

Pull Down the High Places

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman emphasizes the critical role of fathers in spiritual leadership and the necessity of dismantling false worship in our lives and communities.

Duration: 50:21

Scripture: Joshua 24:15, 2 Chronicles 14:2, 2 Chronicles 15:2, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:1-2, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Timothy 1:7, James 4:7, 1 Peter 5:8

Topics: "Spiritual Leadership", "Family Restoration"

Description

Shane Idleman delivers a powerful sermon titled 'Pull Down the High Places,' addressing the critical role of fathers and spiritual leaders in the family and society. He emphasizes the alarming statistics surrounding fatherless homes and the resulting societal issues, urging men to take their God-given roles seriously and to actively engage in the spiritual upbringing of their families. Idleman calls for the removal of 'high places'--anything that distracts from true worship of God--and encourages the congregation to engage in spiritual warfare through prayer, worship, and obedience. He reminds listeners that the battle is not theirs but God's, and that they must align their hearts with Him to see true change. The sermon serves as a wake-up call for both men and women to fight for their families and to seek God wholeheartedly.

Transcript

The message this morning has been weighing heavy on my heart. As you know, obviously, it's Father's Day, but this message applies to everyone in this room and everyone that will be hearing it later. Just looking around, marriages are crumbling.

Men are forsaking their God-given role as spiritual leaders often. Of course, there's wonderful men out there, wonderful churches, but overall, what you see, the climate in our nation is simply reflected in the climate of the homes. As the homes go, so go the nation.

And on Father's Day, I wanted to be real encouraging, but God also convicted me to be a little convicting. I wanted to read something to you, I actually just printed it up this morning, I couldn't get it off my mind the whole morning, worship. This is statistics on fatherless children in America.

The most recent statistics, young men who grow up in homes without fathers are twice as likely to end up in jail, 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes, 80% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders, 85% come from fatherless homes, 71% of all high school dropouts, fatherless homes, 70% of

juveniles in state-operated institutions come from, you guessed it, fatherless homes. I'm surprised they put this, but they did. Confused identities, boys who grow up in father-absent homes are so much more likely to be confused about their gender.

And we see this huge movement. Much of what you're seeing is not necessarily something that's really happening, inside it's a movement, it's in fashion to switch identities, it's trendy, Hollywood's doing it, why shouldn't we? Well, if Hollywood's doing something, well, I should be careful here, there's people here that work in Hollywood, up in the balcony I noticed some of you as well. But you know what I'm saying, we need godly people in all areas of service, Hollywood to state officials, the likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity actually doubles when the father's gone.

And I remember something, it's not on here, but a while back when I looked into this, rape, the percentage of rape increases dramatically, displaced anger in fatherless homes. Do you see a trend here? I could really have the tears start crying if you want me to read the statistics on how it affects daughters. Teen pregnancy skyrockets, promiscuity.

You know what really promiscuity is? They're looking for something that should have been fulfilled at home in a genuine relationship. Not the sexual aspect, don't misunderstand, but something, a father holding them and saying you're worth something, I value you, I love you, and investing in them and building that relationship. Then they don't go outside and look for that necessarily, of course there's exceptions to any rule.

The deep emotional wounds, I read a few letters online that daughters wrote to their fathers and it was painful. The hurt, the abandonment, the percentage of them that they feel devalued, the suicide result, the percentages of women because of fatherless homes, it's skyrocketing. So it is a call to men primarily this morning, and I know what a lot of people are thinking, I've said this before and I actually preached on this a few years ago, that our excuse is well I'm not absent, I'm still around, and I heard something 20 years ago that was still stuck with me.

The preacher said you don't have to leave a home to be an absent father. That's really what's happening in our nation. You don't have to leave home to be an absent father.

You can be absent emotionally, physically of course, spiritually. How many fathers are absent spiritually? It's a battle. Trust me, I could be sitting in the audience right now.

For me to pull four little rascals around and try to do a devotional, it's like, I'll just get a root canal. But it's hard because the enemy is working overtime. So it is a call to men, even to women, fight.

Fight for your families. While my kids are growing up, no you can intercede. You can intercede for our grandchildren need your prayers like never before.

And I try not to think about it too much, but if you think about where we're going and what kind of world your children are going to be, your grandchildren are going to be living in, that should motivate us to pray. And it's a very hard balance because on one hand we feel the passion, we feel the concern, but we also should have tremendous joy because the darker it is, the lighter the light shines. And trusting God, God you're going to see my kids through this.

If we would talk about the Roman Empire in the days of Paul, you'd be shocked at some of the things that happened there. This is not uncommon where what's happening in our culture. So what I want to do is I'm

going to talk about, well before I do that, I wrote this down this morning, so I want to share this with you.

Men don't have to leave home to be absent. Here's how they're absent in many areas. They're either focusing so much on sports or hobbies or work or themselves.

And I know it's difficult because sometimes I get home and it's like, this is daddy time. This is daddy day. I need what? To do whatever and self.

But sometimes we have to put self on the back burner, quite often actually we need to. And start to focus on our grandkids and on our kids and on our spouses. Invest in them.

This is a spiritual battle. I love what Vance Havner said. He said, salvation is a helmet, not a nightcap.

Think about that. Salvation. When you are saved, men and women, you are saved to do battle.

And what's happening is the church is cowering back and becoming a passive and a doormat and we don't want to battle. Salvation, we're saved, just leave us alone. It's not a nightcap.

It's a helmet. It's a call to battle. When Paul gives the image of spiritual warfare, he doesn't paint a very passive picture.

Put on the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit, the belt of truth and shod, cover your feet with the preparation of the gospel and put on the helmet of salvation. That tells me I'm going to battle. And let me remind you, it's a daily battle, not a weekly battle, not a monthly battle.

It's a daily battle. Every day we need to wake up and say, Lord, put this armor on. I'm going to battle for my children and for others and for my spouse and for our marriage and for our nation.

Oh, if God's people would just call out, if my people would humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I'll hear their prayers. I'm convinced that God will hear our prayers. So the message this morning is pull down the high places.

We're taking a detour away from 1 Corinthians. As I shared with some of you, God just put this all in my heart Monday morning early. Pull down the high places.

I found myself in 2 Chronicles 14 reading the story of King Asa, A-S-A. But I want to first set it up a little bit. What is a high place? What is a high place? If you're any reader of the Old Testament, you're probably just as frustrated as I am because you read, this king did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

All right, we're going in a great direction. He pulled down the high places. He broke down the wooden images.

And then the next king, he did evil in the sight of the Lord. And he rebuilt the high places. He rebuilt the statues to Astaroth and Bel.

And I'm like, what's wrong with these kings? I want to slap them in the face. Didn't you learn from the other one? And there's more evil kings than good kings. And then there's kings where God would say, no evil has any king ever done to the degree this king has done.

And he said, because of the sins of Manasseh was one. He said, I have to judge Israel. See this is why I have a passion for our nation.

I have a passion for those in positions of leadership. Because if I know anything from reading the Old Testament, I know this, leadership matters. Leadership matters.

When a king and the laws and the judges went in an ungodly direction, God says, there's judgment coming. Leadership matters. Well, we're in a new dispensation now, Shane.

We're under the grace and not the law. And it's a different God now. And no, it's not.

It's the same story. It's not the God of the Old Testament, God of the New Testament. The God of the New Testament is the same God.

So there's a passion for that and directing our leaders to at least fear God again. So what is a high place? Well, a high place was very interesting. Jeremiah actually talked about a high place being built in a valley.

But the majority of the time, a high place was built on a high place, on a hilltop. Where they would go, God says, you worship me this way. And what would they do? They would say, no, we're going to build a high place on top of this hill, so it would overlook other areas.

And up there, up on those high places, ungodly things took place, very ungodly things took place, from the sacrificing of their own children to sexual exploitation, all these things. They would go up and they would worship what they thought was God, but it wasn't God. It was a seduction.

It was seducing the people away. It was idolatry, child sacrifice, false worship. In every single instance you will find of a high place, it always appeals to the flesh, what the flesh wants to do.

The flesh wants... You know, most people have no problem with God. In case you haven't figured out, there's no problem with God. It's the God of the Bible they have a problem with.

It's Jesus Christ they have a problem with. They say, well, God's in trees. There's a cosmic ball of love.

God's in everything. I have no problem with the concept of God. And they worship God however they want.

And that's false worship. If we don't worship God according to the worship prescribed and described in the Scriptures, and worshiping God with our whole heart and mind, and loving Him, and putting Him first as a priority, presenting our bodies as living sacrifices on the altar. So God's people, long story short, they learned how to worship from pagan nations.

They would, oh, look at how the Canaanites worship. Look at how the Moabites worship. Look at what they're doing.

Let's worship like that. And it would always draw the children of Israel away from God by false worship, by these high places. And it's a good reminder to us this morning, we don't follow the standard, we change the standard.

That's what a Christian community is supposed to do. You don't follow the standard, you change the standard. You don't just get into the school district and go, okay, well, we'll be a robot.

Let's let our kids read, have transgenders read to kindergarten kids. No, we change the standard. We make a difference.

We love all people, but we stand for the truth and we say not on our watch. I love you enough to tell you the truth. I love our kids enough to tell you that we have to stand for the truth.

We don't go with the flow, we interrupt the flow. Amen? We don't follow the crowd, we come out among the crowd. So many people, we just want to follow the crowd.

And God says, come out from among them, be separate. And we do not build high places, we pull them down. That's what needs to happen.

We need to start pulling down high places, places of false worship. And I know if you're like me, you feel like Elisha sometimes. I'm studying the life of Elisha and I can relate to that guy.

When he was in despair, he saw the nation around him falling apart. He's looking at the people saying, what are you doing? Nobody's following God. He actually cried out to God and he said, Lord, I only am left.

God, all your prophets are gone and I only am left. Oh God, and he's so despondent and full of despair. And the Lord said, Elisha, be quiet.

I have 7,000 that you do not know about. They have not bowed their knee to Bell, nor have they kissed his image. I've got my remnant and I will work through them.

Strengthen yourself, pick yourself back up and fight again. And that's what I'm learning, no matter what the news is, no matter what the surveys say, no matter who's coming against you, you are called to stand because you plus the living God is a majority and you pull down those high places. So what is a high place? Well, I'm glad you asked.

A high place is anything we have built in our lives that pull us away from God, pull us away from worship. And it's sad because I see so many people, and I can pretty much spot them on Facebook, because they're into everything but God, even though they have the Christian little symbol. One man, I finally had to do it today.

I Facebooked him, messaged him. He's been here a few times. There's pictures now where he's there a lot with his kids, enjoying this trip with his kids.

Never his wife's in the picture. And she's in other pictures without him. So what's happening is I'm pretty sure they're going through a divorce.

In his 30s, what does that do to the kids? Well, they're resilient, they'll bounce back. No, no, it affects them. Another friend of ours got married the same time we did.

Same time. Christians. Well, irreconcilable differences.

I'm out of here. I meant plan B. Kids will be fine. What's happening in all these cases? High places.

They are thoughts. You could call them strongholds. Anything that draws us away, we go to a place.

They would go to a high place to worship. So people go to a high place. Whatever that is in their hearts, in their homes, and it begins to draw them away from God.

So here's a few lessons from Asa, King Asa, 2 Chronicles 14.2. I don't know if we have those on the screen because I sent them a little late. But just listen, 2 Chronicles 14.2. Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord, his God. I read it, I say, praise God for this king.

For he removed the altars of the foreign gods. So I want you to know something here. First, he's identifying good and right.

What is right and wrong? Truth and error. You identify, this is good, this is godly, this is according to God's will. And then he removed the altars of the foreign gods in the high places and he broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images.

He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment. The commandment there means the commandments overall. So something has to be removed, something has to be broken down.

Once you identify with it, you can't play around with it, you have to break it down. Our cry should be, Lord, Lord, make sin appalling, not appealing. Just a twist, just spell that word a little bit differently.

Make sin appalling, not appealing to us. That should be our cry. God, what is right, what is wrong, and I'm gonna break down the strongholds.

Are there things in your home that are destroying your family? Remove it, break it down, no questions asked. Once you begin to encourage your family to seek God and the commandments and the laws of God and obey God, you've gotta remove some things. You've gotta break down those things that are pulling your kids away or your family away.

Well, Shane, how do I know? Well, I have a feeling most of us know. I don't think we're that naive. I think we know if Netflix and YouTube is drawing in a lot of attention.

Are they looking at pornography on their phones and their devices? What kind of family dynamics are we allowing? And I know the easier route is this, well, just let them continue. Is that easier? Who wants to argue with a 12-year-old that's upset that their phone's taken away? Not me. So see, we take the easy route.

Okay, kids, you run the home. You tell us what to eat. You tell us when we're gonna go to sleep.

You tell us who your friends are. You tell us what you wanna watch. I just wanna be comfortable.

God says enough. That's foolishness. You're not to be their best friend.

You're their father. You're their mother. You lead them.

You're the watchman. You're the guard. You're the warrior.

You shape, you say, as for me and my house, there we go, Joshua. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. When you turn 18, you can take that little self-centered attitude and do whatever you want.

But when you're under this roof and you're not paying the bills, I'm paying the bills, you have a comfortable bed, you have a full refrigerator, guess what who's calling the shots? You might not like that now, but you will remember that later. Amen to that. I remember, I've told you guys a few times, I saw my mom back

here and I just remembered that I used to have all those bad, bad albums.

I'll date myself, ACDC, Judas Priest, Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath, Metallica, Megadeth, no, no. And just, I just love that screaming. The demons, you could just hear the demons screaming as you're pounding that 40.

You just love this darkness, and then there's a Bible on them. What's going on? Bible, we're taking authority in this house. We're putting the word of God, I'm praying for you.

And I say, don't pray for me, I'd leave the house, I'd slam the door shut. Don't pray for me, I wanna have fun tonight. And the kingdoms collide because you're not to be a best friend.

You're supposed to defend your family and guard your family. They might not listen, but that does not relieve you of responsibility. You're called to lead and guard and shepherd.

And I'm tired of passive parents who allow the children to run the home. Pin drop, right? Now, I just upset all the kids in the audience, but you have to know something. We love you enough to speak the truth.

Sex trafficking in America is an alarming rate. And it's a growing, can you believe this? I'm reading studies. It's a million, a billion dollar industry, it's a growing industry.

I'm like, how does that work? How are we allowing these things, predators, preying on our children? But we're like, duh, duh, duh, just, Al Bundy, remember that guy? That's who I think of when I think of the modern day. You remember Al Bundy on, what was it called? America with Children, not a good show at all. Go watch Leave it to Beaver and Seth.

But that guy's an idiot. He puts his hand in his pants and just lets the kids do what he wants. He's a clueless.

They paint the picture of the American father. But the Bible says that you're to be a watchman, that you contend for your family, you pray, you worship, but I don't see anything happening. Remember, remember strongholds are taken down one brick at a time.

Sometimes the whole wall doesn't fall down. It takes brick to build them. It takes one brick at a time to destroy them.

So fathers, if you say, God, I've been wrong. I've not been leading my family. I'm weak in this area.

I'm saying that. This is hard for me. You get four, now five little stinkers.

They don't want to sit and do daily devotionals. They want to argue all day and look at computers. Where is my laptop? Where is my iPad? I'm addicted.

I'm addicted. I must have. I must have.

And you need to break them from that addiction. Just like you're addicted to caffeine. They're addicted to their phones.

Try pulling a cup of coffee away from a mom in the morning. You'll see the same exact thing. So we too must remove, break down, and rebuild in our hearts and in our homes.

Like I said, Vance Havner said, salvation is a helmet, not a nightcap. There is a fight. It's a battle.

It's warfare. I know it's difficult. Life is difficult, and you feel like giving up.

I do. My flesh wants to give up. Not quit pastoring and go move to Las Vegas or something, but, you know, like, just whatever.

I'm not looking at the news. I'm just, I'm not going to be concerned. I'm just going to, Lord, this is too much.

Couple of thoughts. We're not at, I don't think we were created to absorb everything that's going on in the news. I don't think it's healthy to be informed with everything that's going on.

It will, because it goes against a lot of scriptural texts that talk about, finally, brethren, whatever things are pure and lovely and noble and honest and upright, that you just eliminate most news sources. Right there. Yes, know what's going on, of course.

And I know I talk about this a lot. But I think it's very important because Christians now are becoming very anxious and very fearful and very worried. And we should be spending more time in the word of God.

That's what builds you up. That's what strengthens you when the blows come. They come to all of us.

Maybe I'll just share this. I don't know. I've been praying about it all week, or actually four days now, three days.

But some of you know, my back went out Monday, and sciatic nerve got pinched, and Lord have mercy, my tears start coming. There's so much pain. And Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, finally started to get better.

Thursday, and the pain is unbearable. My foot goes numb, and just this pain. And then I have a dentist appointment where they say, you're tooth infected by the root canal.

I'm like, well, might as well get that out, too, because I don't like a dead tooth in my mouth. So now I've got this root canal infected. And then I go to dermatology once a year, and the doctor goes, oh, my.

This looks like melanoma. I'm going to have to have this taken off and sent to the lab. I'll let you know Tuesday.

That was Thursday. So I'm like, okay. And he's like, do you understand? I'm like, I understand.

We're going to have surgery on your back. I remove this. Hey, it's okay.

How about this? What's going on? And one of the nurses, she's like, it's going to be okay. I'm like, I know. I saw your Bible by the printing copier.

Oh, yeah, it's okay. But see, all those blows are coming. All those blows are coming.

And I know people are going to say, but you're the health pastor. No, I am now. I was not the health guy.

I used to put hydraulic oil on my skin for suntan lotion. And a lot of steroids I've talked about. Ecoploids and Winstrel V, they're veterinarian drugs.

Sustanon 250, testosterone, Dianabol, Anivar, Anadrol, very toxic on the liver. I've drank enough for 10 people in my life. I've done a lot of damage to my body.

And just, it's by the grace of God that he still keeps us going. And that's why I became more health-focused, because I do believe it's important. And I do believe that we can make a difference.

I pray, I think a lot of people are sick because they're not caring for their body. Now, that was a big rabbit trail, so let's get back on track. And to observe the law and the commandment, J.C. Ryle, I love what he wrote.

He said, oh, let not one of us linger. Oh, let not one of us linger. Time does not linger, death does not linger, judgment does not linger, the devil does not linger, the world does not linger.

Neither let the children of God linger. What is lingering? Linger means wake up, wake up, pick up your warfare, begin to worship God again. Pray like life depends upon it, because it does.

And seek God again with all your heart. Elijah stood between the people, and I sometimes feel that way in our nation. He said, hey, wake up.

How long will you waver? How long will you linger? How long will you falter between two opinions? If God is God, follow him. But if Baal be God, follow him. People make a decision.

This is not the God of maybe I'll squeeze him in, or I'll put him on the back burner, or I'll worship him on Sunday. This is a God who demands all of our obedience and all of our worship on an hourly basis. Christ, I give you all of me every day, every morning.

I need you, God, to move in my life. That's the God we serve. And you have to get back to that.

Listen, you have to get back to that. Lukewarm living accomplishes nothing. Oh, simple obedience, simple obedience to God and surrender.

That's the Christian life. Why don't like that? Well, that means you're full of the world and not full of the spirit. Because those full of the spirit hate the things of the world.

The corruption, the decline, the perversion. Do you realize we have pedophiles running for office, openly admitting it? I think it's Virginia. They're trying to...they'll eventually lower the age of sexual consent.

People have...you have to wake up, people. This is a time to serve God with all of our heart and all of our strength. And to say, God, not on our watch.

Something that always sticks out when I read it in the book of Judges. The scripture says, and there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord. And that's when the decline starts.

And then verse 9, then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots. I don't know what you're going through, but you don't have a million people wanting to destroy you. And there's a valley they would look out.

And you could see the army, a million men. Think of the Rose Bowl field 10 times. It's a lot of people out there.

And they're not nice to kings when they capture them. I won't go into detail what usually happens. But suffice it to say, it's not unlike what ISIS would do.

And so Asa cried out to the Lord, his God, oh, this is our only hope. Guys, oh, the scripture meant so much to me this week. Because you have to praise him in the calm.

You have to praise him in the storm. You praise him in abundance. You praise him in lack.

You praise him when you're confused. And you praise him when there's clarity. Our praise and our worship can't be contingent upon how I'm feeling.

That's happiness. Happenstance. What's happening to me has to be joy.

Like Job, can you imagine the words of Job? Though he slay me, yet will I trust him. Though he takes me through hell, I'm relying on heaven. And so he's surrounded by this army.

He cried out to God. He said, Lord, it is nothing for you. And is that not true? Lord, it is nothing for you to help, whether with many or with those who have no power.

And then he did something very humiliating, which many people won't do, especially men. See that four-letter word in there? Help. Help.

Help. God, help. We don't like to say that, do we? It's just a side note.

I've never understood this, but people always say, oh, men hate to ask for directions. And I'm like the complete opposite. If I'm lost, in two minutes, I'm pulling over and getting directions because I want to get where I'm going.

But we often don't want to say, help, I got this. I'll fix this. And I will tell you, according to the word of God, we cannot fix what's going on in our culture.

2020 won't fix it, no matter what side of the aisle you're on. Legislation sure won't fix it. It's good to have all those things in place.

But the only thing is when our nation can cry out, or the church or the remnant can cry out and say, God, help us. We need you. Oh, Lord, our God, for we rest on you, and in your name we go against this multitude.

Oh, Lord, you are God. Do not let man prevail against you. He reminded God who he was.

You're God. Do not let man prevail against you. We're your people.

Don't let man prevail against us, Lord. Do something there. So pulling down high places always involves a battle.

Isn't it interesting? He's doing all this for God. This is what Christians have to understand. I'm doing all this for God.

I'm pulling down these images. I'm restoring genuine worship. Now there's an army coming after me? What's going on? Pulling down strongholds, getting back on track with God always involves a battle.

Because there's an enemy of your soul who will not give up. The thief cometh but not to kill, to steal, and to destroy. Goes about as a roaring lamb? Roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Well, Shane, this is very discouraging. It actually should be very encouraging because there is a God that we can pray to just like Asa prayed. Lord, there's nothing for you.

You can help us with many or with little. Nothing is too big for you. What you have to do is align your heart with God's.

See, we have to get on God's side. That's the key. Get on God's side.

Second Corinthians 10 reminds us, for though we walk in the flesh, what? We do not war according to the flesh. Now it's something I talk about all the time, but it's a great reminder. This is why prayer and worship and the word of God and fasting, all those spiritual disciplines, this is where they come into play.

That's your warfare. That's your battle. That's your armor.

And a stronghold or a high place is built just one brick at a time. Have you ever thought about that? I'm trying to remember who it was. Maybe Jenson Franklin.

I was listening to a message. He was right on the money. He talked about thoughts and we build these high places in our lives one brick at a time.

Negative thinking, sin, entertaining sin, whatever, critical spirit. We can just camp out here on the bricks if you want. And you just build that brick.

You build a stronghold one brick at a time. Now remember though, often the high place, the stronghold has to come down one brick at a time. And we get frustrated when the whole wall doesn't come crumbling down.

It's one brick at a time. One sledgehammer hit at a time. Boom.

Boom. And you take it down. So whatever that programming, because that's really where it is.

The verse goes on to say, though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are what? They're not this. They're not carnal, but they're mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds, casting down arguments, something that comes into your mind that's not right, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. And you bring that thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

Here's the battle. I'm preparing for the health expo in July. Many of you know that's coming up.

Many of you signed up for it. And I came across an interesting saying, and it's so true. It's like the body, the body wants to heal itself.

It's the mind that'll get you into trouble. It's the mind, the thought process. So that's where your warfare is.

You tell the flesh I'm going to worship. You tell the flesh I'm going to read the word, God's word. I'm going to trust in God despite my circumstances, despite what he gives me.

This idea that we love God based on what he gives us has hurt a lot of people. So you can remove whatever the stronghold is in your life, whatever the high place is, you can remove it one brick at a time. And Asa called on God, in your name, in your name.

Let me remind you this morning, if you leave here, remember this. You can highlight it, you can tweet it, whatever you want. As a child of God, if you're a child of God, the battle actually is not yours.

That brings a lot of relief in my life. I don't have to, okay, okay, I gotta do this, I gotta pray, I gotta, Lord. The battle's yours, God, it's yours.

It's often, he wouldn't say during battle, go, go, Moses, you gotta do this. What did he say? He said, having done all, stand. You stand and you hold the ground.

You stand in commitment and obedience and the love of Christ and you worship. And then Asa's son, actually Jehoshaphat, actually went into battle, if you can believe this, with the worship team. Just stand there, having done all, stand there and hold your ground.

That's how we're gonna defeat what's going on in our perversion, our nation. You stand and you say, not on my watch, we're gonna pray, we're gonna fast. It's not my battle, I don't know what's happening.

But God does, and we're aligning our hearts with his. Any child of God, the battle is not yours. Where does my help come from? My 401k, my visa, my gun safe is full.

Yeah, but your prayer closet is empty. It comes from my strength, no, God's strength. As a child of God, the battle is not yours.

In case you're wondering if I'm trying to offend people, this morning I am a little bit. Long story short, God delivered the people. He saved them because they called on him.

But guess what? Peace and complacency and comfort set in. So sometimes you should thank God for disruptions. Thank God for distractions, disruptions, because peace and comfort and complacency can actually be our downfall if we're not careful.

So what happened, chapter 15, so the king became complacent and the spirit of God came upon Azariah, the son of Obed, he was a prophet. The spirit of God came upon him, we've talked about that before. In the Old Testament, the spirit of God would come upon a person.

Now in the New Testament, as a believer, you have the Holy Spirit in you, but I still believe the Holy Spirit can come mightily upon believers as they're filled with the spirit of God. That's what we need. And he went out to meet Asa and he said to him, hear me Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, the Lord is with you while you're with him.

If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you. So complacency had set in, apathy had set in, he's not trusting on God anymore as much as what we can learn from this.

And a prophet gives him a warning. This is one thing I think our nation desperately needs, to hear that voice crying in the wilderness. If I could talk to the big megachurch pastors, and I would have one message to these guys, Steve Furnick, Andy Stanley, Joel Stein, I'd say, guys, it's time to be the warning prophet for a season.

You need to stop this encouragement garbage, because now we need to warn these people. They need to be encouraged. Yes, thank you.

Please, encourage, encourage, encourage. But there comes a time where, like Leonard Ravenhill said, we need more prophets in our pulpits and less puppets. That's the only way, the warning of the prophet saying, in your complacency, in your sin, in your debauchery, wake up.

You've got to turn to the living God. And that's where I get frustrated. Sometimes I'll hear these guys' sermons, 500, 600, 1,000, a million views.

Not one word of sin, ever, or repentance, ever. How are you going to get a nation to fall on their knees and seek Almighty God again, unless you call out the sin and you call the people back? We're just like Elijah. How long will you waver between two opinions of God as God? Follow him.

And the people answered him not a word. The warning of the prophet. So it's interesting, so powerful was God's presence on Judah that Israel began to follow God as well.

Now, if you don't quite understand that, the nation of Israel was broken up into two kingdoms. Judah was about half the size, it was in the southern kingdom. And then Israel was called Israel, it was in the northern kingdom.

So if you can picture the area of Israel, Israel's the top, Judah's the bottom. They saw God moving in Judah, and they began to desire God's presence again. But then the Bible says something very interesting.

Nevertheless, the high places were not removed. Nevertheless, the high places were not removed. And you'll see that throughout the Old Testament as well.

So remember this, you'll have friends and you'll have family who see the goodness of God and they want it. But they're not willing to remove the high places. Here's a concern that I have with a message like this.

I know there's people going, that's what I want, that's what I need. But you're not willing to remove the high places. How do I know what they are? Shane, you know what they are.

God's been convicting you what they are. And we continue to stay in rebellion and continue to worship at these high places. One biggie that I talk about often is media choices.

Uh-oh, pin drop. But is that not true? These high places, these things we look to that are, enjoy media if it's good, and be built up and encouraged by it. We need more of it.

But if it becomes, these things begin to draw you back away from God. And there's high places that are set up, from addictions to bondage. We have to pull those down.

And then chapter 16, verse 7, I'll be closing here shortly. And at that time, Hananiah the seer came to Asa, king of Judah, and said to him, because you have relied on the king of Syria. Boy, this guy Asa, he was starting off good.

Now he's had two prophets come and rebuke him. But isn't that interesting? We can start off good. And the longer I live, I know you'll agree, it's not as important to start good.

Please start good, but the real battle, the real measure of success is finishing well. Do you know the statistics of how many pastors quit the ministry? 1,500, I think, a month. Two out of ten, two out of ten make it if they start after 25.

Moral failings, discouragement. How many of us can think of moral failings in the church? Southern Baptists are going through a huge controversy right now. It's all around finishing well, finishing well.

It's those daily choices that are so important. So he said, because you have relied on the king of Syria and have not relied on the Lord your God. This is so interesting.

He relied on God when he defeated the Egyptians or Ethiopians. And now he says, I got it, I'm gonna make a treaty with this other king. I'm not gonna rely on God anymore.

He said, you relied on the king of Syria to make a treaty and not God. Therefore, the armies of the king of Syria have escaped from your hand. Were the Ethiopians not a huge army? Yet because you have relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hands.

So is there anything this morning you've taken into your own hands that God wants you to give back to him? Now, how do you think King Asa acted and said, you're right? What did he do? Well, it says right here in verse ten, then he became angry with the seer. Seer was what a prophet was before the word prophet. He was angry with the prophet and he put him into prison.

And it's a good reminder that bitterness and anger will get you nowhere. Mad at God, men, Father's Day, it gets us nowhere. We need to begin to pull down those high places again in our homes.

So my closing thought is this, when you pull something down, something has to be erected. Whenever you remove something, you have to replace it with something else. So praise God, Asa passed down this to his son, Jehoshaphat.

And I talked about this earlier, Jehoshaphat, King Jehoshaphat. Now a great multitude is coming against this king. And what did he say? He said, for we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us.

We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you. Have you ever been there? Come on, let's wake up, church. Let's stop playing church today.

You know life is difficult. We've got on our church faces. Oh no, nothing bad ever happens to me.

I'm always positive. I'm always uplifted. No, no, no.

Sometimes when we say like this, there's a vast army that's coming against me. I don't know what to do, but where are my eyes? My eyes are on confusion, on trying to manipulate, on trying to fix it myself. No, my eyes are fixed on Christ and Christ alone.

That's why I love that song. It's fixed on Christ. And the prophet said, listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem, this is what the Lord says to you.

Do not be afraid or discouraged for this vast army, for the battle is not yours but God's. There's your two nemesis right there, fear and discouragement. Fear paralyzes.

I don't want to do anything. I can't move, I can't, I can't, and I'm fearful. And discouragement, I might as well just give up.

Those two things will come against you and your family every chance they get. There's been so many times I just get so discouraged, like why are we doing what we're doing? Your house looks more like hell than heaven, right? The kids aren't getting along, everything's, what's going on, Lord? That's a time to press in and saying, yes, vast army's coming against me, but we trust in you, and you alone, our eyes are fixed on you. So what is the battle plan? Well, we've already just been talking about it.

It's worship, it's obedience, it's reliance on God and prayer and bringing back these aren't new truths, they're old truths that need to be brought back in again. That's why I love that song, I don't want to miss one word you speak. Do you truly say that? Do you truly say that? Let me wake up this church this morning.

Everybody's waiting for lunch or something. But every word you speak, God, I need to hear every word you speak because they are life to me. That's where I get my nourishment, that's where I get my strength, that's where I get my motivation, everything is life to me.

I don't want to miss one word you speak in your word and worship and prayer. That's when God speaks to you. You're probably not going to hear much on CNN or Netflix.

You're going to hear a bathe in the word of God, living in the word of God, praying and worshiping, God begins to speak. He says, is that the sweet smelling Roma of sacrifice of a life on the altar? According to Romans, I hear that voice, I'm going to honor that. And they told the king, one of the scriptures I didn't read, the famous scripture, the eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth.

What? To show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to him. You can take that to the bank. It's much more secure than the FDIC.

The federal, did I pronounce that right? This is a secure loan. God, this is your battle. Yeah, but Shane doesn't look like I'm winning.

I'm winning right from your eyes. And God might take you down to a low spot before he builds you up. He might take you down to a low spot to humble you because we have to be broken.

Another thing I'm concerned about with the silent pulpit is the angry watchman. Listen to a message by Carter Conlon in New York. The angry watchman and how we can become angry and yelling at people and critical and judgmental, that doesn't do much at all.

We have to be broken and humble. So I think I've made that clear for the believer on what needs to happen in our lives. To pull down high places, serious changes need to take place.

Here's what happens. In our mind, we say, I need to get radical for God, but that's where it ends. It doesn't come out in the application because that's where it hurts.

It's in the application that the changes are really made. Now everything I've said though, are you aware of this? This is only applicable to those who know God, children of God. And if you don't know God this morning or listening to this later, I want to not only encourage you, like the quote I read earlier.

We cannot linger, time doesn't linger, death does not linger, judgment does not linger, the devil does not linger, the world does not linger. We cannot linger in this part of salvation and putting God on the back burner. Most people say, well, I'll do that later in my life.

I want to have fun right now. I don't want to follow God like you, you're just crazy. I want to have fun right now.

And I want to remind you that I've many times before that the funnest, the most blessed, joy-filled place to be is in God's will, in right relationship with him. And you have all these people lecturing you on how much fun they're having, yet they're hooked to Xanax, alcohol, and marijuana. And they're struggling with suicidal thoughts and they don't know how they're going to get through life.

And that's fun? That's fun without God, really? No, the problem is you're bound in your mind by the deception of the enemy. And the enemy will plant seeds of lies into our minds, keeping us from that genuine relationship with Christ. So I want to encourage you, the Bible says, confess with your mouth, just confess.

I don't know, most of you I know, some I don't know, balcony, I don't know where you're at, kids, young adults. We've had kids come over next door and say, I need Jesus. Because many people have, in America, we go to church, that's what we do.

We go to church, we live in America, we hang a flag, so we're a Christian. We have a flag on our porch, no? That doesn't necessarily mean you're a Christian. What means you're a Christian is repentance of sin.

I confess, I confess this morning that Christ is Lord, I'm not, I thought I was, I see sin as God sees it, I need a Savior. Help, just like we read here, help. But Shane, no army's against me, right, because you're on the army's side.

You're on the side of the enemy. It's either a child of God or a child of Satan. All that strong language, what's in the middle then? Please let me know.

There's nothing in the middle. Jesus actually rebuked religious leaders. He said, you sons of the devil.

You win one convert, and when you win him, you make him seven times or twice the son of hell as you are. You lie just like your father the devil. So we have to ask that question, am I on the wrong side? Am I worshiping the wrong God? Do I truly know the one true and living God? The Bible is crystal clear, just repent and believe.

Cry out and confess and repent and believe, and God will save you. But that's too simple. Well, I'm glad it's so simple.

God makes it so simple that a 12-year-old can grasp it. Yet it's mind-boggling for the PhD atheist. Why? Because their mind cannot get around that there is a God that loves them and died for them and will offer the forgiveness of sin.

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