

Warfare Against the Church

by Phil Beach Jr.

The warfare that we are in is a spiritual battle against the Prince of Darkness, who seeks to keep the preeminence of Jesus Christ from being expressed in and through our lives.

Duration: 57:25

Scripture: Proverbs 14:14, Hosea 14:1

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Repentance and Discipleship"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the spiritual warfare faced by believers, asserting that the battle is primarily for those who are in relationship with Christ rather than the unbelievers. He highlights the danger of backsliding, where individuals become filled with their own ways instead of God's, and calls for repentance and a return to one's first love for Christ. The sermon draws parallels between the early church in Ephesus and the present-day church, urging believers to embrace the discipline of discipleship and to deny themselves in order to fully express Christ in their lives. Beach reassures that through the Holy Spirit, believers can find the grace to stand victoriously in this warfare. He concludes with a heartfelt prayer for the congregation to seek God's guidance and healing in their spiritual journeys.

Transcript

...this last week a little bit, and we want to just mention it. 14.14, I'm sorry, Proverbs 14.14. This is something that we want to consider this morning with great desire from the Lord to minister to our hearts and to help us to see the warfare that we are in. You and I are in a warfare.

Many times people feel that an unbeliever or someone who doesn't know the Lord is in a great warfare. Well, that may be true. However, the New Testament talks about a warfare and perhaps 95% or more of that warfare is not a warfare that the sinner is in.

It's a warfare that those who have become related to the Lord Jesus Christ that's a warfare. And you and I, because we are partakers of the Lord Jesus Christ are in a great warfare. And we want to together look and see what it is that this warfare is about.

How many here feel like you're in a spiritual war of some kind? Some kind of a spiritual war is going on in your life. Well, this morning there is a word from the heart of the Lord that will enlighten us as to the nature of this warfare. And not only will He enlighten us, but the Lord has assured my heart this week as I prayed and wept and asked God to make this a living word in my own heart and in our hearts together as a

community of believers.

The Lord has assured me that He has every intention in enabling us to stand in this warfare victoriously through our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, let's just bow our hearts for a moment and let's ask the Lord to give us a one heart and a one mind and a one soul this morning so that we can receive this word. Father, help us this morning.

We are so dependent upon Your Holy Spirit. Lord, there is no place in Your work for the wisdom of man. There is no place in Your work for the pride of man.

Lord, we want to repent of our pride and our human wisdom. It is foolishness to God. It cannot understand the things of God.

And Lord, we simply acknowledge that Christ alone is our wisdom. Lord, we pray that today the Holy Spirit will help us to see this great warfare that we're in. And that through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Lord Jesus Christ, we might find the grace to experience the victory that You're providing for those who trust in You.

For Christ's sake, amen and amen. Proverbs 14.14 Please put a mark in your Bible if you mark your Bibles. And read over this.

I want to ask a question. I don't want anyone to raise your hands. There's some that are here this week that weren't here last week.

But I'm wondering how many did the homework that was assigned last week? Don't raise your hand. That's between you and God. And I'll pray the Lord will convict you if your heart is saying no.

Alright. Proverbs, why didn't you do it? Too busy. Okay.

Proverbs 14.14 Now, when we read this verse, we ought not to think about our friend. We all know that, don't we? We ought not to think about a certain person that we might know. When we read this verse, what we want to do is we want to say now, Father, please speak to me and show me this word as it relates to my own life.

Okay? The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. We learned last week that the word backslide means to go back, to retreat. And the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.

His own ways. Now, I invite you to turn to... And here's the promise this morning. Here's the promise this morning.

Hosea. Now, you just turn right and you get through Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and then Hosea, chapter 14. We learned last week that a backslider is full of his own ways.

That is, those ways that originate out of himself as opposed to the ways that originate from the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, Hosea chapter 14. That's the last chapter in the book of Hosea.

This is a book that was written by the Holy Spirit through the prophet Hosea and it reflects God's heart cry toward His people Israel. But it has a word for you and I today too. And chapter 14, beginning in verse 1, it says... This is the last chapter.

The prophet was prophesying to backslidden Israel. For 14 chapters, God's people had backslidden. Or God's people had become full of their own ways.

Now, mind you, they retained their outward Christian religion or to them it was their Jewish religion. But the problem was they were full of their own ways. They were full of self-seeking, self-satisfaction, self-love, self-aspirations, self, self, self.

Their own ways. They interpreted life based on how it affected them. Even though they had a great legacy given to them.

And they had communicated to them a great understanding of who Jehovah God was. Through Moses and the prophets and Samuel and all of the judges that God raised up. Yet they continuously, continuously went backwards instead of forward.

And this is the warfare. This is the nature of the warfare that we're in. And there's a reason why, and we'll see that a little later.

Why does the dragon, why does the serpent, the devil himself, seek in every single possible way that he can to get God's people, you and I, to go backwards instead of forward? Why does he do it? Why is he doing it? Why is he opposing us? There's a reason. We're going to see that in a moment. Hosea 14, O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

Now, you remember that we also looked at the word that the Lord gave the church in Ephesus in Revelation 2 last week. And we saw that the church in Ephesus had a great beginning. And the homework that we were asked to do was to look in Acts 18, 19, and 20.

Because Acts 18, 19, and 20 show us the very beginning of the church in Ephesus. It tells us the story of when God sent Paul into Macedonia and he went to the city of Ephesus. And about 30 years later, now listen, about 30 years later, the book of Revelation was written.

And instead of Paul writing a letter to the church in Ephesus, Jesus wrote a letter. And what did Jesus say to the church in Ephesus after 30 years? He said, I have someone against you. He said, you have fallen.

You've left your first love. You've left your first love. You've departed from your first love.

Something happened to the Ephesian believers from the time that they first believed, which is recorded in Acts 18, 19, and 20, to 30 or so years later when Jesus spoke to them through John on the island of Patmos and said, repent! Repent! Turn back to Me. You've left your first love. And Jesus went as far as to say, if you don't repent, I'm going to remove your candlestick from its place.

And we learned last week that the candlestick was not representative of their salvation, but it was representative of them being a vessel through whom the testimony of Heaven, which is Jesus Christ, would be seen. And the Lord was saying, if you don't repent, I can no longer use you as a vessel through whom the testimony of My Son can be seen and demonstrated. And so, as God spoke through Hosea and admonished Israel to repent and turn back to Him, He's saying the same thing to the New Testament church who had been what? Filled with the knowledge of God through the greatest teachers that the world has ever known.

Do you know who taught Ephesus? Paul and Apollos and Cephas. And yet the Lord said, repent. Why? They had backslid.

Full of their own ways. Now, verse 2, Hosea 14. Take with you words and turn to the Lord and say unto Him, take away all iniquity and receive us graciously so will we render the calves of our lips.

Now watch, verse 3. Asher shall not save us. We will not ride upon horses. Neither will we say any more to the work of our hands.

Ye are our gods, for in Thee the fatherless find mercy. Now, verse 4. Verse 4 is the word that the Lord had given me. I will heal their backsliding.

I will love them freely. I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely.

Brothers and sisters, this so reflects the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ who comes to us and exposes and shows us our own ways and our sins and how we fall short, but He says, I will heal your backslidings and I will freely love you. Now this is God's promise to you and I if we will let the light of His Word and the light of the countenance of Jesus Christ shine brightly in our heart and if we will be able to say, Yes, Lord, I need Your healing. I need Your help today.

Okay, beloved, let's turn our Bibles, if we would please, to the book of Acts. And as you're turning your Bible to the book of Acts, let's just be reminded of the words that Jesus spoke to the church in Ephesus. We're going to begin now to look at the nature of the warfare that we're in.

As you're turning to Acts 18, I just want to refresh our memory. Verse 3 of chapter 2 in the book of Revelation. Here's what Jesus said.

Verse 4, Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee. Now these are the words that Jesus is speaking to those that we're about to read about in Acts 18. This is what He's saying now.

Thou hast left Thy first love. Now the very next word that He says is remember. Remember.

So this is what we're going to do. We're going to remember what it was like in the Ephesians' lives when they first met the Lord. We're going to remember by going back and reading.

And then we're going to ask the Lord to help us to receive this word for us personally. Remember therefore from where you have fallen and repent and do the first works or else I will come unto thee quickly and will remove thy candlestick out of its place except thou repent. Okay, that's the word that Jesus gave.

Now let's go to Acts 18 and begin in verse 24. Now let's just begin to ask the Lord to help us to see the kind of spiritual environment that was present among these believers as God sent His messengers in their midst. Notice what kind of spiritual climate is occurring in the hearts.

And a certain Jew named Apollos born in Alexandria, an elegant man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue, whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto him and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him, who, when he was come, helped them

much, which had believed through grace. For he mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ." Okay.

Remember and do thy first works. Thirty years later, Jesus is telling these believers in Ephesus to do your first works. The first thing that we can discover about the believers in Ephesus, and we're going to make a little list here, is that number one, they were very hungry to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

They were very hungry to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Number two, not only were they hungry to know the Lord Jesus Christ, but they willingly became the disciples of Jesus Christ. Now, we've learned in times past that the word disciple indicates that you have become a pupil.

You are a student. And being a pupil and being a student, you have accepted the place of being under authority. A pupil is one who goes to his teacher and says, Lord, teach me.

I don't know. Lord, teach me. I don't understand.

So not only were these Ephesian believers at the beginning hungry for Jesus, but they accepted the discipline of being a disciple. Now, brothers and sisters, please listen carefully as the Spirit of God is speaking to us through His Word. It is a discipline to become a disciple of Jesus Christ.

It is a discipline that will cramp your I-want lifestyle. I want. I want to do this.

I want to do that. To become a disciple of Jesus Christ is to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way where we begin to realize that our personal, personal interests, personal tastes, personal impulses must come under the power of the Holy Spirit and be brought to death so that it is no longer, I love the Lord but I'm governed by my own desires. Rather, it is by the grace of God I love the Lord and I have come to know something of the discipline of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit is crying out in this hour that we live in to all those who name the name of the Lord. And He is saying to us, will you accept the discipline of becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ? I have somewhat against thee, Jesus said to these dear believers 30 years later. Thou hast left thy first love.

One sure way of departing from our first love is to continue to profess that we love the Lord and that we want Him, but we push away the work of the Holy Spirit in our life demanding us to become disciples. And we push it away because we don't want the cost involved in becoming a disciple of Jesus. It cramps our style.

It takes self off the throne of our life. Now all of this is the grace of God. All of this is the work of the Spirit.

It's nothing that we can do by effort. But God wants a cry in our heart in response to His Holy Spirit to say, yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Now, keep your fingers right in Acts because this is only the beginning. This is only the beginning. What is the nature of the warfare that we are in right now? What is the nature of this great warfare? A backslider in heart is full of his own ways.

Brothers and sisters, to say no to the Holy Spirit's call to become a pupil of Jesus Christ is to say yes to what? My own ways. My own heart. If I'm not the pupil of Christ, then whose pupil am I? If I'm not the fool for Jesus, then whose fool am I? I'm my own fool.

Brothers and sisters, there is no way to escape the depths of corruption that lurks within your bosom. There's no way to escape it except by the mercy of God and the grace of God to beg God to make you a pupil of Jesus Christ and to sit at His feet and to sit at His Word and to pray, oh God, oh God, make Your Word the thing that I live by. Make Your Word the thing, oh God, that I live by.

Day and night we sang a song, I'm desperate, I'm desperate. Are we desperate? If the Holy Spirit doesn't teach us that being a pupil of Jesus is the only way, then we will inevitably be a backslider in horror full of our own ways. Religious? Most definitely.

We'll never throw out our Christian religion. See, because the natural man, which is the one that when we become a pupil has to be denied. The natural man and all of his tastes.

The natural man is religious but will not recognize his sentence of death. He won't recognize it. So he'll embrace the Christian religion and serve it.

But God says no to our natural man. You can't serve Me. You have to die.

Keeping right here in Acts 18, I'm going to turn to Luke. Luke 9. Beginning in verse 21. What is the warfare that we're in? We are saved for one reason, brothers and sisters, and that is this, that Jesus Christ may gain the absolute preeminence in our life in all things.

The church is not a building. It is not a system. It is not an organization.

It is not an ecclesiastical hierarchy. The church is Christ being expressed in and through living stones. The living stones are made up of those who have been born from above.

Those who have received the Spirit of God. The warfare that we are engaged in is a warfare not with flesh and blood, not with human beings, but with the very Prince of Darkness Himself. And He is set on implementing every scheme and every device and every strategy that He knows for one reason and one reason alone.

To keep the preeminence of Jesus Christ from being expressed in and through your life. And He does that by what? Getting us filled with our own ways rather than broken vessels at His feet through whom the perfections of Jesus Christ can be seen by the power of the Holy Spirit. Luke 9, verse 22, Jesus said, The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected of the elders, the chief priests, the scribes, and be slain and be raised the third day.

And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it. But whoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.

The same Scriptures are found in Matthew 16, 20-28, and Mark 8, 30. Here Jesus is teaching the very thing that the Ephesian believers were embracing at the beginning. To accept the call of the Holy Spirit to become a disciple or a pupil of Jesus Christ is to accept the call of the Holy Spirit to deny oneself.

For one will not deny oneself except they are a pupil. Because to sit at the feet of Jesus is to be taught by Him. And do you know what He teaches us? Deny yourself.

Say no to yourself. And say yes to Me. Okay, brothers and sisters, Acts 19.

And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Cornuth, Paul, passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus. So here he finds these disciples who were hungry to know the Lord, who were hungry to know what the Lord was saying through His Word. Listen, they were diligent to get into the Word of God and to find out what God was saying.

Do thy first works. And then Paul comes and meets these believers. And in verse 2 of chapter 19, he says to them, Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were you baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto this people that they should believe on Him which should come after Him, that is, on Christ Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve." Okay, brothers and sisters, not only do we find people who are hungry to know God, not only do we find people who have accepted the call to become a disciple of Jesus, a pupil of Jesus, one who wanted to learn about Jesus and be taught by Jesus and to sit at His feet, but we see it now, believers who were well acquainted with repentance. That was what the baptism of John was all about.

It was a baptism of repentance. It was a message explaining the need to be broken before God at all times. Willing to confess sin.

Willing to confess sin when God shined the light. Fourthly, these were people who embraced the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit embraced them. They received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now, let's stop for a moment and recapture what we've just spoke on. Hungry for Jesus. Pupils of Jesus.

Denying self. How often? Daily. At the feet of Jesus.

Not governing their own lives. Not living by the impulses of their own desires. Not being governed by the Spirit that is in their culture.

Because if you're governed by the Spirit that's in the culture, what will you do? What will you be? What will you seek after? What will your heart's desires be set on? Certainly not the things of God. Certainly not the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we've got believers whose lives are revolving around the Lord's interests.

Filled with the Holy Ghost. Continuously being filled. Paul wrote a letter to these believers called Ephesians and told them to continuously be filled.

Revelation 19, verse 18. And many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds. Watch this.

Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before them all. And they counted the price of them and found it 50,000 pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed.

And so now we have not only believers who are gathering and hungry for God and filled with the Spirit and seeking to know God and confessing their faults and repenting. What is God doing here? He's forming a

community of believers. A community.

A household of faith. But now we've got believers who are so being changed by the power of God. Listen.

They are gathering together everything in their personal lives. Everything in their home. Everything in the nook and crannies that is not pleasing to God.

Not profitable to God. And they publicly, publicly gathered all of these things together and burned them before God as a testimony to God in heaven and to the devil in hell and to all the believers round about them that they by the grace and power of God were making a complete break with everything in their home and in their lives that was contrary to what they were being taught by Jesus Christ. They were separating themselves wholly unto God for His exclusive purpose which was that Christ might be fully formed in them.

That Christ might be the life that people see when they looked at Him. And this resulted, and this is the last point, in verse 23 all the way down to verse 40. I will not read it.

But that resulted in such an uproar in the city of Ephesus that the very livelihood of Ephesus, listen, which was idol worship, become threatened because the believers would have nothing to do with what the world considered to be important. They became so radical that the sales of idols were so down that Demetrius, who was one of the tycoons of that day, became so angry at Paul and so angry at these Ephesian believers because their Christianity was not something that was being done inside their home. It wasn't something that was happening in a building.

But it was affecting the very town and city that they lived in. They had become so baptized into God and into Christ and into His Word that they were emptying out their hearts and their lives and their families from all that was not profitable. They were saying no to the things that their culture gladly participated in.

And it was beginning to affect the very flow of money in the city. But I have somewhat against thee. Thou hast left thy first love.

Repent and do thy first works. First works. Brothers and sisters, have you ever known of such an encounter with Jesus Christ? And if so, is it a living, fresh one today as it was back when you remember it? Repent.

Do again the first works. Acts 20, verse 17. The last word that Paul spoke to the Ephesian believers in person at the time Paul spoke these words.

Listen carefully. The believers were in the state that we just read. But Paul detected the enemy.

He detected the dragon. He detected the devil and he sensed what it was that the devil wanted to do. And so, along with the words that Paul spoke to these elders in the church of Ephesus, he gave them a warning, a prophetic warning, which was vindicated 30 years later when Jesus spoke to them and said to them, they had fallen.

Notice what Paul said to these on-fire believers. Verse 17. He called the elders together.

He said, you know from the first day that I came into Asia and after what manner I have been with you at all seasons. Now let me just say this, that Paul many times told those believers that God had entrusted to him, this is what Paul said, follow my example as I followed Christ's example. Paul was so set apart by

God and so apprehended by God that the Holy Spirit allowed Paul to actually tell the believers that they were to follow the example that Paul set as the standard for Christian liberty, for Christian living.

Paul actually used his life as a standard. Now watch what he says here. He says, you know the way I was, what manner of person I was.

Now I believe that the Ephesian believers were so on fire for God is not only because they met Christ and because they were baptized by Christ and because the work of God was so prevalent in their life, but I believe it's because they had an example in Paul of what the Christian life was supposed to look like. And Paul oftentimes told them later on in other epistles, remember the example that I set before you. And when he sent Timothy, he said, Timothy will remind you of what? Timothy will remind you of my ways.

Paul said, of my ways. He was so close to Christ that he could actually send a young man, Timothy, to a church and say, Timothy will remind you believers the kind of person I am because Paul said, I'm the real thing. I really met Jesus.

My life was really changed by Jesus. My life truly demonstrates what it means when a person is conquered by Jesus Christ. Verse 19.

This is Paul's example. Serving the Lord with all humility of mind. Humility of mind.

And with many tears. Tears. The Ephesian believers saw what it was to be intimately united to Christ.

They saw in Paul tears. They saw a man who wept. Who wept.

Who cried. Who begged them. Who walked together with them.

Who walked in humility. Who wept for them. Tears.

Many tears. Tears of sorrow. Tears of joy.

Brothers and sisters, stay on fire for God. Brothers and sisters, don't turn to the left. Don't turn to the right.

This is what he's saying. Many tears. And temptations which befell me.

And how I kept nothing back that was profitable to you. But I've showed you and I've taught you publicly from house to house testifying both to the Jews and Greeks repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And verses 22 and 23, Paul tells us that he had to go to Jerusalem.

And he was telling these believers that he was about to go to Jerusalem and that he was going to experience all kinds of difficulties and all kinds of persecution and all kinds of troubles. But what was the example that he was setting for these believers? Oh, brothers and sisters, God help us. What was he saying to the believers in light of the fact that if he went to Jerusalem he was going to be dreadfully persecuted? Verse 24, but none of these things move me, neither count my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord to testify of the gospel of the grace of God dear unto me.

It's not about me. It's not about what's important to me. You see what happens, dear ones, when we go a little bit deeper into the Word of God and we read that Jesus rebukes the Ephesians in Revelation, repent, we go, wonder why? Wonder what they did? Are we seeing? Are we seeing? Are we seeing the heights

from which they fell? Are we seeing the heights from which they fell? Something happened between what we're reading now and Revelation.

All of these qualities that we're learning began to dim. When your life matters more to you than Jesus Christ and His interests, you have become seduced by the spirit of Antichrist. Okay, brothers and sisters, verse 26, Wherefore I take you record this day that I am pure from the blood of all men.

I have not shunned to declare to you the counsel of God. Paul was saying basically this. Brothers and sisters, when I was in your midst, I'm pure from the blood of all men.

I didn't take advantage of any of you. I didn't try and get rich off of any of you. I didn't try and make personal disciples after myself.

He said, I didn't have a personal agenda for your life. The only thing I did, Paul speaking to the Ephesian elders when I was in your midst, is I gave you Jesus Christ and admonished you to offer yourselves to Him unconditionally by the grace of God and be a vessel through whom He can live. That's what Paul said.

I had no other plan. Nothing. Nothing.

And now the sobering words. Verse 28. Take heed therefore unto yourselves.

The Ephesian elders failed to take heed unto themselves. They failed to take heed to themselves because something happened and the Lord rebuked them. What was it that happened? They became concerned no longer for Christ's interests, but who became important to them? Themselves.

Take heed to yourselves and to the flock of God. Guess what happens when we no longer take heed to ourselves? When we no longer take heed to ourselves and pray, Oh God, let it be Christ today. Let it be Christ's way.

Then the flock of God we no longer look at through the eyes of what does the Lord want? But it becomes a what? What am I going to get out of it? What am I going to get out of my relationship with the body of Christ? What am I going to get out of the flock of God? All of our relationships, one with another, become a self-serving, self-getting thing. Take heed to the flock of God over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. For I know this, and here's the sad thing, that after My departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." And so there you have it, brothers and sisters. What we just did is we saw do Thy first works. We saw what the Ephesians looked like when they first heard the Word.

The whole decline from this spot to Revelation 2 can be rooted in one and one thing alone. And that's where we're going to close this morning. Somewhere along the path between this Acts 20 and Revelation 2, the Ephesian elders, along with some of the believers within the Ephesian church, decided that they were going to stop denying themselves.

And that they were no longer going to embrace the meaning of the cross. And consequently, the Lord's interests were no longer the most important thing in their life, but their own interests were. And that was the cause of their spiritual decline resulting in the Lord's Word to them.

And so, brothers and sisters, the warfare that we are in now, the thing that the dragon is trying to do in our lives amidst whatever's going on is simply that. Stop embracing the Word of the Cross. Do your own thing.

Don't let anything cramp your style. Govern your own life. Live a life in a way where you do what you want and nobody bothers you or challenges you or brings you into accountability.

Certainly don't do anything that will make people unhappy. Just coast. But stay religious.

Keep singing. Keep coming to church. But don't accept the death sentence.

Where are we at today? Jesus is here this morning to reach out and touch us as we say, Lord, here I am. I want You to give me a heart like the Ephesian believers had at the beginning. Holy for You.

Let's bow our hearts before the Lord for a few moments. Lord, we just want to wait in Your presence for now. We ask You, Lord, to speak to us.

Lord, help us to take this Word with us and to let it go deeply in our spirit. Lord, I pray that it will trouble us, convict us, make our day miserable. I pray, Lord, it will ruin all of our plans that we make which so often furthers our backslidden condition.

I pray, Lord, it will arrest us, stop us dead in our tracks, and cause us to weep and to honestly evaluate by Your Word in Your presence the condition of our heart so that we can find grace and mercy in our need. I beg You, Lord, to do this so that You can be pleased to reveal Yourself to us. Amen.

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