

The Moment of Crucial Decision

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of making crucial decisions in faith to avoid a life of mediocrity and double-mindedness.

Duration: 47:11

Scripture: Exodus 16:7

Topics: "Decisions"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of wholehearted obedience to God's commands. He highlights how the Israelites had repeatedly disobeyed and murmured against God, but He had forgiven them. However, after ten instances of rebellion, God decided to punish them. The speaker uses the example of Saul, who was given a clear command by God to utterly destroy the Amalekites, but he failed to obey completely. The sermon concludes by urging listeners to make a decisive and unwavering commitment to follow God's word, citing Numbers 14:22 as an example of the consequences of a lack of wholehearted obedience.

Transcript

I want to turn to the first chapter of the letter of James. James chapter 1. We know that the opposite of faith is unbelief. We would say that the opposite of the man of faith is the man of unbelief.

But there is another expression given here to the man of unbelief, which is very good for us to see. It's speaking here about when we ask God for something. It says here in James 1.6, anyone who asks God for wisdom or anything else, let him ask in faith.

That's the man of faith, who asks for something in faith without any doubting. And if he doubts, then he's like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. And I've often said, there's one promise in the New Testament for unbelievers, and that is James 1.7, let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord.

That's it. When we come in unbelief, we can get nothing. And the reason is given in verse 8, because that man is a double-minded man.

Do you know that double-mindedness is the opposite of living by faith? The contrast here is between faith and doubt. You may say I have faith, but I want to say, brothers and sisters, if you are double-minded, you

are an unbelieving man, an unbelieving woman. You are the opposite of the man of faith.

In the Old Testament, there was a time when Elijah stood before the nation of Israel, in 1 Kings chapter 18, and he asked them this question in verse 21. Essentially, what he was asking was, how long will you be double-minded? How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him. And if Baal, follow him.

And I believe that's the position in which many, many believers are today. They see something in the Word of God, but they are hesitating. They are of two opinions.

They are not wholehearted and radical concerning what they have seen clearly in the Word of God. And for some time, God allows us, God is merciful, He is long-suffering, He allows us to toss around these two opinions in our mind. Think of what I will lose if I go completely this way.

If I forsake everything and go this way, what will I lose? And I weigh the pros and cons, as they say, and the advantages and disadvantages. But after a while, a time comes in the lives of every one of us where God expects us to take a decision concerning what He has revealed in the Word. And I believe it's a time of, it's a very crucial time in a person's life when he comes to that point.

May not be the first time that he's heard these truths, but if a time comes when he's heard these truths a few times, and then he has to make a decision. Now, what am I going to do? How long am I going to sit on the fence? How long am I going to hesitate between two opinions? And the decision he makes at that particular time is going to determine almost the rest of his life. And then, I've seen many believers like this, who make the wrong decision, they can still sit in the assembly, but they just remain mediocre believers for the rest of their lives.

It's not a question of which assembly you sit in, it's a question of what our heart's response is, whether there's a double-mindedness in our response to what we have heard in the Word of God. And I want to give you three examples of this from the scriptures that would have relevance to the type of situation a number of us perhaps find ourselves in right now, after what we have heard in these days, and on past occasions that we have come for conferences. The first is Numbers chapter 14, and verse 22.

This is one example in the Old Testament where a single decision made by a group of people determined their destiny for the rest of their lives. It could not be altered. Up until this time, God had been long-suffering with them, and overlooked many of their weaknesses, and forgiven them repeatedly.

But now, God said, that's the end. I'm not going to overlook it anymore. Numbers 14.22. This refers to the time when two years after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, they came to the borders of the land of Canaan.

We need to understand what application this has for our life. The coming out of the land of Egypt is a picture of redemption. Through the blood of the Lamb that was shed, a picture of the shed blood of Christ, they went through the Red Sea and out, which is a symbol of immersion, water baptism.

And the pillar of cloud from above came down upon them, a picture of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And this pillar of cloud led them. And they came under the leading of the pillar of cloud, which is a picture of the leading of the Spirit, to the borders of the Promised Land, which teaches us that the Holy Spirit always leads us to the borders of the life of victory, and tells us to get in.

And we read in the Word of God in Deuteronomy 2.14 that this was two years after they left Egypt. And now they had come to the borders of the Promised Land. The pillar of cloud had led them there.

And then they heard the Word of God saying, Now, you have come out of Egypt, you have been baptized in the Red Sea, you have been baptized in the cloud, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, you have wandered around in this dry, barren wilderness, this up-and-down type of life, now I want you to enter the Promised Land. I want you to enter this land, there are giants there, but I shall slay them for you. You will slay them through my help, rather.

Go in and possess it. Now, there were many times previously when God had spoken to them about various things, they had disobeyed, and God had forgiven them. They had rebelled, God had forgiven them.

They had murmured, God had forgiven them. Many things they did God had overlooked. In fact, it says here, nine times God overlooked their rebellion and their murmuring.

But now, the tenth time, after two years, this was the tenth time, we read in verse 22, Surely all the men who have seen my glory and my signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put me to the test these ten times, and have not listened to my voice. The last nine times they played the fool with me, they took it lightly, what I said, I have overlooked. But now, that's the end.

It doesn't mean they're all going to die immediately, or they're all going to get some sickness or some chastening. It just means God gave them a guarantee, for the rest of your life, you will be a wilderness Christian. Because you're a double-minded man.

You listen to the message, and then you sit and wait, and think of what you will lose here, and what you will lose there. You listen to the opinions of men. You listen to this doctrine, and the other doctrine, and the other one.

Alright? I have overlooked it many times, but now, the Lord says, now you have to make a decision. Are you going to enter in, or are you going to remain a wilderness Christian? We read here, that when these children of Israel came to the borders of the promised land, Moses sent twelve men into the land to have a look at the land. They came back and said, this is a fantastic land.

Because, it's certainly verse chapter 13, verse 27, it flows with milk and honey. But, the people are very strong, the cities are large, and the giants are there. And therefore, we cannot go into it.

But there were two men, who stood against that opinion. We read that in Numbers 14 and verse 6. They were Joshua and Caleb. Twelve people went to see the land.

Two people came back and said, the Lord is pleased to give us this land. Let's go and take it. Don't rebel against the Lord, Numbers 14.9. Don't fear the people.

The Lord is with us. Don't fear them. And the congregation was faced with a choice there.

Shall we listen to these two men, who say that God will help us? Or shall we listen to these ten men, who say that it's not possible to go in? And like most Christians do, they followed the majority. And they were wrong. The majority in Christendom is always wrong.

You can take anything, if the majority follows it, you can be pretty sure it's wrong. That's how it is. It's always a minority that understands the truth.

And those Christians, who are looking for large numbers, are sure to go wrong, because that's exactly how these people went wrong. Because they say, let's see, it's very simple to decide, ten people are on this side, two people are on the other side, these people must be right. And they went completely astray.

And those two people were the only two people who had faith. Never forget this, brothers and sisters, when you go back to your different localities, don't look for the majority. The majority is always carnal.

And if you listen to them, you'll go wrong. The people who stand up for God are usually in the minority. The question is this, who are the people who stand for what God's word says? It's not a question of, is it possible or not? The question is, has God said it? We must order our life by this.

Has God said it in His word? Then it must be possible. But if I try to assess by my human reasoning, is such a life possible or not, I'll always get the wrong answer. And that's why I tell people, don't just listen to somebody preaching on victory, and get all stirred up and you want to live this life of victory.

Go to the word of God, and see whether God has promised it for you or not. If God hasn't promised it for you, there's no hope for you. But if God has promised it in His word, if He has said, this land of Canaan is for you, this land flowing with milk and honey is for you, you can be more than a conqueror in Christ, sin shall not have dominion over you.

If God has said it, then it's for you. Never mind if the vast majority of people disagree. And these, initially it was only ten persons versus two persons.

But gradually, the opposition mounted up, till it became two million people versus two people. The whole congregation took sides with the others and turned against two people who stood and said, we can go into the land. And God said, all right, I have seen their decision.

Nine times I overlooked it, and they thought, I'll keep on overlooking forever, but I shall not overlook it anymore. Numbers 14, he said, now, verse 23, these people, this is the tenth time, and this is the last time, they shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers. But my servant Caleb, because he had a different spirit, and you know what that spirit was? The spirit of faith.

He will see the land because he followed me fully. I will bring him into the land. And Joshua also had that spirit, and he entered into the land.

And so we see that the children of Israel at that time took a decision which they could never reverse for the rest of their lives. Do you think that type of thing is possible today? I believe it is. We can hear about the land of Canaan, the life of victory, we can hear about it, hear about it, hear about it.

We take it lightly, we take it lightly, we are not wholehearted, we don't hunger and thirst, we don't mourn. I'm talking not about those who heard it for the first time in this conference. I'm talking about those who have heard it for a long time now.

They know all the theories, they know all the answers. They haven't taken seriously with finishing with this wilderness, wanderings, saying, Lord, I want to finish, I want to enter in the land that you have promised for me. I want to enter in and possess this life of victory in my home, this life of victory in my office.

I want to enter in, Lord. I am on your side, I want to enter in. I may not understand all about it, I may not know how to get in, but I say, Lord, I believe I can get in, I believe you will help me to bring every giant under my feet.

Those are the people like Joshua and Caleb. And I say this for your encouragement, that you may find in your town that among all the Christians, two million are against, and two are for. The question is whether two people can stick it out when two million people are against them.

And the wonderful thing that we see in Joshua and Caleb is that for thirty-eight years they stuck it out. Just two of them believing that God would take them into the promised land, while there were two million who didn't believe it. They were really men of faith.

I believe God's looking for such people who will stick it out. Now I want to show you another example in the Old Testament, and that's found in 1 Samuel chapter 15. In 1 Samuel chapter 15, we read of another man.

He was a king, the first king of Israel, and his name was Saul. He started out very well. We read in 1 Samuel chapter 9 and chapter 10, how he started out.

It was tremendous. He was a man of humility, a man who had such small thoughts about himself. Just like the way all of us start out when we start our Christian life, in sincerity, with small thoughts about ourselves.

But by the time we come a few years in the life of this same man, he has changed. And these things are written for our instruction, so that we learn from the failures of men like Saul. We see here that the Lord gave him a command.

Thus says the Lord of hosts, 1 Samuel 15.2, I'm going to punish Amalek for what he did to Israel. I want you to go now and strike Amalek, verse 3, and utterly destroy all that he has. It's so clear the word of God.

Just read carefully and you get it so clearly. Utterly destroy all that he has. Do not spare him.

Put to death man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey. It was so simple, so clear. All animals, all human beings had to be slain, in simple words.

And Saul went out to battle, and he defeated the Amalekites, verse 7. And here you find, he modified the word of God. He destroyed all the people, it says, verse 8, but he spared one man. Now, where did he get that idea? God's word was very clear.

Why did he modify it at one point? These things are written for our instruction. This is the mark of a double-minded man. A double-minded man who is unstable in all his ways.

He plays the fool with God, till finally God says, you're not going to enter the promised land. We see another example here. A man who's been given a clear word from God, and he uses his reason, and says, I'm sure God won't mind it, if I modify his word here.

I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, that's how he lost the kingdom. God had already given him chances earlier, but now this was the last chance. Finished.

If you modify God's word, you cannot possess the kingdom. It may be a small thing. And then it says in verse 9, Saul and the people spared Agag, who was the king, and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the

fatlings, and the lambs.

And all that was good. They were not willing to destroy them utterly, but what was despised and worthless, they utterly destroyed. That was also a modification of God's word.

You see, we find that in Christendom today. There is a thing that we see in Christendom in this century called interdenominationalism. You see, Saul was an interdenominationalist.

What is the mark of an interdenominationalist? For example, we are going to have an evangelistic crusade here in Bangalore to reach the lost heathen for Christ. And we shall hold hands with the CSI church, but of course, if we hold hands with them, we cannot preach on water baptism. I know the word of God preaches water baptism, but I'm sure God won't mind it if we just keep quiet on that to please the CSI people.

This is exactly what Saul said. I'm sure God won't mind it if I modify His word. I know He said we must kill all men, but He won't mind it.

He'll understand there's a good reason for this. The good sheep, for example, we can offer it to the Lord. There's always a good reason for modifying God's word.

Or we will not speak about the baptism in the Holy Spirit because some of the brethren people are also holding hands with us and we don't want to offend them. And so these interdenominationalists modify the word of God till they have what they call the bare minimum. You know, what they say, the important doctrines.

You see, they have decided, they are the clever people who have decided according to God's word what is necessary to hold and what are unnecessary. That's why I say Saul was the first interdenominationalist and he lost the kingdom because of it. And though interdenominationalism may apparently bring some results, it can never bring people into the kingdom.

That's clear. I have no doubt in my mind about it at all. If we modify God's word just to please someone, if we modify God's standards because we don't want to offend people, some rich person comes along and we don't tell him the truth that you cannot serve God if you love money.

You cannot love money and serve God. You cannot love God if you love money. It's impossible.

You don't tell him the truth. There are sisters who come in who don't believe in covering their heads nowadays. We don't tell them that because we don't want to offend them.

Well, we are interdenominationalists. We say we don't hurt people. There are so many things like this.

Little things. We don't want to offend people. We don't want to speak about anything.

I say you can never build a body of Christ like that. You're a double-minded man. We speak the whole truth of God.

There is no part of God's word we're going to modify. We don't care who gets offended, which rich person gets offended and goes, but we're going to build the kingdom of God. And this is where Saul modified the scriptures.

And it says here, he thought he had obeyed the Lord. He thought the Lord would be pleased with him. And Samuel came to Saul.

He said in verse 13, well praise the Lord, brother. I've carried out the command of the Lord. He thought he had.

And Samuel said, what then is all this bleating of the sheep in my ears? The lowing of the oxen which I hear? What is that? Why is it there are certain things I see here, which are contrary to the word? You have modified the command. You don't speak on certain things, because those things if you speak on, you'll offend certain people. You're not speaking the whole counsel of God.

And you can see that in the congregation. You don't want to offend certain people, and therefore you keep quiet on certain things. Samuel was a prophet.

He was not an interdenominationalist. He was not a compromiser. Interdenominationalist is just a respectable word for compromise.

Well, God spoke to Saul through Samuel that day. And he said, I have finished with you. Verse 28, Samuel said to Saul, the Lord has torn the kingdom from you today, and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

I want to tell you, dear brothers and sisters, God may raise you up in a particular town in this country. And he may have a purpose through you to accomplish a task, to build the body of Christ. And you may be very small in your own eyes when God picks you up.

But when God begins to use you just a little bit, it goes to your head, and you begin to think no end of yourself. And you begin to be puffed up, and you begin to modify God's standards somewhere. And God says, I've taken it away from your hands.

I've chosen someone else. God may bear with you for some time. But a time will come when he has seen that you're a compromiser, and he puts you on the shelf.

And that is irreversible. It's a decision that cannot be reversed. Up till 1 Samuel 15, there was hope for Saul.

But after this, there was no more hope. Just like we saw in Numbers 14. Up till Numbers chapter 13, there was hope for the children of Israel to enter the promised land.

After Numbers 14, no more hope. The same thing we see here. If Saul had obeyed, he could have had the kingdom.

But he disobeyed. And it says here, the Lord told him through Samuel verse 17, Is it not true that once upon a time you were small in your own eyes, you had small thoughts about yourself? And the Lord anointed you, gave you a ministry, gave you a fantastic responsibility. But now, the Lord gave you a little test to find out whether you are a double-minded man.

Do you think just because the Lord's chosen us to be the leader somewhere, he won't test us? The leaders need to be tested more than anybody else to see whether they are compromisers, to see whether they are partial towards the rich, whether they seek the honor of men, whether God can keep them in that position or whether God has to remove them and give the anointing to somebody else and give the

kingdom to someone else. And then the Lord sent you on a little mission and you didn't realize it was a test. And he wanted to see what was in your heart.

He said, go and destroy the sinners, fight with them till they are exterminated. Why then did you not obey the voice of the Lord? And Saul says, I did. I did obey the voice of the Lord and it was true.

He had obeyed the word of God 95%. He had obeyed the word of the Lord 95%. But 95% obedience, Samuel said, is disobedience.

I don't know how many people realize that. I'll tell you, there are very few Christians who have a scriptural understanding on this point that 95% obedience is equal to disobedience. That's what Samuel said.

Why did you not obey the voice of the Lord? He doesn't say, why did you obey the Lord only 95%? That's not what he says. He just says, why have you not, why have you disobeyed the Lord? And he says, well, I obeyed the Lord and softly 95%. 95%.

The Lord said, but Samuel says, that's disobedience. That's disobedience. And Saul tried to put the blame on someone else.

He's a clever man. We try to put the blame on others. It says the people took some of the spoiled sheep with a good reason to sacrifice to the Lord.

And Samuel said, the Lord is not interested in your sacrifices. He's interested in your obedience. Don't try to make up for your lack of obedience by sacrificing.

I've seen this sometimes. You tell some rich man who comes to hear the word of God that you need to pay your income tax properly. Now, those of us who hardly earn one thousand rupees a month, we are not tax assessees.

We have no problem here. So we do not know how these people who earn one and two lakhs a year are being tempted. We don't know how they are being tempted.

They are being tempted in massive ways to cheat. It's very easy to look down on them, but they are being tempted massively because what they have to pay to the income tax is large amounts. I remember one person once asked me in a meeting after I said some things along this line, what about what I have cheated the tax in past years? I said, you've got to pay it back.

That's all there is to it. Large amount? You've got to pay it back. Well, that was the last we saw of that person in the meeting because there were other more comfortable places where such people could sit.

So, I say, now that such a rich person has at least once in his lifetime suddenly been confronted with the fact that he is disobeying the word of the Lord in one area, and yet he may be a good brother in many other ways, and you know what he will try to do? He will try to make up for his disobedience by giving 11% to the Lord from now on, next year, or 12% sacrifice. Rather, I'm giving 2,000 rupees more to the Lord's work next year. And it is a cover-up for some disobedience.

Or he'll engage in some evangelism, or do something. Beware. Now, I've used the illustration of the rich person because there may be hardly anybody here in that category, and it's easy to see that.

But we can apply this now to our personal life. Beware of trying to cover up some disobedience in your life by some extra sacrifice for the Lord in some other area. That's exactly what Saul tried to do.

And the Lord saw that and said, I've spoken to you before, I've spoken to you repeatedly, and now this is the last time I'm speaking to you. Do you want the kingdom? And it says here, Saul said later on, in verse 24, I have sinned. Yeah? It's easy to say.

I have sinned. I have, yeah, now I realize. I have transgressed the command of the Lord.

The reason is, I feared the people and listened to their voice. Here is the mark of a compromiser. He is afraid of displeasing people.

I want to tell you, my brothers and sisters, every man who's afraid of displeasing people, whether it is father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, or anyone like that, is really a compromiser, a double-minded man. He hears the word of God on one side, and then he sees his mummy's tears on the other side. Then he's hesitant.

He wants to obey. He obeys 95 percent, but he holds back because something there pulls him. The Lord says, fine.

He allows it for a little while, but a time comes when he says, when the Lord says, all right, that settles it as far as you're concerned. Verse 28, I'm looking for somebody else now. And then you can come back and say, oh Lord, please, I really want to come back.

And the Lord says, no, I've made up my mind. You remember how Esau came back afterwards? It says Esau came back and he wanted the blessing, but he couldn't get it. My brothers and sisters, a time can come in our life when we have made a decision for the last time, and then the Lord has put us on the shelf permanently.

As far as his purposes go, it takes quite some time to get there. I'm not saying that that happens the very first time. But I say, if we remain in double-mindedness, a time will come when the Lord will put us on the shelf, like he put Saul on the shelf.

He didn't kill him. He still sat there as the elder of the assembly, still sat there as the king for a number of years, but the Lord has rejected him. There are a lot of pastors and apostles and elders and all types of titles we have these days who are sitting on their thrones today, like Saul, who were rejected by the Lord long, long ago.

The anointing has moved to some David in a cave, and few people have understood it. The anointing has moved. I feared the people and I listened to their voice.

And then Saul says something else in verse 30. He whispers in Samuel's ear. You see, he's still not willing to acknowledge that before the people.

He sinned before the people, but he's not willing to acknowledge that before the people. He says to Samuel, I'll tell you in your ear, I have sinned, but please don't let me down before the elders of the people. Please come with me and give them the impression that I'm all right.

And Samuel said, nothing doing. I won't do that. I will not come back with you and give you the impression that everything is all right, when everything's not all right.

I have found myself in situations where, say, there is a difficulty between some brothers, and then each brother wants me to take their side. I say, sorry, you can't get me to take your side. You can't get me to come with you and pretend that everything is all right, when everything's not all right.

It's no use just coming here and whispering, yes, I sinned, but don't let me down publicly. Sorry. That's what Samuel said.

I'm sorry, I cannot do that. And Samuel left Saul and that was the end of Saul's ministry. It's a tragic thing that God can call a man for a ministry and he can lose it completely just because he seeks the honor of some man, he sees the tears of some relatives, and for some reason, for some earthly gain, and think what he loses.

Just like Esau lost the birthright, Saul lost the kingdom. These things are written for our instruction. Do not be double-minded.

God has been merciful with many of us for many years, but I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, the time is coming when God is calling us to be radical, and the word of God comes to us, how long will you sit there hesitating between two opinions? If you say this is the truth, follow it wholeheartedly. Don't be a compromiser and inter-denominationalist and a double-minded man. Wholeheartedly chuck all that and follow it.

Don't say, but somebody will get offended. I am afraid of the people or I'm afraid of my relatives. God will say, all right, sit with them for the rest of your life.

You will miss the kingdom. Then I want to give you a third instance, which is in the New Testament, where Jesus looked at the Jews, the Jewish nation, to whom he had ministered for three and a half years. God doesn't take his decisions suddenly.

He gives time. He gave time to the Israelites, ten times he spoke to them. He gave time to Saul, a number of years, and he gave time to the children of Israel.

Not forever and ever and ever and ever, no. In the case of the Israelites, it was two years, and if we see 1 Samuel 13, it was probably two years in the case of Saul too, we don't know exactly, it's not very clear there, the period of time. But in the case of the Jewish nation, it was three and a half years, that we know, the ministry of Jesus.

And now Jesus had come to the end of his ministry, and it says in Luke 19, that he approached the city of Jerusalem, where he had preached for so long, and he wept over it. And he said to them, if only you had known in this day the things which make for peace, but now they've been hidden from your eyes. He says, the days will come when your enemies will overpower you, destroy you, level you to the ground, verse 44, your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another.

Reason? Here's the reason. Because you did not recognize the time of your visitation. You thought, well, God's been long-suffering for so many years.

He's been long-suffering for so many years. He sent the prophets, we, during the time of the judges, we went into captivity, but the Lord brought us back. Then we went into captivity again, and the Lord brought us back.

Then the enemies ruled over us, but then the Lord overthrew the enemies again. The book of Judges is full of that. He sent us to Babylon in the time of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but the Lord brought us back.

Yes, the Lord was merciful with that nation for many years, but now was the final word. God, who spoke through the prophets for many years, finally He spoke to that nation through His Son, and He said, it's time for you now to decide whether you want the new wine or the old wineskin. Do you want that which has been produced by the traditions of men, or do you want that which is the pure truth of God? Do you want the church as the body of Christ in your locality, or do you want the church as a human tradition which pleases people? And they rejected the word of the Lord through Jesus.

And the Lord said, you did not know that this was God's last call to you. You have made a decision, and the Lord says, fine. You see that in Matthew chapter 22, sorry, Matthew 21, a few days before Jesus was crucified, He came into the temple, and He overthrew the money changers.

This was just after He had ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey, as we read in verse 7 and 8, the multitude cut branches from the trees, just a few days before His crucifixion, just about a week or so. And Jesus entered the temple and said, turned out the money changers, and He said, it's written, verse 13, My house shall be called a house of prayer. He still called it My house.

But just a few days later, we read in Matthew 23, verse 37 and 38, He said, Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her, how many times I preached to you, how many times I told you to get rid of this old wineskin and all the traditions of men, but you would not listen. I wanted to gather you as a hen gathers her chicks, but you were unwilling. And now, notice what He calls that house in verse 38, your house is very important.

My house has become your house, is left unto you, desolate. Jesus was saying, I washed my hands, as far as you are concerned. I tried and tried and tried, but now you have made that final decision.

What do these examples from the word of God show us? That it is a serious thing when God speaks to us repeatedly about something. He may forgive us many times, He may forgive us our double-mindedness and our playing the fool with Him, playing the fool with His word for a long time. But a time will come when the final verdict will be written across our life and the Lord will say, All right, that's the last time.

From now on, you shall be in the wilderness forever. From now on, you're not the man, like in Saul's case, I'm looking for somebody else. And like in the case of Jesus, the Lord says, He moves out of that group of people whom He had chosen first and moves and starts with another people.

This has been the history in the history of the Christian church. This is what we have seen. God has raised up some movement, like He raised up the Jews.

And God has raised up a group of people. They started out well, but they became compromises after a while. Men-pleasers, double-minded, they lowered the standards.

The sword was no longer swung in their meetings. They began to please the rich people. They began to please the influential people.

They brought in traditions which are not in the word of God. And gradually, the old wineskin was there again. And the Lord says, All right, I have to move out now and start again with somebody else.

Woe unto us when that day comes, when we think we are the people of God in a city. That's what the Jews thought. We are the people of God in this world.

God can never bless anybody else through us. We are the body of Christ in this particular city, and we don't walk in humility, we don't walk in fear. Jesus comes to us with His word, and we don't respond to it.

The time can come when what Jesus calls My house can become your house. You can still carry on with your meetings. The Jews carried on with their meetings and their sacrifices for many years.

But Jesus had left that camp, and He went outside and said, I've got nothing more to do with this. It's what happened in the church in Laodicea. They call themselves the church of Jesus Christ, but Jesus, it says in Revelation 3.20, was outside the door.

That's a verse that's often quoted to the unbeliever, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. But I want to tell you, in the New Testament, it was not quoted to the unbeliever. That's quoted to a church.

I stand at the door and knock. Here was a church having its meeting, and Jesus was outside the door. Can you imagine that a church can be like that? Sure.

That the Lord came with His word, but they wouldn't respond to it. And so it's a serious thing to hear God speaking to us. Very serious thing.

Where there is no prophetic word of the Lord, it's not serious. There you can do anything you like. But if you hear the prophetic word of the Lord, it becomes very serious thereafter what your response is going to be.

Now, I'm not saying this is the last day of decision for everybody sitting here. Many of you have heard these things, perhaps newly for the first time. There are some who have come here for the very first time and have heard some of these truths.

Well, I'd say there's time for you. But there are others who have heard and heard. I'm thinking particularly of those who have heard for many, many years.

My dear brothers and sisters, let me tell you the truth. You are in greater danger than all these others who have come newly. Because a time can come when we can sit back and say, God has chosen us.

We are the people of God. And we lose that radical, wholehearted attitude that we had before. We compromise.

We want to please men. We modify the word of God. We lower the standards.

We say things to please people. We don't want to offend certain friends and relatives and all that. And God says, all right, I've spoken to you enough number of times.

From now on, you're a wilderness Christian, a Christian without the kingdom. You've missed my best for your life. So, may those who have years to hear, hear that.

May it never be said of anyone who has heard the word of God in these days that we are double-minded. At any time in our life, it says about Jesus that he steadfastly set his faith to go to Jerusalem. And may that be true of us too, that we have steadfastly set our faith to go the whole way with God, whatever the cost.

And then we can be sure.

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