transcript

As we just come before him and honor him and love him and worship him and cast our cares upon him, he ministers in a precious way, doesn't he? Oh, let's just bow our hearts before him. Father, how thankful we are. Because of your faithfulness, Lord, we come, we gather together, Lord, and we're so dependent upon the ministry of your Holy Spirit and the faithfulness of your high priestly ministry.

We hang our lives upon the integrity of who you are and who you say you are. And oh, we thank you that you're a loving heavenly father that is constantly working in our life, constantly seeking to bring our hearts to place of greater realization of your tender mercy and your loving kindness toward us. And we give you honor this morning.

God, help us to love you. Help us to see your love, Lord. Help us to walk, oh God, with a knowledge of your goodness and your mercy.

And we commit this whole gathering into your hands. And thank you, Lord, for the faithfulness of your ministry in our midst, Lord. And in your presence, Lord, we want to just gather now and continue right along, Lord, with the things that you've already spoken to us.

I pray, Lord, that you will speak to us, continue to speak to us, and reveal to our hearts the thoughts of your heart. Help us, Lord, to know what you're saying and give us the courage and the faith and the grace to respond to all that you would say to us, Lord, I pray in Jesus' name. Hallelujah.

Thank you, Lord. You know, there's a song that I love to sing. And can we sing it together? We don't need any music.

It's just the hallelujah chorus. Somebody who will do it justice may start it. Because if I do, I think we won't start on the right tune.

Just the hallelujah chorus. No, no, the quieter version. Let's just worship him.

Yes, Lord. Hallelujah. Lord, we love you.

Lord, we love you. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your presence. We give you honor.

We just want to acknowledge that it is you that we're after. It is you that has loved us with an everlasting love. It is you who are continuously upholding us and strengthening us.

It is you from whence cometh our help. It is you, oh Lord. God, I pray you'll help us to turn our eyes from all of those things that have taken our vision away from you, Lord.

Our pursuits, our dreams. Lord, the hurts, the past hurts. People have hurt, Lord.

Some of us. And we have been held captive by the pain of that hurt. We have allowed bitterness to come into our life.

And we are miserable on the inside, Lord. Today, I pray that you will bring the healing that we need to be free from everything that has taken our heart captive, preventing us from seeing your glory and your beauty and your love. Heal us this morning from anything, Lord, I pray.

Deliver our hearts, Lord. In your presence, we thank you for healing and health. Thank you, Lord.

Praise the Lord. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord.

I trust the Lord is ministering to you and bringing healing to you and helping you to cast your cares upon him this morning and to see him in a very precious, clear way. His presence is here in a marvelous way. And it is in evidence of his love for us, this great love for us.

And as the lover of our soul, the one who died for us, he so longs to lavish us with his love. He so longs to lavish us with the knowledge of his love for us. He alone can fill that void.

He alone can fill that need within our heart. He alone, no other thing or person can fill that need the way he can. And he just, don't you sense him seeking to win us and entice us by his love this morning? He's just reaching out, wanting to capture us by his love and his goodness and his kindness this morning.

As we were singing the song about casting all our cares upon the Lord, I want you to know that was a prophetic song, meaning, listen carefully, the hour is quickly approaching the time, the season, the timetable of God, when we will not be able to survive unless we are learning and have learned and continue to learn the grace of casting our cares upon the Lord. The greatest snare that will come upon the professing Christian in this late hour that we're living in, particularly in this country, is going to be the snare

of being paralyzed and overcome with fear and worry and anxiety because of the things that are going to come upon the nation, things that are going to come upon the world. And we as God's people need to learn to trust our Father in heaven.

There is coming great perplexity and great distress and great testing upon the earth. And we're going to be in the world, not of the world, but in the world. And Jesus said, in the world you shall have tribulation, you shall have trials, you shall have tumultuous times, but be of good cheer, Jesus said.

He overcame the world and as the overcomer of the world, he invites us to draw from the resources of his grace, the resources of his person. This is going to be a vital imperative lesson that we learn as a body of believers. We're going to have to learn to play one for another and one with another.

We're going to have to learn the golden rule of the words of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul, bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. We're going to have to learn how to bear one another's burdens, how to uphold one another, how to care for one another as the days of his coming approach more and more rapidly and as the nature of this age begins to dissipate before our eyes. Because surely as Psalm 46 very clearly indicates, and you may turn there if you like, Psalm 46, and this is the conclusion of the three-part series, Playing the Fool.

Are you playing the fool? I strongly encourage you to get copies of this series and listen and go into your Bibles and let the Spirit of God minister to you. I can see very quickly how this is going to have to come off soon. Allow the Lord to minister to you through the Word of God.

Let him speak to you. Let him minister grace to you so that you are not found playing the fool. Because, you know, everybody is somebody's fool.

And the Lord doesn't want you to be anyone's fool but his fool. You know, Paul said, I'm a fool for Christ's sake. That is, I appear to be foolish to the world for the sake of Christ.

Because when you confess that you are trusting in the living God and that you've renounced self-will and self-desire and you're not chasing after the dreams of this world, you appear to be foolish in the eyes of the world. You appear not to have all the nuts and bolts together up on the inside up here. Because they say, well, how can you not be doing the things that everyone else is doing? So you're a fool for Christ.

But if you're not a fool for Christ, you're a fool for somebody. And if it's not for Christ, then you're the devil's fool. And I believe God birthed this message into my spirit to share because three weeks ago when the Lord brought it to my spirit, I was very aware of the fact that there was the temptation and the leaven in our midst.

There was the tendency in our midst if we weren't careful to be playing the fool. And so we have to be very alarmed and very aware of this danger. But in Psalm 46, we're going to begin to discover that playing the fool means that we are not prepared for what is coming upon the earth.

And the reason we're not prepared is because we have not sought to be rich toward God, but rather have sought to engage in self-indulgence. We've thought of ourself, we've thought of the things that relate to ourself, and we have labored and strived in order to accommodate our own needs. And hence, we have failed to understand what the Lord is after, what the Lord wants, what the Lord's heart's desire is, and line ourself up to that.

Now in Psalm 46, God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. We are going to have to learn that God is our refuge and strength. God is our refuge and strength.

We're going to have to come to realize that God is in fact the only source of strength and refuge that we will be able to find in this last hour. It is going to have to be more than a doctrine or more than a theology. We're going to have to come into a greater understanding of this than simply theologically saying, oh I know God is my help.

It's going to have to come to where we are aware of this in our daily practical life. Therefore, will not we fear? The connection between not fearing and knowing that God is our refuge and strength is inseparable. We cannot be free from the paralyzing effects of fear unless we have come to know that God is our refuge and strength and present help in time of need.

The presence of paralyzing fear in our life, if not all the time, perhaps most of the time, is connected to a failure within us to see that God is my help, that God is my refuge. You see? So the connection between having no fear and knowing that God is our refuge is vital. Now listen closely.

What is the Lord doing in your life right now? What is He doing through the circumstances that you're going through? What is He doing? Why is He allowing the things that are going on in your life right now? He is allowing them in order to provide you with an opportunity to come to know in a greater manner that God is your refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. You see, the Lord said that He is the potter, and as the potter, He is overseeing the lump of clay. Now if you've ever seen a potter work on a lump of clay, it's quite a remarkable experience.

Jeremiah was asked of the Lord to go to the potter's house, and there he watched the potter. Now there's several points that you can remember regarding the potter and the clay. First of all, the potter is the one who applies the pressure to the clay.

It is the potter who has in his mind the image that he wants to create, and it is the potter who knows exactly how much pressure and where to apply the pressure in order for that lump of clay to turn into whatever it is that the potter wants to create. And so as children of God, we must remember that we are under the direct care of God, and as we walk before Him and our hearts are open to Him, we can trust that it is God who is sovereignly overseeing our lives and applying just the amount of pressure in just the right place, because that's what's necessary in order to produce the image of Christ which He is seeking to produce in your life today. The intention of God for the church is that the church might grow into a corporate expression of the character and beauty and loveliness of Jesus Christ.

And so therefore, whatever you're going through, whatever button God is pushing in your life today, it is not because of some strange coincidence, or it's not because something's wrong, but it's because God is the wise potter who is pressing you and pushing and allowing the pressure in a certain place because He sees that that is what is necessary. And as we relinquish during this time of pressure, we relinquish our life to Him. We agree with His Word.

We come to Him and in prayer and through the Word, we just acknowledge, oh God, I feel this pressure. You're doing this. I offer it to You.

Have Your way in my life. Secondly, the potter controls the speed of the pot. When it spins, He controls it.

Many times I've heard Christians say, I feel like my life is out of control. I feel like I'm spinning too quickly. But God is ultimately the one controlling the spin.

And lastly, and this perhaps is the most, in my own life, that has been the most edifying, and I heard this once from a preacher many, many years ago. And he said, one thing you want to remember is that the potter has his eyes on the clay at all times. Never, ever, ever will you see a potter, if he's worth his salt, spinning a lump of clay and pressing it, and at the same time, go like this and turn his head.

Somebody might address him. Something might happen. But you can be sure that a professional, skilled, experienced potter will never take his eye off the clay because it is his eye contact on the clay that is controlling everything else about what's going on.

And God says, He is the heavenly potter, and by golly, He's not taking His eye off the clay. His eye is not off your life today. His eye is not blinded to your situation.

And He is inviting you. He's imploring. He's begging us to come to Him this morning and relinquish our fears, relinquish our struggles, come to Him in brokenness and acknowledge, Lord, You are my God.

I thank You for what's happening because I know that You are working in me that which is pleasing in Your eyes. Therefore, will not we fear? Now, the following verses, beloved, describe language. Listen carefully.

The following verses describe language that explains and is indicative of the shaking that is going to come upon this generation. Notice the words. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth be removed.

Though the earth be removed. Thank you, brother. Listen carefully.

The earth being removed speaks of all other foundations other than Christ Himself. Any kind of a foundation that we are building our life upon is going to be removed. Now, the words of Jesus would reveal to us, listen carefully, it's very important to get this connection.

Actually, it's in the book of Matthew. Let's turn to it so we can look at it here. Matthew 7, verse number 24.

Now, remember, this coincides with though the earth be removed. Listen, the earth will be removed. Matthew 7, verse 24.

Are you playing the fool? Therefore, whosoever hears the sayings of Mayan and does them, I will liken him to a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descends, and the flood came, and the winds blew, and beat upon the house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that hears these sayings of Mayan and doeth them not shall be likened to a foolish man, playing the fool.

The earth represents any area in our life that fails to come into obedience to God's Word. It's not just hearing the Word of God, it's doing the Word of God. The Bible says, be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourself.

One of the major ministries of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, it is to establish in us the strength and power and love of God that will enable us to obey the words of Jesus. You see? And so, one of the great fruits of the Holy Spirit working in our life is a continuous bringing to our attention the need to establish a relationship with the Lord, a love relationship, so that our life is in obedience to His Word. As it says here, the earth will be removed and the mountains will be carried into the midst of the sea.

So therefore, the earth is removed and the mountains are removed. This is basically language describing the removing of all those things that can be removed. That is, everything that is not ultimately rooted and grounded in the will of God, that is pleasing to God, that is springing out of God's heart, is going to be removed.

Hebrews chapter 12. The writer of Hebrews describes this very thing. Hebrews chapter 12, beginning in verse 25.

See that you refuse Him not that speaks. For if they escape not who refuse Him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away Him that speaketh from heaven. Listen to this.

Whose voice then shook the earth, but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifying, listen here, the removing of those things that are shaken. Or rather, another translation is the removing of those things that may be shaken.

Let me say, beloved, the thing that may be shaken in your life and the thing that may be shaken in my life can be summed up in simply this. Anything and everything that is not rooted and grounded in the love of God and in the word of God. God is moving toward a goal in the church.

He's been moving toward this goal for a long time. And the goal that God is moving toward in the church is to have a people whose lives are wholly involved with Him and His will. And who through the power of agape love, through the power of relationship with Him, a love relationship with Him, are living a life governed by His will, governed by His love, who are empowered by His Spirit and who are laying their lives down for the brethren.

That's God's goal. But there's many distractions toward that goal. But God is removing those distractions.

Verse number three, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, waters in the Scripture, particularly in the Psalms, indicate language which describes deep penetrating trials and sorrows and troubles and tribulations. Jesus Himself in the Psalms prophetically spoke of the waters overflowing Him. Waters in the Old Testament oftentimes represent deep testings that the Lord's people have to go through.

So look at what we're seeing here. Playing the fool is not being prepared for the coming shaking, which will remove the earth, which will remove the mountains. And according to here, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

So here the Lord is painting a language here, describing the removing of everything and anything that can be removed. And what a condition that will create. What a condition that will create.

And that brings us right to verse four. Such a condition is going to bring a great revelation to the church. Such a working is going to produce a great revelation.

Look at the revelation that's going to come. Verse four, there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

God shall help her and that right early. God's intention, beloved, in this shaking, God's intention in allowing your life to be shaken, allowing your life to be pressed out of measure, God's intention in allowing the difficulties that have come in your life, is that you might be set up for a revelation, an unveiling of the river

of life that is flowing toward those who are open to God. The river of life makes glad the city of God.

God is in the midst of her. The Lord's heart burden is that we would come to see that God is in our midst and that He is our help and our refuge. He is the source of our strength.

He is the source of all that we have need of. And He's taking great measures to bring us to that revelation. Is He not? He's taking great measures to bring us there.

Where are you today? Perhaps your heart feels the pain of what's going on. But perhaps now you might consider that in the midst of this pain, the Lord is setting you up for an unveiling of His mercy and His grace and His love. Are you rejoicing? Let me tell you, you can't rejoice in difficulty and in trials unless you see beyond the trial, beyond the pain, and you see God, who is the potter, who's allowing this because He's setting you up for a greater revelation of Himself.

Do you remember that the three Hebrew children went into the temple to the fiery furnace, but they weren't burned. Why? Because there was one in there with them, like and unto the Son of God. The Lord was there.

You see, it's seeing the Lord in our trouble, in our difficulty that brings the grace that we need. Israel in the wilderness failed God because they wouldn't see the Lord. They saw the scorching heat.

They saw the absence of food. They saw the fiery serpents. They saw the pain.

They saw the rationed food. They saw the tests. They saw the trials.

They saw the difficulties. They remembered what it was like in Egypt. They saw everything but the Lord.

And that's why they missed it. And so frequently that's what happens in our lives. We see everything but the Lord.

Are you playing the fool today? Luke chapter 12. Luke chapter 12. Listen carefully.

Verse 20. Jesus said, the fool is the one who hears the sayings, but does not do them. Paul said, the fool is the one who hears the sayings, but does not do them.

Paul showed us that the wise man is one who sees Christ and all that he is and all that he has done and is prepared to forsake everything to follow him. Philippians chapter 3. So is he that lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God. That's the fool.

Laying up treasure for oneself, but you're not rich toward God. How do I become rich toward God? Philippians chapter 3. Verse 7. But what things were gained to me, those I count lost for Christ. The one who is rich toward God has considered Christ.

And in comparison to him, nothing else matters. I count those things that are gained to me, that is to my advantage, but not to the advantage of God's purpose. I count those things, but rubbish that I might know him, love him and follow him.

That kind of a heart is what makes us rich toward God. Being emptied from self-love, selfish ambition, and being filled with God's love and his Holy Spirit. Let's not play the fool.

Let's really be earnest about this before the Lord. Let's let him search our hearts. Everything will be shaken, but a life firmly rooted and grounded in Christ will stand.

I'd like for you, if you would, as we close to turn your Bibles to Matthew chapter 15. Listen carefully, all right? The whole process of being delivered from playing the fool revolves around God emptying us from self-love and filling us with selfless divine love. I'm asking the Lord to take special effort and interest in revealing to each one of us the things in particular that we need to be emptied from.

Do you remember last week we talked about the vessels that were full of holy oil and they needed to be empty before the oil could come in. We need to be emptied from everything that's clogging us up, emptied. But one thing in particular that I want to share as we close, and I'd like everyone to please pay very close attention because this is something that we must be emptied of.

Matthew chapter 15 beginning in verse number 21. I'm going to read this, make a few comments and then close. This will address somebody here this morning, perhaps a number of us, all right? This is something we have to be empty from.

This is preventing some of us from being filled with holy oil. Chapter 15 verse 21. Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coast of Tyre and Sidon.

And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coast and cried to him saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her, not a word.

And his disciples came and besought him saying, Send her away. Or she cries after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Then came she and worshipped him saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It is not me. To take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.

And she said, Truth, Lord, true. Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. And Jesus answered and said to her, Oh, woman, great is thy faith.

Be it unto thee as thou wilt. Listen carefully this morning. We will not be filled with God's oil, God's presence until the Lord deals with us in such a manner that we can endure the kind of test that this woman endured without becoming bitter, angry and resentful and giving up.

How do you respond when your requests are ignored? Don't let me tell you, beloved. Don't don't don't quickly start saying, Well, Lord, what is it that you're not denying me? No, no, no. Don't go to the Lord.

Go to one another. Go to one another. Think how because beloved the way we act toward one another is a reflection of how we would act toward our God and father.

How do you respond in a situation if when you're put into a kind of situation like this, this woman was making a request of the Lord and he didn't answer a word to her. Then finally, when he did answer her, he said, I'm sorry, I'm not sent to you. And then upon the third inquiry, he actually comes and says, Listen, this bread doesn't belong to dogs.

It's very difficult to communicate this unless the Holy Spirit shows us. But the Lord gave me this and just showed me how we're so full of pride and ego. And who do you think you are to talk to me like that or act like that toward me? Who do you think you are? If I have a request, you answer it.

How dare you humiliate me? I'm telling you, beloved. I know this is penetrating and searching, but we need to come to grips with this. This woman responded at the end of being wounded and and wounded and wounded three times.

True Lord. But even the dogs share the crumbs through that test. Something on the inside of who does he think he is, but she allowed it to break her more and more and more to the point where she still was a humble servant seeking the request of the Lord.

And the Lord responded to that by saying, Great is thy faith until we are emptied from that wretched ego that is so much a part of our life still as children of God that comes out whenever we're subject to a test in principle to this kind of a test. We're not going to be filled with God's holy oil. The Lord, this is prophetic.

Now, the Lord is working and will work in our lives in situations that appear like we're being treated the same way that this woman was being treated. And it's because he's testing us to see what's going to come out. What's going to come out when you don't get the thing that you expect? How do you handle relationships with people? How are you handling your marriage? How are you handling relationships with friends? What are you doing when you're not getting the thing that you think is yours? And then what are you doing when not only are you not getting it, but you're humiliated? What's happening? Is there anger and bitterness and resentment building up inside? Or are you breaking? Let me tell you, beloved, everything you go through, you're either going to get bitter or better.

You're either going to get harder or softer in the presence of God. God wants very much to pour out of himself into our midst, but he must first bring us to the point of desperation. Oh, woman, great is thy faith.

Let's just spend a few moments in the presence of the Lord and let the Holy Spirit minister to us. And let's let him empty us that we won't play the fool. I would think that everybody here has experienced in part this principle that I just read.

And I would suspect that everybody here, listen carefully, has struggled with bitterness, resentment and anger when you've been treated wrong. I want to admonish you as a brother in the Lord, as one who is speaking now under the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Do not allow your heart to become hardened or filled with bitterness of any kind.

Ask God to show you how you respond in your daily life to those things that God allows that brings you into the same position that this woman was in in principle, where you're not getting what you're asking for, when you know what you're asking for is the right thing. But then it goes a step further and you're humiliated and hurt. We need to have the kind of heart that this woman had that is not going to be turned aside and is not going to get bitter, but is going to stay broken before God.

And even even at the end of this horrendous trial, Lord. I'm still after you, and if this is the way you want it, that's OK with me as long as I get it. Father, thank you for your faithfulness this morning and the testimonies of all who spoke and thank you for your word.

We don't want to play the fool and we want you to work in our lives. Take your word this morning. Go deep, Lord, search us, help us to relinquish the ego, the pride, help us to let go, acknowledge our sin, but also acknowledge our high priest who is forever interceding, who is there to forgive, there to minister grace.

Lord, I pray you'll deliver us from this tendency because we cannot be filled with your fullness and grow in the love that you have for us unless we're delivered from that human tendency to react in a sinful way to the inconveniences that you allow in our life. Lord, empty us from this pride and in brokenness, fill us with your holy oil. We commit this word into your hands.

Keep growing us up. Keep giving us your love and keep the work of your precious Holy Spirit fresh in our lives today. I pray in Jesus name.

Amen. Hallelujah.

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