

The Great Shaking - Jesus Is Testing You Right Now

by Phil Beach Jr.

Jesus is testing you right now to bring to light what is hidden in darkness and to see if you will obey His will, even when it's hard.

Duration: 1:12:22

Scripture: John 6:5

Topics: "Testing", "Surrender to God", "Testing of Faith"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes that Jesus is currently testing each of us, revealing the truth about our hearts and our dependence on Him. He encourages the congregation to seek the truth from God rather than the comforting lies of the world, urging them to confront their weaknesses and idols. The sermon highlights the importance of prayer and humility in the face of trials, as well as the necessity of a personal encounter with Jesus to truly understand our spiritual condition. Beach Jr. calls for a commitment to pursue the blessing over the blessings, reminding us that true joy comes from surrendering to God's will, even in times of testing.

Transcript

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord Jesus. We bless you, Lord, for your presence here today.

Lord, we're mindful of your Holy Spirit and we pray, Lord, that during these next few moments you would give us listening ears to hear as you have a word to speak to every heart here. Every heart here. You will address the depths of the heart.

You will address the depths of our need, Lord, by your word. And we pray, God, that you will help us to receive your word. Lord, I pray that you will unstop our spiritual ears and soften our hard hearts.

Lord, it's hard to receive your word. Because it's always true. And apart from your grace, we don't like to know what is true about ourselves and others.

We like to live in the life of illusion and lies. But we pray, God, that by your grace this morning, you will deliver us from liking what is not true and loving what is true. Oh, please, Lord, help us.

We're weak. We're weak, Lord, in this area. We like to surround ourselves with people that tell us good things about ourselves, Lord, rather than sit at your feet and hear the truth about ourselves.

No one else is going to tell us the truth except you. No one. Everyone else is a liar.

Oh, God, help us. Help us today to want to hear the truth from your heart. Hear the truth from your heart, Lord, and be changed.

We pray, Lord, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Okay, beloved.

Are you very much aware this morning that Jesus Christ always tells you the truth about yourself? Always tells you the truth about yourself. Do you want to hear the truth about yourself? Not only does he tell us the truth about ourselves, but he loves us. The only one that really loves us with all of his heart.

And not only does he love us, but he died for us. Now, Father, as we look into your word this morning, we are keenly aware of our utter dependence upon you for understanding in your word. We're keenly aware, Lord, of your need to touch our heart if we are to hear your word.

Lord, our spirits are seduced by the words that come from earth, and we are very unacquainted with hearing the word that comes from heaven. Because it's only found at your feet. And few and far in between are sitting at your feet.

And so it's the words of men that we are listening to most of the time. And the words of men have dulled our ears, and hardened our heart, and made much of us, and much of our gift, and much of our abilities, and much of our wisdom, and much of our accomplishments, and much of our bigness, and much of our success. That's what man does to us, Lord.

Puffs us up and makes us something. But when we hear your word at your feet, we hear the truth. The truth.

And so, Father, I'm begging you today. Bow that proud, stiff-necked heart that resists your word. That wants to hear nice, happy things without dying.

And start with me, Lord, I pray. Start with me, Lord, I pray. The first section of Scripture that we're going to look at is in John chapter 6. Oh, yes, brothers and sisters.

God will reduce our pride to zero if we hear the call of the Lord and say yes. He'll reduce our pride. He'll smash it in love.

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The face of the Lord is turned away from the proud, but his eyes are upon the lowly, and the meek, and the humble. We don't know near as much as we think.

Not near as much as we think. He that thinks himself to be something, Paul said, let him become nothing. Let him become nothing.

Nothing. Nothing. Let him become nothing.

And so, when we walk with the Savior, I'm talking about a living communion with Christ. I'm talking about having an encounter with a man that the woman at the well had, remember? She said, come and see a man that told me everything I'd ever done. I'm talking about having an encounter with that man.

Not with religion. You know, a religious spirit will talk to you about Jesus, but will never bring you to Jesus. And I fear that some of us listen to religious spirits.

We like to be told about Jesus. We like to hear sermons about Jesus. But we don't want to be brought to Him.

Because to be brought to Jesus means a personal encounter with the truth. And a personal encounter with the truth always requires that we see the truth about ourself. Oh yes, religious spirits are a dime a dozen.

But oh, that we might be a people who resist religious spirits, and who cry out, Lord, I want to see you. I want to know you. I want an encounter with you, Lord.

I want an encounter with you. John chapter 6, beginning in verse 1. There's a number of scriptures we'll be looking at today. And I encourage you to please ask the Lord to speak to your heart through His word.

Because He has something for all of us. This little section that we're going to read is entitled, this is the message that the Lord is giving us this morning. And it's this.

Jesus is testing you right now. Jesus is testing you right now. Now listen carefully.

After these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His miracles, which He did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh. When Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He said unto Philip, Where shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this He said to prove Him. Listen, this He said to test Him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

Right now, brothers and sisters, every one of us are in a situation, whatever it might be, whatever it might be uniquely in your life. And Jesus is testing us and proving us. He already knows what He's going to do.

He already knows what should be done. He already knows what the right thing to do is. But He's testing you.

He's testing me. And the reason why He's testing us, is because He wants to bring to light what is hidden in darkness. He wants to bring to surface what is not visible.

He's testing you. The Bible says that God tested Abraham. God said to Abraham, Abraham, take thy son, thine only son, and bring him to Mount Moriah.

And there, I want you to tie him up with rope, and take your knife, and slay him. And the Bible says that Abraham obeyed the Lord. And right before Abraham plunged his knife into the heart of his son, he heard the voice of God say, Abraham, Abraham, stop, don't do it.

He said, now I know. It's what God said to Abraham. Now I know.

Now, did God know before? Of course He did. But what God knows before the test, has to be displayed before the world. Has to be displayed before holy angels.

Has to be displayed before the Father. Has to be displayed before the principalities and powers. Whatever God already knows, has to be displayed in time.

And the way God gets it to be displayed is He puts us in a test. He knew Abraham would take that knife. But Abraham had to be subject to a situation where he had the opportunity to say no.

He had the opportunity to say no. He could have said, oh God, this is my only son that you have given me. This is the promise that you have given me.

I can't take a sword and plunge it into the heart of my son. All that you've ever promised me hangs upon this little boy. He could have said no, but he didn't.

Listen, God is looking for a love relationship with the people. A love relationship is on the basis of voluntary obedience to God. Not forced obedience.

It's a voluntary thing. It is the work of God in our heart. The grace of God in our heart.

The love of God in our heart. Empowering us to voluntarily choose the way that God is setting before us. That's what a test is all about.

A second test that we see. If you turn your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 1. Jesus is testing you right now. It's 2 Kings chapter 2. You and I are in a test right now.

Listen, listen. Someone here, some of us here have been saying, Lord, how come you haven't spoken to me about the thing that I've been inquiring you of? How come I haven't heard a clear word? Listen carefully, listen. Lord's saying, I don't want to speak.

I want to see what you're going to do. We're being tested. I want to see what you're going to do.

I want to see what you're made out of. I want to see how you deal with obstacles, disappointments, struggles. I want to see what is in there.

I want to see it come out. Lord, you're testing us, aren't you? 2 Kings chapter 2. And it came to pass when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven. By a whirlwind that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

Elijah and Elisha were together. Elijah had a pupil. His name was Elisha.

Listen carefully, please. It was time for Elijah to go to heaven. Listen, it was time for Elijah to move heavenward.

Elijah is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. The man who is on a journey heavenward, heavenward, heavenward. His sight is on heaven.

His interests are on heaven. His desires are on heaven. His passion is to know His Father and to do His Father's will.

The heart of the Son of God while He walked on earth had no place on earth. No place on earth. No place.

He didn't find Himself. Wanting to find a place on earth where He could place His affections, and His trust, and His hopes. He wouldn't look to earth to find comfort.

And He had a pupil. He had a disciple. He had a student.

He had a learner, Norman. His name was Elisha. And the prophet said within himself, I'm going to heaven and I've got a pupil.

A pupil implies someone who wants to be just like me. Just like me. Elisha, Elijah in his wisdom said, Well, I've got to test this young man.

I've got to test this young man. I've got to see what he really wants. I already know what he wants, God said.

But I've got to test it. Because everything that is true about us that God already knows has to be revealed through real life. That's why we're here.

That's why we're here. That's why God gives us a time on earth. It is to manifest what God already knows.

And the old prophet said, I've got to test this young man. He said he wants to go with me. He said he wants to be heavenly.

He said he wants to be just like me. But I'm going to test him. I'm going to see how far he's willing to go.

And so Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Terry, here I pray thee. For the Lord hath sent me to Bethel.

Jesus is testing us right now. Jesus is moving on. Listen, Jesus is moving on.

But it seems as if He might even be saying to some of us, Terry, here, I'm moving on. But you stay here. You stay here.

It's okay. You can stay here. I'll bless you.

I'll bless you. Elisha is being subject to a big test right now. A big test.

He's the pupil of a man who's got a passion in his heart. He's the pupil of a man who has his sights on heaven. Blessed is he that is not offended by me, Jesus said.

Blessed is the man that says, I want to be your pupil, Lord, but then becomes offended at the way. Blessed is the man who says, I want to be a follower of Jesus and is not offended. Terry, you hear, stay here.

Stay where you're at. Hey, let's face it. How many are feeling the blessing of God in your life right now? How many are enjoying the blessing of God? How many have seen the Lord bless you and He's been faithful? And how many have sensed His love for you? Well, why don't you just stay there? It's a good place, brothers and sisters.

Stay there. I mean, He's blessing you. Watch out.

Watch out. Big test. Big test.

Where's your heart at today? Where's your heart at today? Has it settled down in the sphere of blessing that you have hitherto been brought to? Huh? Has it? Has it? Have you settled? Yeah. But guess what? That man is moving on. Here's what we need.

Here's what we need. Terry, here I pray thee. The Lord has sent me to Bethel.

And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. You remember last week what we heard? Eli, the old priest of God. Who was even backslidden and full of sin.

Remember that? You remember that? What was it that he said? Tell me everything that the Lord has said. Tell me everything that the Lord has said. Don't hold back a word from me, young Samuel.

I know my house is a mess. I know my sons are adulterers and sinners. I know that they have sinned against the Lord.

I know the Lord has a harsh word for me. But I want to hear it. I don't want you to hold back anything from me.

Now here's a heart that we see in Elisha. What does he say? Surely as the Lord lives, I will not leave thee. That's it.

I will not leave thee. Lord, give us a heart that cries out. I will not leave thee.

Lord, help me. I will not leave thee. Verse 4. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee.

For the Lord has sent me to Jericho. Another test. Gilgal.

Bethel. Now Jericho. Same thing.

Same test. And he said, as the Lord liveth and as they so liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

Verse 6. And Elijah said to him, tarry, I pray thee here. For the Lord has sent me to Jordan. And he said, as the Lord liveth and as they so liveth, I will not leave thee.

And they too went on. OK, brothers and sisters, this is this is don't want to. I don't want to go into detail this one.

We could dissect the meaning of these words. Bethel. Jericho.

Gilgal. We could get tremendous spiritual application. But I don't sense this is where the Lord's leading me to share this morning.

Just leaving it at this. We're in a test. What are you doing in that test? One of two things.

One of two things. Your heart has settled where you're at. Or your heart is crying out, Lord.

I will not leave thee. I must go on with you. I must move on with you at any cost, at any loss.

I don't know what the future holds. I don't know what going on with you will mean in a practical way. I don't know what it'll mean financially.

I don't know what it'll mean materially. I don't know what it'll mean in relation to my friends, the friends that I have. The company I keep.

I don't know what it means, Lord. But I don't care. That's not my problem.

Lord, the only thing I pray is that give me a heart that says, I will go on with you and I will not leave you. Matthew chapter 26. Matthew chapter 26.

Oh yes. Oh yes. Lord, help me to go on with you.

How many sense the Lord is giving you an ear to hear what His Spirit is saying? Yeah. How many sense the lurking danger of settling where you're at in the Lord? You're settling down. It's comfortable.

The Lord's blessed you. Your heart. Your heart is content to live in the blessing rather than to pant after the blesser.

Your heart is content to enjoy the blessing even if the blesser moves on. What if the blesser moves on? Do you want the blessing or the blesser? What if the blesser moves on and the blessing changes? What if it becomes a different blessing? Oh, watch out where you put your heart, brothers and sisters. Watch out where you put your heart.

For where your heart is, there is your treasure. And where your treasure is, that's the thing you value. And the thing you value, you will worship.

You will be given allegiance to the thing you value. What do you value this morning? What do you value? Oh, we're in a test, aren't we? Big test. Big test.

Lord, this is a searching word. What do I value, Lord? What do I value? He says you value the blessing more than the blesser. Because your heart delights in the blessing.

And if there's ever the possibility of the removal of that blessing, you get mad. Threatened. Why? Because we have fallen into the idea that we derive our significance and our identity from the blessing rather than the blesser.

The place of our identity is not the place God has brought us to and the blessings that we are enjoying as a result. It's in the blesser. God is a jealous God.

Jealous. And He won't have His people turn their heart to anything but Him. Are you in a test now? Oh, God, show us where our hearts are at.

Show us where our hearts are at. Lord, show every young person where their heart is at this morning. Every young person.

Where's your heart at, young people? Is it the blesser? Is it Him? How about the older ones? Where's your heart at? Matthew chapter 26, verse 36. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane. How many here knows what the word Gethsemane means? Gary? Wine press.

Oil press. Thank you. I was testing you.

She was paying attention. Very good. We get a star today.

I knew that. How many believe that's true? It's not. Oil press.

Oh, the significance of Jesus bringing His disciples to a place called Gethsemane. A place where the oil is pressed. Do you know we just visited the oil press? You know that? We just visited the oil press in John chapter 6 and 2 Kings chapter 2. That's the oil press.

That's the place of testing. That's the place where God searches the depths of our heart. That's the place where our humanity is brought down to zero, and we must discover by God's grace, Lord, have mercy.

My heart has been misplaced. My affections have been misplaced. My desires have been misplaced.

I have strayed, Lord. You have blessed me. The Lord says, Oh, how I long for the love that I saw in you in the days of your youth, when your heart panted after me alone, when you hadn't yet succeeded, when you hadn't yet prospered, when you knew that you were a nobody, when you knew that you were nothing, when you knew that you didn't fit in with the world.

But now you walk high, and you compare yourself with others. I have done quite well. Oh, how I long, the Lord says, for the days when you were after me alone.

The wine press. The garden of Gethsemane. The place of pressure.

The place of difficulty. The place of struggle. The place of conflict.

When you longed to be in my presence, when you longed to spend time with me, when the sound of my name caused your heart to burn, what happened? When you were hard after me, what happened? Come to the place of testing. Come to the place of pressure, Jesus said. Come to Gethsemane with me.

Come to where the very depths of your heart are exposed in my presence and in my Father's presence. What do we do in this place that God has brought us? There's not much we can do but pray. Nothing but pray, beloved.

This is the hour when God brings us into the light of His countenance and flesh becomes flesh and we are reduced to what we really are. Let's learn now. Now, you notice the transition the Lord is bringing us through.

We're in a test and now it brings us to Gethsemane. Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder. Learn from Jesus, brothers and sisters.

Learn from Jesus. Learn from Him. When Jesus was brought into the place of Gethsemane, He prayed.

What are you doing? Learn from Jesus. He prayed. What did He pray? And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Sorrowful and very heavy. A time of testing. A time of great pressure.

Great difficulty. Heaviness. Sorrow.

And what is the whole thing about? It's about the will of God versus my will. It's about being willing to drink the cup that God has given us, even though it's a bitter cup. It's a bitter cup.

It's a place where God demands that our hearts be undivided and after Him. Then said He unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death. Tarry ye here and watch with Me.

And He went a little further and fell on His face. He fell on His face. When was the last time we fell on our face? Because Almighty God was testing our hearts so deeply and so severely and so thoroughly that we were realizing we were coming up short and we needed grace, grace, grace, lest our heart be turned aside and we'd accept something less than God's perfect will.

When was the last time we knew such travail of soul? Nowadays, we don't want that. We don't want that. We don't want something to bring us to that crisis.

We'd rather sit around a television and be entertained. We'd rather sit around video games and have fun. Sports.

But Jesus is in the garden. Because He's the perfect man. And He's after one thing.

And those who say, Lord, Master, I want to be your pupil. He'll lead you right to the garden. Right to the garden.

Don't say, Lord and Master, unless you're prepared to be led to the garden. Heavy, isn't it? Oh, yeah, real heavy. But this is Him.

This is what it means. See, it's not the joy of this earth. The joy of this world will seduce you.

It'll take you from the heaviness of what it means to serve the Lord. Brothers and sisters, the spirit of this world is at enmity to God. At enmity to God.

And when you feed from it, it will destroy your ability to hear the Lord and to follow the Lord. And unless the Lord brings a great healing in our heart and a great release in our being from being addicted. Addicted.

An unwholesome, unholy addiction to this world and the things of this world, which include its entertainment. The things that make this world laugh shouldn't make the church laugh. Shouldn't make us laugh.

We're soldiers, remember? Remember what Paul said to Timothy? He that is called a soldier shouldn't entangle himself with civilian affairs, shouldn't entangle himself with the things of this world, but should seek to please Him that calls you. My soul is exceedingly sorrowful. We want to be happy.

His soul is sorrowful. Oh, yes, there is a joy. Oh, yes, there's a happiness.

But it's not known except we find it in death and loss. And considering all things dung and garbage and trash. Until we've been brought to that place, brothers and sisters, do you know what the man of truth will tell us? Now, other people will tell us something differently, but until God brings us to that place, the man of truth will tell us, your sorrows are worldly, your joys are based on the things of this earth.

And to those joys and songs, James addresses, we know in James chapter 4, let your joy be turned to sorrow, let your rejoicing be turned to mourning. Why was he saying that? Is he a killjoy? No, but he recognized that there were hearts in that assembly that had misplaced their affections and were no longer going on with the Lord, but they were addicted to the blessings. They had camped on the place that God brought them and they were no longer panting after God.

And as a result, envy, strife, jealousy, backbiting, despective persons, looking at rich people and bringing them close to their lives, and then taking poor people and pushing them aside. Horrible things. Oh, my Father, verse 39, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou will. Again, brothers and sisters, we can't go into the depths of the travail of the Son of God here. Only He could know what He was going through.

Only He could know that He was about to drink the cup which had in it every sin that everyone had ever committed, the sins of the world. He was about to drink it. He was about to become.

He became sin. He became sin. Recently, my sister told me that her son, who is going through a time now of questioning regarding the Christian faith, said it was the rich people that killed Jesus.

He's against rich people. He is supportive of poor people. He said it's the rich people that killed Jesus.

How can we be Christians and not despise the rich people and seek to help the poor people? And she told me this on the phone. And the Lord moved in my heart and I said, Oh, dear Judy, come to your son and say, I want you to know, dear Doug, that you're wrong. Rich people didn't kill Jesus.

You killed them. Your sins killed them. My sins killed them.

Uncle Phil, that's me. Uncle Phil's sins killed him. No, it's not the rich people.

It's you. You. You killed him.

You crucified him. You did. Mike, you killed him.

That's the cup he was about to drink. It was what God had planned for his life. And he was struggling in his humanity.

Oh, God, if it's possible. If there's another way, God. But nevertheless, nevertheless, I will drink this cup.

Do you know what the disciples should have been doing at this time? The same thing. Oh, God, we don't understand. But we know that our wonderful Savior is wrestling in His soul because He only wants Your will.

Lord, we too want to know what it is to be devoted to You. We don't wrestle with that anymore, do we? No. No, we don't.

We're not that concerned, are we? Too busy playing. Too busy playing and having a good old time. And He cometh unto His disciples, verse 40, and found them what? Guess what we're doing.

Now, watch the wonderful words of Jesus in verse 41. This is the second word that the Lord put on my heart. The first was, we're in a test.

We're being tested. Basically, it has to do with this. Where have you placed your heart? And what you're going through now, if you'll ask God to show you, you'll see exactly where your heart is.

See, the practical life is God's testing arena to show us where our heart's at. Someone's betrayed you, and you don't want to look at them the rest of your life. You've just been found out.

You're no better than the person that betrayed you. No better. Jesus said, bless them who curse you.

Do good to those who spitefully use you. Pray for them. Invite them over.

Feed them. You can't do it. You know why? Because you've been tested and found out.

That's the work of God. Not what you're doing. What you are.

Huh? What you are. Now, here's here's Jesus. I love Jesus's words.

Verse 41. Could you not pray and watch with me for one hour? Verse 41. Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is powerless, is weak. Brothers and sisters. Every one of us, like Peter, have a desire if God is in our life to do what's right.

But our flesh is weak. And if we rely upon our flesh and the strength of our volition, the strength of our tenacity, we will miserably fail. How many here want the Lord to have your heart holy and that you don't want your heart to be set in any direction but Him? But how many found that to try and do that in your own self results in total failure? The flesh is weak.

Pray, pray, pray that you may not enter into temptation. Pray. Your spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Why aren't we praying? Come on. Why aren't we praying? Why? Why aren't we praying? Because we don't see. We're blind.

We're loved, yes, but blind. If we saw the true nature of our flesh and the true nature of how dependent we are, we're upon God. We would throw, listen closely, everything out of our life that's not necessary.

That's not necessary. You say, well, define necessary. You don't want me to define necessary.

What you need to do is go on your knees before God and sit at His feet and let Him define it for you. But you better listen because you're not going to like what you hear. You're not going to like what you hear.

How many have done that? How many have gotten on your knees and waited for God to tell you and show you what is necessary? We assume we know. We think we know, but we don't. But if we get a real revelation of what's going on here, pray.

The flesh is weak that you enter not into temptation. We would get rid of everything in our lives except what is necessary and prioritize sitting at His feet, listening to His Word, weeping over our weakness and over our brother's blindness and weakness, weeping over the fact that there's a lost dying world going to hell, weeping, and yet He loves us. Amazing, isn't it? Pray and watch that you enter not into temptation.

Oh, yes, your spirit is willing, but your flesh is powerless. Powerless. But the Lord says, I will help you.

I will strengthen you. I will empower you. Who does He empower, though? People who walk around and are strong? No.

See, I'll empower you only after you are brought down to nothing. I can't empower you now. You're walking around like a peacock, real strong.

But I'll wait. I'll patiently wait until the hour comes when in bitterness and sorrow, you cry out, God, my life is a big mess. I'm empty.

I'm tired of failure. That's good. That's good.

That's just where I want you. Lord, I'm a hypocrite. I've lived a lie.

I've been a phony. I've been two people. How many know someone who's two different people? They're one person in public and another person at home in private when no one's around.

You know what that's called? Hypocrisy. Why doesn't it bother us? Why doesn't it bother us? Because we're more interested in sitting and watching the TV, playing games, than sitting at His feet and letting Him show us the true condition of our heart. See, because if we sit and watch TV, we're going to laugh.

But if we sit at His feet, we're going to cry. Cry. Why? Because He'll tell us the truth.

The Bible says, and Peter went and wept bitterly. Why? Because he found out the truth about himself. Where's the hope? Where's the hope in this message? Where's the joy? Not somewhere else.

It's right here. If you want joy without sorrow, if you want happiness without mourning, if you want sweetness without bitterness, the Lord says go find another table to eat at. Because you won't eat at His table and find it.

Go find another table to eat at, where you can play games and have fun. But if you want to know the true joy, and the true peace, and the true happiness that comes from serving the Lord, then let us open our mouths wide and let Him help us drink this bitter cup. Because this bitter cup has sweetness in it.

But we don't get the sweetness until we get the bitterness. And they're never, ever, ever, one never is mutually exclusive of the other. One never cancels out the other one.

You can't have bitterness, true bitterness, when you meet the Lord and you really see things the way they are. You can't have bitterness without sweetness. And you can't know the sweetness of hearing His voice saying, I love you.

I will empower you. I will enable you. That's sweet when He gives us hope.

But you can't have that sweetness without the bitterness of knowing that if He doesn't help you, you're a miserable, rotten human being and you deserve hell and damnation. And that you will fail. And that if you're not careful, you're going to be a hypocrite.

You're going to practice deceit. Your heart has tendencies toward adultery. Do you know that? Not me.

Not me. Oh my. Oh my.

You're a thief. Not me. Oh no? How many times have you robbed the glory that only belongs to God? How many times have you liked it when somebody looked a little bit too highly at you? You liked it.

You're a thief. Thief. Yeah.

You like to be praised, don't you? You like to be told, well done. Thief. Mm-hmm.

You see, that's the truth. That's the truth. But we watch Rambo and Rambo will make us feel like we're really cool.

Harrison Ford. Oh, I want to be like him. A hero.

Yeah. Elijah Wood. That's the teenagers.

I've got teenage daughters. Come on. Come on.

Is this true? Is it true? This is the heart of the Lord, brothers and sisters. This is the spirit of truth. Yeah.

Yeah. Come on. We go into the ministry and it's crummy in the ministry.

Everybody wants to be something. Everyone wants to be some great preacher, some great teacher. It's abominable to God.

Competition. Money. Control.

It rots in the nostrils of God. So whose feet do you want to sit at? You want to sit at that idol? The TV? You could probably say, well, what in the world is he harping on the TV for? Maybe it's an idol in your life. Hmm.

Hmm. We're at a big test. And I'll tell you right now, brothers and sisters, we're going to fail.

If we don't pray. Because our flesh is weak. Oh, our spirit's willing, but your flesh is weak.

So what are we going to do? Listen. What are we going to do with the words of Jesus that have just been spoken into our heart? I'll tell you what's going to happen. Now, you might not like this, but it doesn't matter to me.

For the moment, we're troubled. For the moment. Listen.

For the moment, we're aware that God's speaking to our hearts. But as soon as we leave and go into the areas of our lives that are not governed by the lordship of Christ, we'll lose it. Because we haven't slain the idols in our home.

We haven't slain the idols in our heart. We haven't slain the idols that we serve during the rest of the week. And those gods always overcome the quiet little voice of God that comes to us when we finally gather, whether it's here or anywhere where the Lord has a place to speak.

You remember what Gideon did when the Lord called him to be a deliverer? What did he do? He went to his father's house and smashed all the idols in the house. Every idol. Brothers and sisters, here's a word from the Lord.

I challenge you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of God to go into your home and to sit at the feet of Jesus Christ and to let Him show you the idols that have been erected in your home and smash them. Because if you don't, do you know what will happen to that little word that God spoke to you this morning? Do you know what will happen to that little word? It'll be stolen. It'll be destroyed.

That's why, brothers and sisters, it's good that we can gather and the Lord has a place to speak. But it's better. Listen, it's good that we can gather, but it's better if not only do we gather here and let the Lord speak, but our homes become sanctified where the Lord can speak there.

And our fellowshiping one with another would become sanctified so that we don't make much one of another, but we make much of Him. But that won't happen until the Holy Spirit has His way in our fellowshiping one with another. Oh, we love to brag on each other and talk about things that don't matter, don't we? What about gathering together and saying, let's let the Lord speak to our heart? Let's let God

Speak to our heart.

Listen, this is when the church is going to begin to truly know the Lord in power and glory. When she is sanctified and set apart, not just at a Sunday gathering, but at home, Monday, Tuesday, when she's connected with other believers, the Lord has a time, the Lord has a place to speak. And let me tell you, when the Lord speaks, He's not going to be promoting ridiculous things.

When the Lord speaks, He doesn't rally around a certain doctrine or a certain technique or a certain method. When the Lord speaks, He doesn't promote certain religious ideas and certain groups of people and certain personalities. He doesn't cultivate a party spirit where we get together and now we're going to follow this teaching and this teacher.

We're going to follow this. When that's not the Lord, that's religious spirits. Away with them.

When the Lord speaks, everybody's face falls down to the ground and we all say, Lord, You alone are holy. You alone are righteous. You alone are worthy.

When the Lord speaks, no one, nothing is made much of. Only Christ. Only Christ is made much of.

Amen? Okay, brothers and sisters, I know we're under time constraint and we're not even done, but we're going to have to pick it up another time. I believe the Lord has spoken. Please listen.

Please listen as we close. The Lord loses what He says so often in our hearts because our lives are not sanctified. They're not set apart for Him.

We don't give Him time to speak. And I challenge you. I challenge you in the love and mercy of God.

Lay hold to what God has spoken into your spirit and don't let it slip from you. Pray about it. Go to His feet.

And number two, I dare you to ask God what's necessary. What's necessary? And then listen. Don't argue.

And by all means, don't ask other people. Because when you hear from Him and then you start asking other people, they'll talk it right off your back. Oh now, brother.

Don't be so extreme. Don't be so extreme. It doesn't bother my heart to serve this idol.

It shouldn't bother you. It doesn't bother me to be worldly and full of greed and covetousness and distracted with a thousand things. It shouldn't bother you.

I mean, by all means, the Lord's called us to liberty and freedom. Why do you keep holding up a quarter, mom? Oh, she keeps holding up a quarter. I thought, is there a message there or something? So I challenge you, brothers and sisters.

Please, ask the Lord to help you. Create an environment in your home where the Word of the Lord is precious and not something that doesn't occur. And I guarantee you'll hear the same thing that He speaks from His Word into your heart.

So let's bow our heart for a moment before the Lord. Father, we thank you for your presence here. And we just want to sit before you in these last two few moments, Lord.

And just ask your Holy Spirit to clearly speak to us, Lord. We're being tested. Our hearts are being exposed.

We're in the Garden of Gethsemane wrestling with whether or not we're going to follow on with the Lord or settle for something less. And we've realized we're weak and we're asleep spiritually. We're sleeping.

We need your mercy, Lord. We need your mercy. Because we are sleeping, Lord, we have drifted far from you.

We need you to heal our hearts. We need you to show us what's necessary. And we need you to empower us to obey you.

Your every word. And listen, if you are set on pleasing people, you'll never please the Lord. Listen, you will never please the Lord if you are seeking to please people right now.

Because you will ultimately please the one that doesn't want you to obey the Lord. You're going to have to make people sad. You're going to have to make your children sad sometimes.

You know that? You're going to have to say, I'm sorry. No, no, period. Husbands, you're going to have to make your wife sad sometimes.

No, I'm sorry, hon. The Lord's calling me to spend time with him. Wives, you're going to have to make your husband sad sometimes.

I'm sorry, sweetheart. I know we like doing this together and it's fun. But the Lord's convicted me.

He says to me, why don't you spend time with me instead of having fun? Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Who are you devoted to? Who are you devoted to today? I challenge you to just say, Lord, let me hear your voice.

Let me hear your voice today. Let's sing this song together.

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