

# The Hour of Testing

by Phil Beach Jr.

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeing God's beauty and glory, and the need for a praying heart to draw closer to Him.*

**Duration:** 1:17:32

**Scripture:** Psalm 139:23

**Topics:** "Testing", "Humility and Repentance", "Drawing Closer to God"

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## Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the need for believers to draw closer to God, confessing their pride and self-righteousness while recognizing the splendor of His beauty. He calls for a heartfelt prayer for God to search our hearts and reveal our true state, urging the church to abandon a distant walk with God and instead seek a deeper relationship. The sermon highlights that true healing and understanding of our depravity come from seeing Jesus clearly, which leads to genuine repentance and a desire for more of Him in our lives. Beach Jr. stresses that the greatest gift from God is the revelation of our faithlessness, which ultimately draws us closer to Him and ignites a passion for prayer and devotion.

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## Transcript

Search our hearts without noise and activity. Lord, we pray You'll continue to search our hearts even now. Make us to see, make us to see that You alone are the faithful one.

We confess our pride, Lord, how we have boasted in our faithfulness. How we have gloried in what we thought to be good qualities in our life. How we've bragged, how we've thought such vain thoughts.

All because, Lord, we haven't seen the splendor of Your beauty. No man can see You, Lord, without falling down on his or a woman her face and cry out and say, Oh Lord, You alone are the worthy one. Lord, rescue us, rescue the church, Lord, from walking at a distance.

For, Lord, we've walked at a distance and we have become foggy in our vision. We look to others as holy and righteous. We think ourself to be when in fact, Lord, there's only one who stands in our midst that is deserving and His name is the name that has saved us and washes us.

Lord, forgive us. We take more delight in glorying in one another than in glorying in You. God, can You help us to see? Help us to see today, Lord.

Help us to see, Lord, please. Visit us, Lord. Yes, when we gather together, but Lord, this is such a small part of our Christian experience, Lord.

Visit us in our homes. Visit us in our families. Visit us in our fellowship.

From day to day, Lord, please draw near to us. Rescue us from following You afar off, Lord. Rescue us, Lord.

God, it's only when we come into Your presence and live in Your presence that we can properly see. Lord, rescue us. Rescue us, we pray, Lord.

Even today, draw us to You, Lord. Make us to see, Lord. You know, brothers and sisters, we're not near as important as we think we are.

Some people think they're so important. You ever meet folks like that? So important. You know why that happens? Why we actually begin to think that about ourselves? Because we're losing sight of Jesus.

You know that? You lose sight of Jesus. You begin to think yourself more highly than you ought to. When we see Him, we're all leveled.

All leveled. All put on level ground. And He alone stands as the big one in our heart and in our life.

How big is He to you today? If He's not real big, then something is too big in your life. Something's too big. Something is too big in your life if He's not real big.

If you get mad when you don't get what you think you deserve, you know what that means? He's not big enough. He's not big enough in your heart. He's not big enough in my heart.

See? See, it's all Him. That's why He stands in our midst this morning and He bids us to come to Him. He bids us to pray that we would ask Him to open up the eyes of our hearts to see how big He is, how glorious He is.

Oh, God, do this. Do this, Lord. Do this, Lord.

Show us, Lord. Show us, Lord. Holy Spirit, show us.

Holy Spirit, show us the bigness, the greatness, the majesty, the beauty of Jesus Christ. Help us to see it so clearly, Lord, that we are able to pour contempt upon our own righteousness, pour contempt upon our own miserable pride, pour contempt, Lord, upon all our sin, Lord, and just cast ourselves at Your feet, glorying in You alone. Oh, God.

Do this, Lord. You know, there's healing today in our midst. And there's healing... You know, sometimes Jesus said certain things to certain people in the New Testament.

He said, just go and put some mud on your eyes. He put some mud and one person was healed. And then He asked another one, do you believe that I can heal you? And the person said, yes, and then they were healed.

And then another place Jesus said, just go offer according to the law of Moses certain things and you'll be healed. Here's healing today. Listen, healing today is as we would come to Jesus and say, Lord, forgive me for following You.

Listen, forgive me for following You afar off. And I ask that You bring me close to You so that I can see Your beauty and Your splendor and Your glory. And in seeing You, I'll see the foolishness of my sin.

I'll see the foolishness of my pride. I'll see the foolishness of thinking that I was more important than I really am. I'll see the foolishness of glorying in myself.

Listen, I'll see the foolishness of wanting men to see me rather than to see Jesus. I'll see the foolishness of my controlling attitude toward people, even my own family. Listen, there is healing this morning for every soul that would pray that prayer with a heart of sincerity.

I'm sorry for following You afar off. Bring me closer to You, Lord. Listen, listen, listen.

We're not near as close to the Lord as we think we are or near as close to the Lord as He would want us to be. So, Lord, bring me close to You. And then, Lord, let me see the splendor of Your person so I can be ashamed.

Do you know that one of the greatest sorrows in the heart of God in this hour is that His people who are called by His name can't even be ashamed anymore? We don't even feel shame. You know why? Because you can't conjure shame up in yourself. You can't conjure it up.

Listen, you can't say, oh, I'm so ashamed of how awful I am and how sinful I am. You can't. You know where shame comes from? The ability to feel ashamed and to want God to change you comes when you see Jesus.

When you see His glory. When you get close to Him. Remember what Isaiah did when he saw the Lord? Woe is me.

There's one thing that God's people need today. It's not money. It's not bigness.

It's not political influence. One thing. God.

More of Jesus. And if we get more of Jesus, then our lives are devastated because of it. God will do in one generation what ten generations have tried to do with their own power, their own might, their own devices.

Lord, bring healing as we sing this song. I want to invite you today to really pray. Maybe you want to pray with your husband, your wife, your children, or a friend.

Maybe you want to come forward and you want special prayer. However you feel comfortable, that's alright. But most importantly, pray.

Lord, forgive me. I followed You afar off. Bring me back to You.

Let me see You so I can be ashamed. Every man in here, listen, every man in here should be devastated every time he speaks one word to his wife, his children, or to anyone that is harsh. Harsh.

Are we devastated? Guess what? We're not most of the time. And you know what that means? We're following Him afar off. All of our theology does us no good.

Doesn't do us any good. Only a tender heart in His presence is what devastates us. And that's true with every woman in here, every boy, every girl.

Oh, how we need to pray for our children, huh? This is a corrupt generation. This is corrupt. These little children have a conscience.

If we don't pray and ask God, their conscience will become seared and they won't even be troubled over that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. This is the generation where good is being called evil and evil is being called good. We need God.

We need God in our home. We need God in our families, brothers and sisters. And that's it.

The church doesn't need a new program. We don't need a new thing. We don't need a new ministry.

We don't need a new this or a new that. We need God to come back into our midst, into our homes. And that's what we're believing God for.

God Himself. Feel free to pray for just a short time here as the Lord would tarry in this way. Let's humble ourselves before God and let Him search our hearts.

Prayer is open. Come on, let's let Him search our hearts. Bring me back to You, Lord.

Bring me back to You. Your glory unfolds Filled in my eyes With Your treasures untold The beauty of holiness Brings worship anew My greatest love is You Every new day Your glory unfolds Filled in my eyes With Your treasures untold The beauty of holiness Brings worship anew My greatest love is You Call me deeper Into Your grace The river that flows From the holy place Wash over me Cleansing me through My greatest love is You Call me deeper Into Your grace The river that flows From the holy place Wash over me Cleansing me through My greatest love is You Filling my eyes With Your treasures untold The beauty of holiness Brings worship anew My greatest love is You Call me deeper Into Your grace The river that flows From the holy place Wash over me Cleansing me through My greatest love is You Call me deeper Into Your grace The river that flows From the holy place Wash over me Cleansing me through My greatest love is You Wash over me Cleansing me through My greatest love is You Wash over me Cleansing me through My greatest love is You Thank You, Lord. Thank You for Your presence, Lord.

Oh, thank You, Lord. Thank You for capturing our heart, Lord. Father, we would pray that today, Lord, You would so create a desire within our heart to be nearer to You, to be closer to You.

I hope and pray that every person here would at least be able to acknowledge that You're not as close to the Lord as He would want You to be. I hope everyone... And I hope that You can say that not because it's just a thing to say, but because You've come to see. You've come to see.

And secondly, I pray that God will help us to where we can truly see how dreadful we are if we are not under the power of God's love and under the power of God's Holy Spirit. Many years ago, when I was spending some time preaching about prayer, I was so devastated. I said, Oh, God.

I said, Lord, how in the world can we get people to start praying? You know, you get frustrated. And I think this is a frustration that many people experience. And the thing about prayer, too, is it's always like a season.

People get excited about prayer, and in a couple months, it fizzles out. It really does. And I was praying and saying, Oh, God, what's the answer? How in the world can... This was many, many years ago.

And from a preacher perspective, I was saying, What can I preach to get people? And then, having spent time before the Lord, the Lord wonderfully led me to seven words. Seven words. And the Lord impressed upon my heart, and this is what He said.

He said, Son, the reason why my people are not praying is because they have not understood seven words. And He showed me the soul that prays and keeps praying is the soul that has come to see... Listen, not through a theological enlightenment, but through the discipline of God Himself. They've come to see the truth of these seven words.

And you know where those seven words are? Some have heard me preach on this. Don't tell now. John 15 For without me, you can do nothing.

Do you know why we don't pray? Because we don't believe that. That's why. It's very simple.

Listen, you can't preach people into praying. You can't put a seminar together and teach people how to pray. There's a place for instruction.

Don't misunderstand me. But listen, that's why we don't pray. Listen, do you know why we don't pray? Because we don't believe it.

Now, I'm not saying we don't believe it mentally. Of course we do. We're Christians.

We believe everything that God's Word says. My, my. We're Bible-believing Christians, right? Everyone here a Bible-believing Christian? Yes, of course.

But we don't believe it. And so what we have to do is instead of spending our time... Listen. Listen, brothers and sisters.

This is a word for us. This is a word for the church. Instead of spending our time fulfilling the Scripture, ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be opened.

Instead of asking God for things, seeking God for things, knocking on the door for things, if we would begin to ask and keep asking for a praying heart. Seek and keep seeking for a praying heart. Knock and keep knocking for a praying heart.

Do you know what would eventually happen in your life? Listen, before God gave you a praying heart, He would bring something into your life that would show you how utterly unable you are to cope and deal. And in that bitter experience, in that experience of bottoming out, you would hear Him say, Behold, my loved one, the answer to your prayer. You know what happens when we pray for patience? God sends tribulation because tribulation produces patience.

Our hearts... Listen, this is the gentleness and meekness of the Lord. But the Lord always speaks truthfully to us. Our hearts are too entangled in things, aren't they? Things, things, things.

The things, the cares of this life. And the Lord would want to draw us to Him. There's not much weeping going on in the church today, is there? Well, I take that back.

There's weeping when we don't get our own way. There's crying and weeping when things don't go our own way. Listen, there's crying and weeping when we don't get our new toy.

There's crying and weeping when we don't get the promotion. Where's the crying and weeping in the house of God? Because we see that the Lord's name is being abused. You see what the Lord would do in our hearts if we would ask Him to draw us closer to Him? He would share His heart with us.

This is what He longs to do with us. Share His heart with us. Those who are going to... Wait, is there a teacher here? Okay.

Go ahead. Brothers and sisters, may I ask a question? Do you long this morning to be closer to Jesus? Closer to Him? Closer to His heart? Able to hear His heart? Able to hear His Word? What has got your attention this morning? What has got your heart's affection this morning? Do you see Him? Father, I thank You for Your wonderful presence here. I thank You, Lord, for trying our hearts.

Lord, we all just stand together looking to You. We are so needy, Lord. But most importantly, Lord, we're in need of seeing.

We're in need of seeing You, Lord. We're in need of being drawn closer to You. We're in need of a revelation like Isaiah had, Lord.

Of seeing You in Your glory high and lifted up. Lord, we know that that's the only thing that will empower us to live a life worthy of Your name. That's the only thing that will empower us to escape the corruption of our own sin, the corruption of our own pride, the corruption of our own deceit.

Lord, thank You for Your faithful Holy Spirit who doesn't come except for one reason, to speak what He hears, what He sees regarding the Son, the Son of God. Father, we look to You for these next few moments to continue the work that You began when we gathered together here, the work of drawing us, the work of leading us, the work of enlarging us. Make us uncomfortable this morning, Lord, in Your presence.

Not with fear or torment, but make us uncomfortable with a holy dissatisfaction. Lord, I pray You'll rescue us from our pillows of comfort, our comfort zones. Lord, nudge us on.

We need to be free from our comfort zones. Oh, God, rescue us. Put the fire back in our heart for You, I pray in Jesus' name.

Do you feel that there was a time in your life, listen carefully, this might not be true, when your heart was a little more tender toward the Lord than it is now? Do you feel there was a time in your heart when the thought of spending time with the Lord was so precious to you, but now it's, well, it'll happen. I just trust the Lord to work it out. Sometimes we use this, well, the Lord's leading me to hide behind certain kinds of hard attitudes.

You know, when we were young Christians on fire for God, we didn't wait for God to lead us. We said we need to pray, and we made a plan, and we went and prayed. Now we wait for God to lead us.

It's funny how when we do that, God leads us very infrequently, doesn't He? What's the saying, Norman? I always get this confused about he that has no plan plans to fail. He that fails to plan plans to fail. That's good, Norman.

If you have nothing for a goal, you'll surely accomplish it. Oh, Lord, thank You. You know, I think the longer I serve the Lord, the more I appreciate this aspect of the Lord.

You know, I find that continuously now. I find the Lord tries my heart, Norman. He tries my heart every day.

He tests me. I find that daily at night, He'll bring to me all the things that I did, all the things that I said to people, and He'll search my heart. And He'll make me to know whether or not I was speaking as an ambassador for Him or whether I was speaking out of that wretched, ugly man called Phil Beach, according to the flesh.

Have you come to know this aspect of the Lord? Have you come to know this aspect of the Lord where He wants to try you, He wants to test your heart, He wants to heal your conscience from being insensitive? Oh, brothers and sisters, this is what the Lord is longing for today. This is what He's challenging us to. He'd rather have an army of 300 than 32,000.

300 who are devoted to Him, who realize the strength of their victory lies in a broken, earthen vessel. That was Gideon's strength. Break the earthen vessel and the light shine.

Thousands of people are trying to do something with hard earthen vessels, and you only need a handful. Well, how many did Jesus find? He found 12, and one of them was a devil. But it didn't seem to bother Him that His Father only gave Him 12, because He took those 12 and He showed to those 12 the difference between Himself and them.

And He devastated them. And He didn't spare them from the ultimate test, but He let every single one of them fall. There was a time when someone asked me, and they were really, I think, sincere, but they were angry.

And they said, if God loved Peter so much, then why didn't He keep Peter from denying Jesus three times? You ever think that? If God loved Peter so much, why didn't He keep him from that? And I can remember the response that I gave the person. It was this, oh, beloved, you've got things wrong. It was because God loved him so much that He let Peter deny Him.

You see that? It was because of His love that He let Peter deny Him. Now, you say, well, why would God... Now, listen, listen. The same principle is true with Job, right? So, the world and even Christians who haven't seen this, they'll say, how could God be so cruel to let Job go through such horrendous suffering? He lost everything.

How could Peter go through such suffering? These things don't make sense to us unless we understand what God's longing is. What is God's longing? What is God's longing in His heart? How can love allow people, His own people, to go through such suffering and such pain and such anguish? Because God knows that, listen, the greatest expression of God's love is to single out a person or people and by His sovereign power make them to see how utterly corrupt and destitute they are without Him. That's the greatest expression of God's love.

I am growing more and more in a thankfulness to God over this issue. Father, I thank You so much that You are showing me more and more and more how desperately wicked I am if I go my own way. That has become one of the most cherished revelations in my heart.

And all of my history with God can be interpreted in that light. All of what I went through, all of what I have experienced, and I know because of the faithfulness of God that everything I am going through and shall continue to go through will be understood only in that light. If I try and understand it any other way, such

as, how could God let this happen since it's not benefiting me, my ego, my pride, my selfish ambitions? Now, if you try and interpret your history with God, and you try and interpret what's going on now or what's going to happen tomorrow in light of that frame of reference, you will be frustrated.

You'll get angry. Because God is not in heaven devoted to giving us a lifestyle, a history with Him, a present with Him, and a future with Him that has to do with being the cosmic genie in the sky giving us everything we desire. That's not God's intention.

His intention is to create within us a passion for Him, a desire for Him, an adoration for Him. But before that can happen, He has to show us the nature of sin, which is a passion for self, an adoration for self. We're in love with our self.

Did you know that? Apart from the grace of God, we're in love with our self. We are the most important people in our life. Isn't that the root to all the problems that we have in relationships so many times? It's self-love.

Right? Self-love. Think about it. Is there a conflict going on in your life right now in any kind of a relationship? Think about it.

With mom, with dad, with a friend, aunt, uncle, grandma, grandpa, husband, wife. What's at the root of that conflict? Self-love. There it is.

So if God really loves us, the ultimate expression of that love is seen in what He did with Job. The ultimate expression of that love is what He did with Peter. He loved Peter, didn't He? I believe Jesus loved Peter.

Peter was a go-getter. Peter always had a plan. Jesus loved him so much.

But Jesus knew, being the perfect man sent from God, that Peter's greatest strength would become recognizing his utter depravity. That's Peter's greatest strength. And beloved, that is your greatest strength and my greatest strength.

The greatest gift that God could give you is not a million dollars. How many have thought that? The greatest thing God could do right now in my life is get me out of this mess. Many years ago, I heard a preacher say, and I'll never forget it, don't say to God, Lord, get me out of this, but say, God, what can I get out of this? Next Sunday is Easter, Resurrection Sunday.

Call it what you want. This is the week, the Passion Week. There's all different kinds of things that are being spoken of, being preached about.

And that's all fine. But I'll tell you, as I contemplated this season, the Lord put on my heart that this whole week, the week before Jesus was crucified, was the week, listen, when all men were discovered as genuine liars. Genuine liars.

I'm not trying to take away from the celebration of Easter, but brothers and sisters, let me tell you something. Before there's a true celebration, there's got to be a true weeping. We've got to come to see that during that last week where Jesus lived and He was with His disciples, during that last week, God the Father successfully proved to every one of the followers of Christ that they were all hypocrites and phonies.

And though they were loved by God and called by God, and they had a plan that God ultimately was going to fulfill through them, they were liars and phonies and they had to be brought to utter despair where they saw that left to themselves and their own self-righteousness and their own commitment and their own trust in God and their own zeal for God and their own devotion to follow Christ, left to that they all forsook Him. Every one of them. And I'm wondering how many this week are feeling uncomfortable as God begins to show us that this week represents, and it's a testimony, and I believe in eternity, the testimony of the week before Christ's resurrection will cause all heaven to be quiet.

I don't think we're going to hear a lot of rejoicing. I think we're going to hear a lot of mourning and quiet sobbing as we remember the self-righteous attitudes that we had regarding our devotion to Christ and how we were all proven in the hour of temptation, the hour of test, to be unfaithful. All of our boasting, all of our bragging fizzled and Jesus went alone to the cross.

Forgive me. Brothers and sisters, listen carefully. The greatest gift apart from salvation that God can give to you and the greatest prayer that you can pray apart from thanking God for your eternal salvation.

And I want to challenge you this morning to consider these words because this is what Easter week is all about. The greatest gift that God could give to the church. No, I pray He gives it to us.

Please, Lord. It's the gift of showing us our faithlessness and utter depravity. Showing us that we have the heart of Peter.

We have the heart of Peter. The one who in the hour of test did what three times? He disowned the Lord. Are you so spiritual and so strong in the Lord and so devoted to Him that you just have pity on all those other believers who have denied the Lord? Boy, how sad.

How sad. There's such weak Christians in the world. If I had a chance to disciple them, they probably wouldn't have denied the Lord.

Is that your heart? Oh God, rescue us. Rescue us. Rescue us, Lord.

Let us see. The Passion Week was a week when all forsook the Great Shepherd. But He remained true.

We forsook Him, but He did not forsake us. Mm-mm-mm. The greatest gift.

Lord, show me that I am but flesh, for without Me, you can do nothing. I'll tell you, seminars on prayer, they may have their place, but that's not what's going to get God's people praying. Books on prayer, thank God for them.

I've been blessed, blessed by reading many books on prayer. That's not going to do it. There's only one thing that's going to get God's people to pray.

Prayer will follow. Listen. Prayer will follow the bitter weeping that Peter experienced after he realized he failed the Lord.

What does the Scripture say? And he went and wept bitterly. I don't find much material on that as being the means by which God's people can become a praying people. Matthew 26.

Beginning in verse 26. Matthew 26, verse 26. Let's just glean some insights from this recorded record.

Listen carefully, okay, beloved? In light of what the Lord has been ministering to us, just in light of that, let's just walk through a few of these Scriptures. Father, I pray that You'll speak to our heart by the Holy Spirit and reveal Yourself to us. Verse 26.

Jesus is having the Passover with His disciples. Now we all recognize what the Passover is, right? The Passover was a feast instituted by the Lord that represented the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Passover.

The ultimate fulfillment of that. But look at here and see what Jesus is really after. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to His disciples and said, Take, eat, this is My body.

And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, Drink ye all of it. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you that I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. Brothers and sisters, listen carefully. If these disciples understood what Jesus was doing at that moment, they wouldn't have forsaken Him.

But they didn't understand. This drinking of the wine and eating of the bread is far more significant. There's far much more significance in this than simply having communion together.

This eating His flesh, drinking His blood, eating bread, drinking wine, communion, what's traditionally been called in the church something some churches do regularly, others do it irregularly. There's something far more that God is after than just coming together and taking a little sipping, taking a little bread. The significance of this is found in John 6. Listen carefully.

The significance of this communion, verse 48, chapter 6, I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread..." Now what bread is He talking about there? If any man eat of this bread, what bread? I am the bread of heaven. He's talking about Himself.

He is the bread. And if any man drink of My blood, Jesus said, if we read on. Now watch this.

Verse 53, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Oh, brothers and sisters, did you know that Peter found out that he had no life in himself? He had a lot of religion. He had a lot of devotion to Jesus.

He bragged a lot. He argued about whether he would be the greatest in the kingdom. He even laid hands on the sick and they were healed.

But he didn't have the life. He didn't have the life that it took. Jesus is saying here, to the whole world and to the church, do you see Me? This is Jesus.

Do you see Me? I am the righteous man. I am the one that God is pleased with. I am the only man that truly is devoted to God.

I am the only man that's truly faithful to God. I am the only man that is truly able to say, I love righteousness and hate iniquity. I am the only man that ever came and demonstrated the character and likeness of God.

I am the only man that stands just before God. And here when Jesus is... Listen, Jesus is saying, eat My flesh, drink My blood. What is He talking about? Cannibalism? No.

He's saying, you see the kind of man I am? Not a Jewish man. He's not saying we have to become Jewish. He's saying, you see the kind of man I am on the inside? You see the kind of life that flows through my veins? You see how when you curse people, I bless them? You see how when you're betrayed, you hate people, but I kiss my betrayer and call him my close companion? Do you see? This is what Jesus did with His disciples for three years.

He lived with them. He walked with them. And He showed them time after time after time in life's experiences how other He was than they.

How different. They wanted to bring fire down from heaven and destroy the Samaritans because they wouldn't let Jesus in their city. And Jesus said, you don't know what manner of spirit you're out.

The Son of Man has not come to destroy lives, but to save them. They looked at Him and said, where's this guy from? And they felt ashamed. Jesus was constantly revealing to His disciples their depravity and their sin and their self-righteousness.

A few men felt one time they were going to go to Jesus in order to get a fair judgment on how to divide their inheritance that their father left them. One of them probably thought, Jesus will side with me. The other one thought, no, He'll side with me.

And they found out that Jesus didn't side with either of them, but rebuked them both and said, beware of covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he owns. Blow him away. Last time I go to Him, Jesus doesn't side with people.

He doesn't take sides. He's not a Pentecostal or a Baptist or a river of life. He is the righteous One.

And He judges all of us as unrighteous, without life, without hope. And then bids us to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood. And that's more than the gift of salvation.

That is assimilating through the power of the Holy Spirit the very character and life and power of the Son of God and losing the depths of our pride and our confidence and our self-righteousness. And so Jesus stood among the multitudes and here in this Passover He was doing it in an intimate setting with His disciples. But in John 6 He was saying it to the multitudes.

He was saying, you see the kind of man I am? He's saying, you people are not following Me because you see in Me the life that pleases God and you see in yourself a wretched, miserable life. He says, you're not following Me because of that. But yet Jesus was saying that's the only kind of follower I want.

I don't want someone following Me because they're hoping to get something out of it for themselves. I want someone to follow Me because they want Me. But you can't want Him until you've seen how wretched you are.

And so when Jesus says here in John 6, listen, verse 54, whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood, really the translation is whoever is continuously eating My flesh and continuously drinking My blood, I will raise him up. For My flesh is meat indeed. Meat sustains us.

Meat nourishes us. Listen, meat, bread. Bread and meat back then was symbolic of the thing that enables people to survive.

You see? Bread in the east, in that area of the world, is breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And a snack, bread.

Bread. When I traveled to Europe, bread. Bread in the morning.

Bread in the afternoon. Bread at lunch. And if we had a time of communion in the evening where we chatted together, it was another loaf of bread.

They really eat bread. That's the staff of life. Jesus is saying, I am the bread that came down from Heaven.

Verse 56, He that eats My flesh and drinks My blood dwells in Me and I in him. Listen, as the Living Father has sent Me and I live by the Father, so He that is eating Me, even He shall live by Me. So this communion story in Matthew 26 has such far-reaching implications.

And I fear, I fear that the significance of this truth has just virtually been lost. Virtually been lost. We need God to restore not communion services.

We need God to restore the meaning of what that is supposed to represent. It's the sacred truth that as believers, Christ is now our life and we glory in His righteousness alone. And it is only by Him and through Him that we can live and please God and be devoted to Him.

And when we cease from drawing from Him, we cease from trusting in Him, we cease from living by Him, we immediately fall into our own self, which at its best is altogether vain. It's best altogether unfaithful. Go to verse 36.

Then comes Jesus with them to a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here while I go and pray on her. And He took with Him Peter, the sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.

Tarry ye here and watch with Me. Watch with Me. And He went a little further and fell on His face and prayed, O My Father, if it's possible, let this cup pass from Me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You. And He comes back to His disciples and found them sleeping and said unto Peter, who is He talking to now? Peter. Read verse 33.

Peter said to Him, Though all men be offended because of You, yet will I never be offended. Then verse 40. He looked at Peter.

What? Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. This season is all about God revealing the greatness of His Son that took Him all the way to the cross while bearing the weight and the pain and the anguish of the sin of the world.

And alongside of that, Norman, it's all about man making his boast to God. Though all forsake You, I won't, Lord. Brothers and sisters, we shall all be subject to Father's discipline at which time we will come to see there is only One who is faithful.

And we in ourself are deserving of judgment and damnation. And we thank God for the gift of salvation which rescues us and offers us forgiveness. But we come to realize that not only do we thank God for the gift of salvation, but we must learn by God's own hand how to live by the strength of another, namely, Jesus Christ.

And so don't think it to be strange or some peculiar thing when you find yourself encompassed in all manner of difficulties and trials and tests, but rejoice because you are being given a privilege that in eternity you will thank God for unceasingly. And the privilege is you are coming to know now the beauty of Jesus Christ and your own depravity. Such a revelation is the greatest strength a man or woman can have.

Such a revelation will birth in you prayer. You will learn to pray out of the revelation of weeping because you have seen how easily you've denied the Lord. May God work this revelation in us very deeply.

There is no rejoicing next Sunday in the world. They could care less. It's just now Easter bunnies and eggs.

And in much of the church it's just, and I hate to say this, but God is my witness, it's a time when the offerings and the tithes come rolling in. And so they put together a nice little service because they know that people who normally don't come to church come on Sunday, Easter, and they come Christmas. But in heaven, brothers and sisters, I don't know if heaven celebrates Easter.

I don't know what they do up there. But I'll tell you one thing, brothers and sisters, if they do, it's not a time where men are boasting and bragging in their fleshly excitement and there's fleshly singing going on. It's a time of sacred silence and quiet sobbing and weeping as all heaven realizes we've all forsaken the Lord.

And God made it true that we're all liars and there's only one that is in our midst who is deserving and worthy. That's what this season is all about. So He's here to make these things known to us.

As we close, I'm going to ask Colette if she would come up. And I want to invite you to simply reaffirm to God your desire. Remember, Lord, forgive me for following You afar off in the shadows.

My heart has gotten dim. I think too much about myself and my importance. I think too much about me and what I'm doing.

And my thoughts have strayed from the greatness of You. Bring me closer to You, Lord, and let me see once again Your glory, Your righteousness, Your beauty. And help me to cry again, Lord.

Help me to weep. Help me to be ashamed of my pride. Help me to feel bad, Lord, because I have said that thing to that person and I know it wasn't right.

Lord, restore back to me a heart of tenderness. Lord, give me a heart that like Job, if You choose in Your wisdom to allow the devil to take everything that I've got. Lord, give me a heart that will joyfully lose all things, knowing that I have an enduring substance in heaven.

Only God can give us that kind of a heart. And He's calling His church for this. For when His Lord sleep in the dead, like Job, they sing that charming hymn.

I sacrifice them to His blood. Sleep from His head, His hands, His feet, a small bed of gold. Riches, wealth, nature, that heart is so divine.

As usual, we're under time constraint, but I do pray the Lord will capture our hearts and that You'll make it Your prayer, beloved. Lord, draw me back closer to You. Don't let me live my life walking afar.

And what You will receive from Him, I promise you, dearly beloved, will be beyond what words could ever articulate, beyond what money could ever buy, beyond what a man or a woman could ever give You. It's all in Him. You are loved, beloved.

God bless you today.

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