

Spiritual Peril

by Steve Gallagher

The sermon warns of the spiritual peril of false peace and the importance of heeding the Lord's warning to avoid the consequences of apostasy.

Duration: 1:04:58

Scripture: Isaiah 14:12

Topics: "Apostasy", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon delves into the concept of apostasy throughout history, drawing parallels between past great apostasies like the time of Noah, the prophet Jeremiah, the time of Christ, and the anticipated great apostasy of the end times. It emphasizes the perilous times foretold by Paul, focusing on the need to heed warnings and not be deceived by false peace or teachings. The message urges listeners to awaken from spiritual slumber, repent, and seek true peace through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

I want to speak on the subject of apostasy this morning, and let me just briefly say that in the history of man, there's been four primary, well, I should say great apostasies, although that kind of isn't right, but there was the time of Noah, and we don't know exactly what the spiritual climate was leading up to that time. All we know is that people were calling out on the name of the Lord, but things went bad, and it got to the point that it was so bad that God looked down upon mankind, and what he saw going on in their hearts was only evil continually. And then there was the time in Jewish history that culminated the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah for 50 years preached the truth there in Israel, and then came the final overthrow where the people of Israel were taken to Babylon. The third one was during the time of Christ. I mean, in the time leading up to it, and the fourth one is the great apostasy of the end times of which you and I are a part of, and most of us don't realize it.

In each of these situations, it ended in terrible calamity because it got to the point that people had become so hardened, so calloused that God could no longer reach them through the words of men, and the only possible hope there was was to be found in a complete overthrow of the system as it was. Paul said that one of the characteristics of the last days would be that there would be perilous times, and I want to talk about one of the aspects, one of the perils of our day. That's what I want to focus on today, the perilous times that Paul spoke of, and I'm going to use the story in the Old Testament of Jeremiah.

If you want to turn to chapter 8, this is something that happened. These are real stories, real people. There was a real Jerusalem in those days and all of that.

It's not fables. These things happened, and actual people were living and breathing and thinking and reasoning in their minds during those days. The situation, if you know the book of Jeremiah, is that over a period of time, the Jewish people had grown increasingly hardened to the Lord and had just this steady downhill slide.

The interesting thing is there were times of quote-unquote revival, but each of those periods, through these different godly kings, there would be a brief, things would simply get a little better for a while, but then they would go back, and then it would be worse than ever. I don't know about you, but I know for myself, when I would backslide, that's what would happen to me, and it was a slow steady getting worse and worse, even though there were those times when I would turn to the Lord, but then I would go back, and then it would get even worse. And it was that way for the people of Israel, and Jeremiah faithfully ministered in that culture for 50 years.

And we all know the story, it ended up in the overthrow of the people of Israel, and so on. So, we're going to look at chapter 8. Jeremiah has been warning the people, and I'm going to pick it up in verse 4, and we'll just go over a few of these verses to try to get a sense of what he was saying to the Jewish people of his time. And this is a word for us today, that we should heed, because not only did this story actually happen, but it's also a type of the apostasy that we are in, and we can learn some things from this.

Lord, I just pray that you will bless the reading of your word, that you would unstop our ears, Lord. Help us to hear the word of the Lord. You said, all who have ears to hear, and we want to be of those people who hear what you are saying.

Open our ears, I pray, in Jesus' name, amen. So, this is the Lord speaking to Jeremiah, and he says, you shall say to them, thus says Jehovah, do men fall and not get up again? So, now, I'm going to be sharing some things as we go through here, so I'm not going to just read it through. But, the Lord starts off with a very practical illustration.

A guy's walking along, he trips and falls on his face, you know, and falls on the ground. Well, unless he's absolutely knocked out, or he's broken a couple of legs or something, he doesn't just lay there, right? And so, the Lord is appealing to their natural sensibilities, and he's trying to make a point to the Jewish people. So, he starts off this way.

Does someone fall and not get up again? And, of course, we all know, human nature instinctively tells us, no, of course not. You get up, you know, and dust yourself off, and you just go on. But, he says, does one turn away and not repent? It's like he can't comprehend what's happening to his people.

Why, then, has this people, Jerusalem, turned away in continual apostasy? You know, the Lord is looking down, and he's not understanding. From his perspective, it seems as logical and as rational as someone tripping and falling and getting up and doing the right, you know, what they need to do. He doesn't understand his people are going astray in mass, but not getting back up.

They hold fast to deceit. It's like they embrace it, cling to it, insist upon it. They refuse to return.

I have listened and heard. Now, if you could imagine God stooping down from the heavens, he wants to really get a sense. This is all figurative, of course, because the Lord's aware of everything going on.

But, again, he's painting a picture, allegorically here, of God stooping down so he can really hear what are people saying, what is their thinking, what's going on inside of them. I have listened and heard. They have spoken what is not right.

No man repented of his wickedness, saying, what have I done? You know, and when someone repents, that's the first thing. It's like the blinders come off, like the prodigal son. He came to his senses in the pig pen, and the first thing that became clear to him was his unworthy condition.

I am not worthy to be called your son. I have sinned. That's what wells up inside someone's heart, who comes to their senses spiritually and are awakened out of their deception.

But no man is doing that, is what the Lord is saying. Everyone turned to his course like a horse charging into the battle. What he's describing here really could be like the early days of the prodigal son, when you couldn't reason with him.

He had his mind set. He was going to the far country. There was nothing you could say that was going to deter him.

He made up his mind. He was rushing headlong into destruction, and he didn't care what you said about it or whatever, even whatever the consequences were. He wanted what he wanted, and that's what the Lord is saying here about his people.

Verse 7, even the stork of the sky knows their season and their turtle dove. You know, in other words, they instinctively know that you fly north during the summer and you come back south before winter. You know, I mean, it's just instinct to tell you to do that.

But my people do not know the ordinance of the Lord. How can you say this is what the Lord's been hearing? Maybe not actually verbal saying, because he hears the voice of our heart. How can you say we are wise and the law of the Lord is with us? This is pointing to the religious system that they had intact during their day.

It was all... Well, look, but behold, behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie. They have so corrupted and twisted what I originally set forth as truth. They've taken that thing, truth, and they've just added and subtracted and moved it around and just deformed it to where it wasn't even saying anything like what the Lord had said through his word.

The wise men are put to shame. They are dismayed and caught. Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord.

They have rejected the word of the Lord. What kind of wisdom do they have? And then he starts talking about the consequences, what they're going to face because they would not listen to the word of the Lord. And he expresses some things.

And he says, because from the least even to the greatest, everyone is greedy for gain. In other words, they're all in it for themselves, every single one of them. They're just in it for self.

Everyone practices deceit. He said, from the prophet even to the priest. I mean, he's talking about the ministerial ranks there.

And here's where I'm trying to get to right here in verse 11. This is speaking of the ministers of that day. And this could be said in our day as well.

They heal the brokenness of the daughter of my people superficially saying, shalom, shalom. But there is no shalom. All right.

Now, again, this word came to these people in a religious culture. This isn't a time when they are wholly given over to idolatry and just take completely walked away from Jehovah and all of that. It isn't like that.

This isn't Amorites or someone he's talking to. He's talking to the Jewish people who had a religious system intact and in place. And this word shalom in the Hebrew is very significant.

It really represents, in those days it was more represented outwardly, of course, but it represents a prosperity of the land. That everything is good and people are safe. Our borders aren't under threat from armies.

They didn't have the Russian troops massed at the borders or something. People were living in peace. That's what shalom meant.

That's what they wanted it to be. Everyone, of course, throughout history desires that. But after the cross in the New Testament period, the concept of peace went through a transformation like practically everything to do with spiritual life.

So now it became an inward peace. So no matter what was going on outwardly in life, you could have an inward peace in life. And that came through the term Irene, the Greek term for peace.

And it represents what we can have in the Lord. All right. So I want to illustrate this message by looking at the main actors here in this story.

And when I mean in the story, I mean in the whole story of Jeremiah, not just in this particular few verses. So first of all, you have the Jewish people. These are the people that Jeremiah is speaking to.

And regardless of their spiritual condition, they are considered God's people. And what I mean by that is they are the ones who have the oracles of the Lord and they are the ones who have been taught the truth. They are the ones that have the name of the Lord and so on.

And it's the same with the evangelical church of our day. We are God's people in that sense, regardless of people's actual spiritual condition. We are known as that we are called Christians.

Right. So that's what that means. And Jeremiah says this about these people, that they are broken.

They are spiritually broken. Something is not right. They're not functioning the way that they should function, like a car being broken down, you know, just doesn't run right or anything you can think of like that.

That's what the term broken means. Something was broken and like it would be the term you would use for a fractured bone. You know, a guy falls, he shatters his leg or something.

It's broken up. It's a mess and it needs to be fixed. But these quack doctors are handling it in all the wrong way.

They're just putting a bandaid on it, basically. So that's the situation of the Jewish people. They're broken in Isaiah.

He said it very powerfully in the first chapter. I'm just going to read a couple of verses out of it. Why do you keep on rebelling? You want to be punished even more? Israel, your head is already covered with wounds and your heart and mind are sick.

From head to foot there's not a healthy spot on your body. You're covered with bruises and sores and open wounds. Your wounds have not been cleansed or bandaged.

No medicine has been put on them. And, you know, it's the picture I get in my mind is a guy, maybe a mob of guys come upon him and they just beat him down. And they get him on the ground and they're kicking him and they're hitting him.

And just when they're done with him, he's laying there writhing in pain, gasping for breath. There's not an inch on his body that hasn't been hit or bruised or whatever. And that's a picture of what we look like to the Lord when we turn away from him.

And that's what he's seeing. The Lord is looking down from heaven upon his people. And this is what he's seeing.

But the problem is that they have a religious system in place that is tranquilizing them. You know, in other words, as if they are so loaded up on drugs that they are not in touch with the reality of their condition. And, you know, guys come into this program.

And, well, actually, I can remember Robert coming in. I don't know how many years ago. That's been 10 years ago or something.

Robert coming in here. I can't remember how many different medications you were taking back then, but a number of medications. He was so tranquilized that God could hardly get through to him.

I mean, he was a mess. You would be surprised. And, you know, over a matter of time, the Lord was speaking to him.

And because Robert had an open heart to the Lord, one day he just announced that he was going to quit taking those drugs. I'm talking about drugs the doctors had prescribed to him because it was depression and all of that stuff. The doctors had prescribed the stuff that what the drugs do is they keep you from having the highs and lows.

Okay, I understand. You know, these guys don't have a real answer for the highs and lows. And so they're just trying to help people as best they can.

I understand that. That's what the medical field does. And so they load people up on tranquilizers, not because they don't want them to have the highs, but because they don't want them to have the lows.

And when you take these kind of drugs, it just buffers you and keeps you just in this slight state of, I don't know what you call it, drug, you know, just being drug. And that's what religion does to people. It inoculates you from your need for more of the Lord.

You know, so you get just enough to just kind of keep you, you know, to feeling like everything's okay. But it's a false peace that people have. You know, that is what the spiritual peril is that I'm talking about this morning, by the way, is false peace.

And you know, the devil is the author of false religion, and he is the author of false peace. Jesus said, the peace I give to you is not what the world gives. And that's what we're talking about.

The enemy has a peace of mind for you. You can be completely tranquilized, just cruising along happily. I remember when I injured my shoulder, and they had me on morphine for a while, and man, I was having fun, you know.

I would just lay in bed, Kathy still laughs about it, because I'd be laying in bed seemingly in a deep sleep. But they had told me that, you know, they gave me this clicker. I had surgery on my shoulder, and they gave me this clicker thing.

They said, yeah, every 10 minutes you can click that thing, and it'll drop some more morphine, you know. So I'd be in a deep sleep, but man, I never failed. As soon as 10 minutes came, click, click, you know, I'm looking for more.

I was cruising. I was cruising. I was happy for it to be just the way it was.

I mean, you know, okay, I was in a lot of pain, and I needed it for a period of time and so on. But it is such a picture of what religion will do to us, you know. It just gets us to where we are like that.

We're just cruising along, no highs, no lows. Nothing can really penetrate our hearts. We become untouchable, because we have just enough religion to inoculate us to feeling our need.

So the first actors in this play would be the people of Israel, and the second would be the false prophets. They're the ones who Satan used to create this system. They are his agents.

They're wolves in sheep's clothing, angels of light. But the reality is there's something different going on inside them, and they offer just enough to keep people going, you know. What they are is they have Satan's gift of encouragement.

You know, Barnabas had the gift of encouragement. He was called son of encouragement. And that is one of the gifts of the Spirit that the Lord gives to certain people.

And I don't know if you've ever known anyone that has the gift of encouragement. I definitely don't have it, but there are some people who do. I have the gift of discouragement.

And I do my best to share it. But a person who's walking in that gift in the right way, you know, they are such a blessing, because you get to feeling discouraged and down. You just heard a Steve Gallagher message, and they come in, and no, I'm just kidding.

Because a person who really has that gift would never do anything to take you away from the Lord. Their gift is to take you to the Lord. But a false prophet has a false kind of encouragement, and their encouragement is meant to do one thing, to take you away from the Lord, to encourage you in your backslidden condition.

All the delusions that you have built into your life to lie to yourself, they are there to reinforce in a soothing, nice, friendly voice. Jeremiah said, call it the lying pens of the scribes who twist the Word of God into something other than what it really is. Now, you guys have heard this verse so many times, but you need to hear it in the light of this message.

Because Paul, when he was describing the atmosphere spiritually of the last days, the church in the last days, one of the things he said about it to Timothy, he said, for the time will come, this is an absolute fact, it doesn't matter if you have heard this verse 10,000 times, if it doesn't pierce your heart and affect you and cause you to sit up and take notice, it's a sign that you have become so hardened that the Word can't reach you anymore. This is a prediction of what would come, and I'm telling you guys we are in this right now. This is what we live in, this culture.

The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. That word endure means to bear the weight of something, and they get to where they can't handle the weight of the message. Don't give me the truth.

It's too heavy. I can't handle it. And you know what? You can't.

And that's the problem. We have a church largely full of people who don't really walk with the Lord, and whatever they do do in their Christian life is all done in the flesh, because you can't live the Christian life in the flesh. It's impossible.

It is too heavy to bear. And so rather than go through the process of repentance to bring you into the real thing, what people do is they just heap onto themselves, well it says it right here, teachers in accordance to their own lusts, desires, the things they want. They're fitting their religion into the lifestyle they have chosen for themselves.

And Paul calls it myths. They're myths that people are taking. You know, and I'll tell you this.

Listen, I have been around a long time now in the church culture, and for years I listened to radio preachers. It's been many years since I've even heard one, but I remember well enough that what I heard was half-truth. In other words, the radio preachers that I listened to, I'm not going to name names or whatever, but they were giving a lot of truth, a lot of good teachings, a lot of nice sermons, things that could be beneficial, but they were only telling half of the story.

You never would hear them renouncing sin or confronting worldliness or talking about people's pride. You never would hear those kinds of messages because they needed people who liked to hear them, you know, who would send in money and keep their radio show going or whatever. Same with TV preachers, maybe even more so.

And so, you know, they're only presenting the positive side of the gospel, half the truth, the nicey half, the half that I could give to people and they'll all like me. You know, the one thing about false prophets are they're cowards. They shouldn't even be in the office of ministry because their main concern is that people like them and approve of them and that there's something in it for themselves, just like what Jeremiah said about the false prophets of his day.

They're all in it for self, is what Jeremiah said. And he stood out from that group. And Paul said, this church culture that you and I call home, that you and I have become so acclimated to, that you and I feel so comfortable in, this church culture, Paul said, while they are saying peace, Irene, when they are saying peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly, like labor pains upon a woman with

child, and they will not escape.

Now, I thought about that verse a little bit because it's like it doesn't make sense to me. How could they be saying peace and safety? And that's the mindset they're in. Okay, I understand that.

But then labor pains come. Well, we know what labor pains basically are. I mean, I kind of know.

They start off with a little bit of discomfort that comes occasionally, and then it grows in intensity more and more and more, right? Until it's really severe at the end. Well, how can you be saying peace and safety through that? That's what I was trying to figure out. It doesn't seem to make sense.

But I want to tell you, that's exactly what happens. Because when you are in a tranquilized state of mind, nothing gets through. Nothing gets through.

It doesn't matter. And you just, man, all you have to do is look in your own heart. Look in your own heart.

Think about a year ago, the condition you were in a year ago, okay? Before you came to Pure Life Ministries, you were out there in the church world. Think about it the way that your mind used to think. You'd hear about all these things happening around the world, these weird weather patterns, and El Nino, and earthquakes, and bizarre things like 10,000 fish suddenly dying for no apparent reason, or birds falling out of the sky dead, and no one can explain it.

All these weird things happening. And the world's got answers for it all, doesn't it? They explain everything away, and you're like, oh yeah, yeah, I guess that's about right. Or maybe in some sort of a way, you attribute it to the end times or something.

But how much did it really affect you? Did it cause you to drop to your knees in repentance? No, not one of you. That's why you had to be brought to Pure Life Ministries, so you could be put in a place of truth and light for a period of time, so your soul could be washed clean of all the deception that you've heard, and you could be given a new footing, a new foundation, a new start, a new chance in life. So the false prophets are a big part of the picture, even though they're not mentioned here in this particular passage.

But they are a big part of the picture there. And the third character, who also is not in this particular passage, is the king of Babylon. And that's Nebuchadnezzar.

But if you've read my book, Intoxicated with Babylon, you understand that Babylon represents the Antichrist spirit in this world. And it all began back in the Tower of Babel, where all the false religions were birthed. And that's when there became a systematized program of religion outside of the worship of Jehovah and all his demands.

And it was an alternative religion that has been established and became systematized to where it became a mindset of the world. That's what we have right now that has grown stronger over the years. And at the very end, what is it in Revelation 17 and 18? It's Babylon, mother of all harlots, who will be the representative of the Antichrist government, the spirit of the Antichrist.

Everything that God is standing against is represented in Babylon. Lucifer is the king of Babylon. It says it right in Isaiah 14.

So Nebuchadnezzar is kind of a type of that, and Babylon is a type of the world system. The Apostle John said something in 1 John 5, and I happened upon this one day, and it just really hit me in a different way

when I read that verse that particular day. I'd read that verse who knows how many times.

Let me just read it. It's 1 John 5, 19. We know that we are of God.

Now this is John speaking to Christians in Asia Minor there, and when he's talking about we, he's talking about himself and the other disciples and the godly people that were around him, and he's saying we know that we are of God. Okay, there's some of us that are definitely walking with the Lord, and then there's a pause, a comma, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. And the way it hit me this particular day is there, right there, is Jerusalem, the people of God, and Babylon, the people of this world.

You know, and false religion is a group of people who are trying to have one foot in each world. They're trying to make gray area. This is what false prophets do.

They are constantly attempting to make gray area, what God calls black and white. You're either in or you're out. It's, you know, it's one or the other if you read scripture, and don't listen to the lying pens of the scribes.

Just read the scripture for what it says, men. Just read it for what it says, and don't let lying false prophets turn it into something else. Anyway, what hit me that day is that all these people in this false religion, this false Christianity, are lying in the power of the evil one.

They're in a stupor, and they don't realize it. They've been tranquilized. I was asking Kathy.

We have a friend who was on the mission field with the Faith Homes for many years, and she woke up one night. There's these rats in Africa, and I don't understand. I don't remember the story that well to be honest with you, but I think this is the way it goes.

These rats get up, and they're known for this. They breathe on a person's ear, and it numbs the person's skin, so the person won't feel anything, and the person's sleeping through this, and this is exactly what happened to this woman. She was sound asleep, and she woke up, and this rat was right there in her ear, blowing on her ear, and the idea is what they want to do is they want to eat the ear, the meat of the ear.

It's nasty, but that is what I see the enemy doing, breathing his breath, just tranquilizing people with a false peace. People are either living in the power of the evil one, or they are living in the power of God. It's one or the other.

You can have religion and lie in the power of the evil one, and that's what I'm afraid is the case for much of Christianity, and we produced a video a year ago, maybe, called Careless Ease, and it's just six and a half minutes. I'm going to play it right now just to try to make it a little more clear what I'm talking about. Go ahead and play that, guys.

The enemy is being allowed a greater measure of power on this earth. It's all part of what the Lord is allowing, so the enemy is going to be going after Christians like never before. If we're going to stand against the enticements that the enemy is going to lay in our path, then we must learn how to deny ourselves.

We've got to figure this out, but the basic attitude of most American Christians is to go after and get every kind of pleasure they can possibly get their hands on, short of obvious sin, and to enjoy every form of entertainment they can possibly enjoy, short of obvious sin, to indulge every desire of the flesh they can

possibly indulge, short of obvious sin, to pursue every personal idol that they have built up in their heart, as long as it's short of obvious sin. The bottom line is we have had prosperity in this nation for 50 years, and now we are living with the fruit of it. You see the condition of the church after 50 years of enjoying prosperity.

Some people think it's God's blessing, I don't know, but whatever it is, now you see the fruit of it. Sexual sin out of control, promiscuity out of control, divorce out of control, drug use out of control, and all the other sins that go along with all of that stuff, and all the heart issues and stuff, people just living for self out of control. That's the fruit of 50 years of a church that has enjoyed prosperity.

Basically the only time people say no to themselves is when they can't afford something. If they have the means to get it, and they want it, they get it. Look what Jesus said, verse 34, watch out.

Maybe your translation says beware. Does that word mean anything to you? When Jesus, if he stood in front of you and said beware, is there anything in you that can be reached? Is there something in you that hasn't become so jaded that Jesus' words can actually affect you and scare you, trouble you, disturb you? They should. He gives a warning here, don't let your hearts be dulled.

Let me read it in the living Bible, watch out, don't let my sudden coming catch you unawares, don't let me find you living in careless ease, carousing and drinking, and occupied with the problems of this life like all the rest of the world. Now the translation says that one part, but take care that your hearts are not loaded down with self-indulgence. This word carousing, it really just means the after effects of overindulgence.

It's how you felt Thanksgiving evening. It's how you feel when you give over to spending money. It's how you feel when you've just thrown yourself into the world, sat in front of some carnal movie.

That's what it's referring to. The word is dissipation. It's just an over-excessive indulgence in something.

And Jesus is warning us, end-time believers, don't do this. You know, one of the problems with indulgence is it will turn you into a moral coward, to where you can't take a stand for anything. Everything's got to revolve around your feelings, around your desires, and your flesh, and your pride, and so on.

That's why the emperors were always so soft and effeminate, because they had given themselves every pleasure that they could possibly become involved in. That's where it takes you. If your lifestyle is a lifestyle of constantly saying yes, yes, yes to your desires, you're in trouble.

You are not prepared for what's coming upon this earth. You know something? We all desperately need to learn how to say no to ourselves. We have got to learn how to control ourselves.

In the midst of a culture that is out of control, we have to be controlled by the Holy Spirit. We have to learn to go to the Lord, not to just jump on opportunities, not to just go and do the thing that you have the power to make happen. We've got to learn how to take something to the Lord and say, Lord, with a sincere heart, do you want me to do this thing? You've got to learn how to do this.

If you're going to be led by the Spirit, the sons of God are known by the fact that they are led by the Spirit, Paul says. You know what it means to be led by the Spirit? You have to come into that, and to be able to be led by the Spirit, you've got to be willing to say no to yourself. When you want something really bad, you should force yourself to go in the other direction, at least until you can get clear-headed about it.

That's how you prepare yourself to withstand all the things that the enemy is going to lay in your path in the days ahead, to bring you into his mindset that all revolves around pleasing the flesh. I wanted to play that just to kind of bring it into the reality of our daily lives in American Christianity, and I asked you to think about it. You men who live here, you're taken out of your life for a period of time, but what are you going back into? Are you going to be lying in the power of the evil one? Because that's what you just saw.

People who are calling themselves Christians, lying in the power of the evil one, and they're only fooling themselves. All right, the final character we want to touch on here in our message is Jeremiah, God's representative to a backslidden people. And you know, I'll say something.

Let me put it this way. Pure Life Ministries is an end-time ministry. God raised this ministry up, not because of Kathy and me, but in spite of us.

He had it in his heart that there had to be a place where people who were in deep trouble could go to find him, to find a real life in God, to find real peace in God. And he raised up this ministry, a prophetic ministry. This is Jeremiah for you.

This is Jeremiah for you. You know, the people of his day wrote him off. Almost everyone wrote him off.

And the message coming forth from this place would have been, if he were here today, it wouldn't have been much different, I don't think. Maybe he would have preached with a lot more fire, no doubt. But as is always the case with God's prophets, it's the spirit of Christ that's at work in those men.

It's his words that are going through those men. Noah, preacher of righteousness, it was Jesus Christ, his spirit that was going through the anointed messages that Noah was preaching on those hard-hearted people. And Jeremiah, and obviously Jesus, but also the message in the last days through various godly people around the world.

It is Jesus Christ trying to reach people to bring them to himself. Jesus was the greatest prophet. And this is what he said, do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth.

I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. And I want to read something that Oswald Chambers wrote. He said, we talk glibly about Jesus being, quote, the prince of peace.

But when he comes into the world that is peaceably ruled by Satan, he comes to send a sword, not peace. The coming of Jesus Christ is not a peaceful thing. It is overwhelming and frantically disturbing, because the first thing he does is to destroy every peace that is not based on a personal relationship to himself.

The peace of physical health, of mental healthy-mindedness, of prosperous circumstances, of civilization, not one of these is peace of God, but the outcome of the souls of men being garrisoned, being garrisoned by the prince of this world. I thank God that Jesus is willing to tell us the truth. Thank God, because I was a fool on my way to destruction, and Jesus spoke the truth to me.

And if he wouldn't have, I would have destroyed myself. Absolutely. How great God's love is for us.

And I want to share a little something that Jesus shared in a parable. And it wasn't the point of the parable. He was talking about the way the enemy operates and so on.

But I want to read a couple of verses out of Luke 11, because I want to show you something. I'm wrapping it up here in just a couple minutes. This is what Jesus said, verse 21, when a strong man, fully armed,

guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.

But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder. All right. Now, the possessions being described here are the souls of men, the souls of men, your souls.

And the picture here is that Satan is holding people captive in a garrison. Think of a Philistine garrison. He's holding these souls captive.

Now, Jesus only uses one word to describe the condition of these people. Just one word. It's right here.

Undisturbed. Undisturbed. That's the word, Irene.

Peace. In other words, they are in the grip of Satan. They're held captive to do the devil's will.

They're lying in the power of the evil one. But they're at complete peace. They're free from alarm.

They are at ease. Perfectly satisfied for it to be the way it is. Does that describe the way you have lived your life? You know, there is a peace that Jesus brings, but that peace comes through the cross and nowhere else.

There is no other way to arrive at the peace of Jesus Christ than going through the cross. That is the only way. And if anyone tells you anything differently, they're lying to you.

It's the cross. It's the repentance, the obliteration of self, the humbling of yourself before the mighty hand of God. If you want the peace of Jesus Christ, that is the only way you will ever have it.

You can't create a religious system for yourself. You can do it and you can even be in peace, but it's a peace that's inspired by Satan. Anyway, the picture is that these souls are in this garrison and this mighty Savior busts through the walls of that garrison and comes in.

You know, it's Ephesians 2, there we are lying in the power of the evil one. How does it go? You are dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air. That was us, sons of disobedience.

But verse 4, but God being rich in mercy sent Jesus to rescue your soul. But can you hear his voice, men? That's the question. Can you hear the Lord's voice? Do you have ears to hear what he is saying to you? You know, there are really, if you could see the live-in program here, the residential program here through my eyes, I wish you could.

Kathy and I have been here 25 years now, right? 25 years here. We started the ministry out in California a few years before that. And we have dealt with a lot of men, right? It didn't just start the day you showed up here.

I know it seems like it did. Me. Thank you, Bradley, for that wonderful illustration.

No, this ministry was going on before some of you were even born. Some of you young guys, you have no idea what we have seen and experienced in this place, on this property, in those years, and all the heartache we've experienced. Because when you care about people, when you love people, and you watch them turn away from the Lord, it breaks your heart.

It breaks your heart. It's very difficult. That's why these counselors, you know, if you could see them in the spiritual realm, you'd see them with broken arms and bandages and traction, barely hobbling along, you know.

We could steal ourselves and be cold and hard, treat you like underlings, and treat you like dirt, and just do it or get out, you know, and have that. But that isn't our heart. Even though in the flesh, sometimes you feel like getting in that spirit.

But it's God's love in this end-time ministry that's being extended to you through a voice that's trying to wake you up. It is God's love calling out to you men. You think the people of Jerusalem felt any different than you? They were at peace.

They had all the lying prophets telling them that, well, Babylon's never going to come in here. They're hundreds of miles away. Nebuchadnezzar isn't coming.

There's nothing to be concerned about. Peace. Be at peace.

That's the voice of what you have heard before you came here. Now, listen, I know that many of you have been in good churches. You have godly pastors who bring a good, balanced message.

I understand that your problems are not because of your church. But there are others of you that have been in churches that are very much in that spirit. And when you leave here, you've got to find yourself a good church that's going to bring the whole counsel of God's word and not just the nicey message that makes him have a big church or something.

Anyway, over all these years of dealing with people here, we've seen those who have come to the Lord with sincerity, and they are the ones, those of you that are here, you are why we are here. All the others have their opportunity. I hate to say it.

If I sat and thought about it for very long, I could just sit down and weep thinking about it. How many in this room right now, you're only here because God has given you an opportunity, maybe a last opportunity. But you'll shut him out.

You'll close your ears. You don't want to hear it. You want to go back to your false teachers because you do not want to give up what you just saw in that video.

That's what your life is all about. And you are happy for it to be so. And you will be happy for it to be so right to the dying breath.

But I want to tell you what happens after that dying breath. There will be coming a great undeceiving because you will stand before the Lord and your lying prophet that you listened to, that you wanted to listen to, will not be there to defend you. You will stand naked before the greatest hero that mankind has ever seen, the one who laid it all on the line for you.

You will stand before him with all your selfishness, with all your pride, your unwillingness to humble yourself and respond to his voice. You will stand before him and your life will be shown for the reality of what it was. And all the false peace will be wiped out.

All the lies will be wiped out and nothing but reality will stare you in the face. There is a point that God's Spirit quits striving with man and he gives them over to themselves. The worst judgment that could ever

happen to a man.

He said about Ephraim, leave him alone. He wants his idols, leave him alone. I know this is a strong message today, man.

I understand it's strong. I'm not trying to yell at you or put you down or hurt you or offend you. But this is just one of these days I felt God wanted me to bring this message.

There are some of you in here that desperately need it. You need Steve Gallagher in your face today, grabbing you and shaking you and trying to wake you up. You've had nice messages.

A month ago, we pleaded for God's presence. He came mightily just out of the kindness of his heart and lavished you with his love. Did you respond? Some of you did.

Have you responded to messages in the past? Yes, some of you have. Others haven't. And you're in great danger, spiritual peril.

And part of it is this false peace that you have taken upon yourself. I'm going to end with a quote from George Whitfield, who preached during the Great Awakening. And he preached on this particular passage.

I'm just going to read what this man said. And Bradley, I'm going to ask you to close us in prayer. Poor soul, what a cursed condition are you in? I would not be in your case for 10,000 worlds.

Why? You are just hanging over hell. What peace can you have when God is your enemy? When the wrath of God is abiding upon your poor soul. Awake, then, you that are sleeping in a false peace.

Awake, you carnal professors. You hypocrites that go to church, read your Bibles, and never felt the power of God upon your hearts. You that are formal professors.

You that are baptized heathens. Awake, awake, and do not rest on a false bottom. Do not blame me for addressing myself to you.

Indeed, it is out of love of your souls. I see that you are lingering in your Sodom and wanting to stay there. But I come to you as the angel did to Lot, to take you by the hand.

Come away, my dear brethren. Fly, fly, fly for your lives to Jesus Christ.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/yhrT7O9mmWs.mp4>
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