

WHY WE SHOULD NOT FEAR THE STORM

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In Chapter 4 of the Gospel according to Mark, Jesus was telling parables and talking about the kingdom of God; and in Verse 30, He said, *“Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?”* and He went on to tell the parable of the mustard seed. Further on, in Verse 33, it says,

“And with many such parables spake he the word unto them as they were able to hear it. But, without parables spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things unto his disciples.”

So Jesus spoke to the people and then He explained it to the disciples. Verse 35 says,

“And in the same day when the evening was come, He said unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.”

If you would notice, it seems that, especially in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus was always doing something. He was always going *“unto the other side.”* There is a message in this, that there is always something over on the other side that needs to be done, for we find out that after He went on the other side of the lake and healed the demoniac and did some other things, then He had them pass over again to the other side (Ref. Mark 5:21). He was always going back and forth on that lake. So this may be a message of evangelism: “Let’s go!” We leave that there now for what that is worth.

So then, let us continue reading in Chapter 4 of Mark, beginning with Verse 36,

“And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with them other little ships. AND THERE AROSE A GREAT STORM OF WIND, AND THE WAVES BEAT INTO THE SHIP SO THAT IT WAS NOW FULL. AND HE WAS IN THE HINDER PART OF THE SHIP, ASLEEP ON A PILLOW: AND THEY AWAKE HIM, AND SAY UNTO HIM, MASTER, CAREST THOU NOT THAT WE PERISH? AND HE AROSE, AND REBUKED THE WIND, AND SAID UNTO THE SEA, PEACE, BE STILL. And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Now, I believe that there is in this passage here one of the messages of the hour, concerning the presence of God in our midst, and concerning our failure to recognize that

God is with us. The storm arose. We would say it was a natural storm, a natural phenomenon. However, we find that Jesus treated it as a demonic affair. I am not saying that every storm is a demonic affair, but Jesus treated it as a demonic activity in the midst the sea that they were on. It may be that the demonic activity used the storm to frighten the disciples and to get to them.

So, as we have read, we find that the waves beat upon the ship and it is like the the ship was about to sink, and (according to the disciples) Jesus was just there asleep in the boat. Now, this is how it is recorded, and I do not know what you feel about the inerrancy of the Scriptures, but I know that there is no mistake in the Bible. As Ces will tell you, God did a perfect work, and everything in the Bible is given also by inspiration of God. We see a lot of things said wrong and a lot of things done wrong [by people] in the Scripture, but even if somebody said something wrong or did something wrong, God allowed it to be recorded, so that we might have the example of Scripture.

We live in the realm of the Spirit and the Spirit speaks to us, but when we hear something from the Holy Spirit, we authenticate it by the Scriptures. It is not the Spirit that we authenticate, but we authenticate our receptivity (we authenticate our medium). We do this by checking the Scriptures to see, "Does the Bible have an example of this?" Of course, it is bound to, because the spirit that speaks to us is the same spirit that wrote the Scriptures, and is the spirit that is in the Scriptures. Jesus said, "*The words that I speak to you they are spirit and they are life.*"

So these disciples said that Jesus was asleep in the boat, and I have not run it down with a fine tooth comb, but I know that God is never asleep. Of course, Jesus, in His human flesh did go to sleep and so on, but if we take the example of Him being asleep with the situation of Him being dead, we know that Jesus died on the cross and Jesus was buried in the tomb, and when they went there a little while afterwards, Jesus was dead, and yet He was not dead: He is the one who was dead and is alive! So He is the one who was asleep and yet was awake! Amen!

So, because Mark was not there, Mark recorded from what he heard from the other disciples; and being inspired by the Spirit, Mark said that Jesus was in the stern of the boat sleeping on a pillow.

"And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind,"

Now, it says that they "*awake*" Jesus and that He "*arose*," and the Greek word that is used for in both cases is the same kind of word that is used for Him being raised from the dead and going up to the heavens; and in the original Greek, where it says "*And he arose...*", it actually says, "*And he being roused....*" Now the way I read this, it is not just Jesus being awakened from sleep, but it is like He was "stirred up!" He roused up as someone would rise angry, to say, "Well, let's get this nonsense over with!" So, in the original Greek it says, "*And He being roused, He rebuked the wind....*"

Now if God had created a storm, then God does not rebuke the storm. You follow

what I mean? However, Jesus rebuked the wind, so He is treating it as having had a demonic influence behind it. Let us say that it was natural causes (this natural wind and this natural sea), but in the midst of that, demonic activity intruded itself into this situation; and don't you worry, if he can, the enemy will intrude himself into any situation—even a good situation.

So Jesus was roused up, and it says that He “...rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, *Peace, be still.*” This is how it reads in the King James, and for a long time I was puzzled about that. In the first place, without the comma, you would think that He was talking to peace and telling peace to be quiet. That is how I learned it in Sunday school, but there is a comma after the word peace. However, if you look in the original Greek, He did not say “*peace*” at all. He said, “BE QUIET!” (“*siopao*” in the Greek); and where it says “*be still*,” it is “BE MUZZLED” (“*pephimoso*” in the Greek). So He rebuked the wind and He spoke to the sea, and He said, “Be quiet! Be muzzled!” In other words, “Be bound! Be muzzled!” For God has that power to muzzle every demonic power.

Now, the key note of this is that we live in a world of storm. We live in a world of storm, and yet I hear the charismatic neo-pentecostal elite guards saying every day that we are heading for a great big revival. They are saying that the world is heading for a big revival and they are all getting ready for revival. In fact, I heard lately from some that this revival is going to be a revival of prosperity for the Church and for the Christians: “God is going to confound the wicked; and God has promised to bestow upon us the riches of the wicked, and so we are getting ready to get rich. We are going to be revived spiritually and we are going to be revived materially.”

They are predicting a great prosperity, but I do not see it in Scripture. I am not a great eschatologist. I really have not studied Revelation and that part of the business as much as some others have. You have to see someone like Cecil for that kind of thing. God has put us all in the Body with different gifts, and so on. Nevertheless, you can see it. You can smell it in the air. You can see it in the signs of the times. You can see that actually things are getting progressively worse and not better.

Now, again, I do not want to come to frighten you with any Apocalyptic message, but facts are facts, and I think we are heading in a direction that is progressively worse. You see it in government. You see it in every walk of life. You can see it when you talk about the rising crime rate.

We have recently moved to Florida and just two weeks after we got there, they came out with a list; and when you talk about living under stress, Florida is listed something like the third from the worst place to live in the United States. Now, they were talking serious talk about the statistics for heart attacks, and strokes, and high blood pressure, and depression. The level is so high in this area simply because of the crime factor and the drug factor. However, is not just Florida, it is everywhere. The United States is the best place to live in the world—you had better believe it! It is the freest place to live in the world and it is the safest place in the world, but you would not believe it by reading the morning paper, or watching the six o'clock news. Things are getting progressively worse, and I believe we should not make the mistake to believe that tribulation is going to happen suddenly in one

large cataclysm. It may be that we are looking for one big sudden thing happening, so that one day we will wake up in the morning to hear somebody say, "I am the Antichrist!" However, we learned that the spirit of antichrist is already in the world, even from the time of the writing of the Scriptures; and what I am trying to say is that the conditions today are the conditions that are making for and getting the way ready for tribulation. It is not going to be that we just wake up one morning and find ourselves suddenly there, but it is going to creep up on us. It is even now creeping upon us gradually, in the same way that we can get so accustomed to breathing polluted air that we do not even know that we are breathing polluted air! We get so accustomed to living on the edge that we do not know that we are living on the edge. We get so accustomed to the cheating and the lying and the deception in government and in high places, that we think things are going well.

The children that are born in this age (within the last twenty years)—except for what they hear their parents say, they probably think that we are in a golden age. Because of what is being promoted, they probably think that these are the greatest days to be alive. They say that it is great to be alive because we are exploring space, and we are in the computer age and we are into all the things that we are into; and so it is great to be alive in the computer age, and so on. **WHAT WE ARE SAYING, HOWEVER, IN ALL OF THIS, IS THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE DUPED INTO BELIEVING THAT THINGS ARE ALL RIGHT. THINGS ARE NOT ALL RIGHT! HOWEVER, WE DO NOT NEED TO BE AFRAID OF THE CONDITIONS, BECAUSE WE HAVE SOMEONE IN THE SHIP WITH US WHO IS ABLE TO REBUKE THE WAVES AND TO STEM THE TIDE THAT IS CREEPING UP UPON US. MOREOVER, I BELIEVE WITH ALL MY HEART, THAT AS WE PREPARE OURSELVES AND AS WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS, AND AS WE HAVE A CLOSER WALK WITH THE LORD, WE WILL BE READY TO MEET THE CONDITIONS THAT COME UPON US. BECAUSE IT IS NOT REALLY WE WHO ARE MEETING THOSE CONDITIONS, BUT IT IS THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD WITHIN US THAT WILL PREPARE US AND FORTIFY US TO MEET IT.**

I do not know if you are into this, but once upon a time (a few years ago now) people were talking about storing food (and all that) for famine times, and making underground shelters, and so on. However, the truth is that there will be NO place to hide! There will be no place to hide! There will be no safety in storing food, because, first of all, your compassion will not let you have it for long. You could have this building full of food, I guess, and if the rest of Schuyler is hungry you would give it out anyway; and if you would not, they would take it, and perhaps even over your dead body. Therefore, to me this kind of thing is not even a security. There is no security for us in these things. Our security is not going to be in our Star War programs. I mean, the arsenals and the weaponry will lie there idle because the force that is going to be attacking is not coming from Russia. There are those in the fundamentalist world who have their eyes upon Russia, but I believe that is one of the deceptions of the enemy that we believe. We are concentrating on Russia and things like this, but Jesus said in Luke 13 concerning those who came and told Him about those whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, He said, "Think not that any of you are any safer (or more secure) than they, or that you are any more righteous than those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell," but He said, "Unless you repent, you shall all likewise perish."

I know this kind of talk sounds to the fundamentalists theologians like unpatriotic talk, because they are wrapping themselves in the flag now and saying that God and our atomic weapons and the Stars and Stripes will see us through. I heard a message just the other day by one of the most prominent preachers in America, and his message was on patriotism. However, that is not the kind of enemy we are fighting. I do not think we are going to be any more secure than the Russians, except our security is in God. If the Russians are without God, then they are in trouble; and if the Americans are without God, then we are in trouble; and if the Jews in Israel are without God, then it is they who are in trouble. **MOREOVER, WE ARE ALL IN REAL, REAL TROUBLE IF WE DO NOT BOW OUR KNEES TO GOD AND TO JESUS CHRIST AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND LET THE SPIRIT OF GOD FORTIFY US AND PRESERVE US TO BE IN THE COMPANY OF THE ELECT, AND OF THOSE WHOM GOD CHOOSES TO FIGHT FOR.**

Therefore, “being roused,” Jesus rebuked the storm. I learned a new word in Florida, that the Florida Cubans used when the storm was coming over. Unless you know Spanish, you can hardly get a job in Miami anymore, and so I listen to the radio in Spanish a lot in order to brush up on my Spanish. They called the storm “El Tormento.”

Now, the Spirit of God (and the Spirit of God in you, and the Spirit of God in me) can rise up and rebuke the tormentor! This is regardless of how the tormentor comes. Whether he comes in the form of a literal storm or whether he comes in the form of the type of storm that is now raging in families today. This is an extraordinary storm. It might sound like a disaster when somebody goes and kills several people, but the greater disaster is what is happening in the homes today. Today, there is trouble right in the household. There is trouble right in the families. Furthermore, in the schools kids are carrying weapons, and you can often read of a ten year old child who breaks loose and shoots up a teacher, and that sort of thing. You are not safe anywhere! Now I do not mean for you to have nightmares tonight, because what I am saying is that if you have Jesus Christ you are safe anywhere, and without Jesus Christ nobody is safe anywhere.

Your burglar alarm will not do the trick, and your guns will not do the trick. In fact, you are safer without guns in the house than you are with guns in the house, because, after all, somebody may come in without a gun, and then you end up providing them with one!

SO THEN, WHAT THE WORD OF GOD IS SAYING IS THAT GOD IS ABLE. GOD IS ALL POWERFUL, AND YOU AND I WHO HAVE THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN US SHOULD NOT FEAR THE STORM. Now Jesus is not here in the flesh to rebuke that storm (that tormentor), but you and I can take control and take charge of the situation in our house, whether it comes in the form of physical sickness, or whatever.

These last days, since we moved from North Carolina, we have had a real battle in taking charge, and we have found ourselves leaning more and more on God. It is because we are now in a different place, where there are probably more spirits moving around than there were in Carolina; and it is because we are having to learn now to live without a salary. When you have been having a job for many years, knowing exactly where that pay check is coming from, then you just try living without a salary. You have a constant battle on your hands.

It has brought us closer to God and it has brought us deeper in prayer. It has given us “muscle.” I heard Cecil’s message this morning where he talked about tribulation getting you prepared, and it says in the Bible that it works patience, and so on, and so on. I am telling you, you have to learn to wait on God! You have to learn to pray, and to wait on God and see God work. To see God work with that barrel of meal, with the little dribblings of meal in the bottom of the barrel. It would not be bad if God would just fill up the barrel and let you relax and sit back for a while, but you have to scrape the barrel, and pray again for some more scrapings; and pray again and again. God has really got us in school down there.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THE MORE WE ARE IN PRAYER, THE HARDER THAT THE BATTLE GETS. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT SO! IT ONLY SEEMS SO.

In 2 Kings 6, it says that the King of Syria sent his men to capture Elisha (because Elisha was the “bug” in his telephone and he was telling the King of Israel whatever plans the King of Syria discussed in private). He said, “Go get that man and bring him to me.” He sent his whole army after Elisha. They must have thought he was a pretty powerful man! THAT IS ANOTHER THING, YOU KNOW. THE WORLD WILL DOUBLE ITS EFFORTS AGAINST YOU WHEN YOU REALLY MEAN BUSINESS WITH GOD! IF YOU WANT TO BE WISHY-WASHY THEN THE WORLD MAY RELAX ON YOU, BUT THE WORLD WILL BE DOUBLE AGAINST YOU IF YOU TAKE A STAND.

When they came out to Elisha, a young man was with him and the young man was afraid. However, Elisha said to him that he should not worry, and he prayed that God would open the young man’s eyes. SO THEN, WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT IT ONLY SEEMS AS IF THE BATTLE GETS HARDER WHEN YOU PRAY; BUT IT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVE BECOME MORE SENSITIVE. I MEAN, THE COCKROACHES WERE CRAWLING OVER YOUR FOOD AND YOU NEVER KNEW IT! THEY WERE ON YOUR TOOTHBRUSH AND YOU DID NOT EVEN KNOW THE DIFFERENCE, AND YOU WERE JUST EATING UP THAT MESS AND YOU DID NOT EVEN KNOW IT; BUT WHEN YOU BECAME MORE VIGILANT YOU WERE ABLE TO SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON. WHEN THE YOUNG MAN’S EYES WERE OPENED, HE NOT ONLY SAW THE ENEMY, BUT NOW HE SAW THE POWER OF GOD! HE SAW THAT THOSE WHO WERE WITH US ARE MORE AND GREATER THAN THOSE THAT WERE AGAINST US, AND HE SAW THE CHARIOTS OF ISRAEL AND THE HORSEMEN, AND THE CHARIOTS OF FIRE, AND ALL THAT GOD HAD OUT THERE BUT WHAT HE WAS UNABLE TO SEE BEFORE.

IF WE WOULD GIVE OURSELVES MORE TO PRAYER, THEN GOD WOULD OPEN OUR EYES! WE WOULD BEGIN TO DISCERN MORE AND REALIZE MORE HOW MUCH MORE WE HAVE TO PRAY, AND HOW MUCH MORE WE HAVE TO TAKE A STAND. OUR SPIRITUAL ANTENNAS WOULD BECOME MORE SENSITIVE TO THE “BUGS” THAT ARE IN THE SYSTEM AND TO THE SPIRITUAL FORCES THAT ARE ALL AROUND US, SO THAT WE OR SOMEBODY COULD GET UP AND START TO REBUKE AND MUZZLE THOSE THINGS—ALL THE PHYSICAL ATTACKS THAT COME UPON OUR BODIES, AND THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED ONE THAT COME AT US IN OUR MINDS, AND THE DEPRESSION THAT

TRIES TO HIT US.

NOW, THE BEST CURE FOR DEPRESSION IS TO GET UP AND SAY, “BE QUIET! BE MUZZLED!” “BE QUIET! BE MUZZLED!” REBUKE THAT THING! BIND THAT THING AND SEND IT BACK, BECAUSE THAT IS THE POWER THAT WE HAVE, AND THAT IS THE POWER THAT WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HAVE IF WE ARE GOING TO MAKE IT IN THIS DAY AND IN THE DAYS TO COME!

It seems to me sometimes that the more we talk about tribulation, the more frightened that we become. We must not become frightened, because fear is not going to help us. Look here at the picture of the disciples in the boat when they were taken by fear. When they rushed to Jesus, I believe they were screaming and yelling, and shaking Him and asking Him, “DON’T YOU EVEN CARE?” (Now there was a spirit! That they were even attacking God and even criticizing Jesus—that He was there, lying down and apparently asleep—and didn’t even care!).

After Jesus rebuked the wind and after He muzzled the waves, the Bible said that “*there was a great calm.*” The word here for “*calm*” in the Greek is “*ageneto.*” This is that great word out of the book of John that we have studied before and that you would know if you studied the little Greek course. This word comes from the word which means, “to come into being; to be created.” So then, we read it that He “created” a great calm.

The calm did not come about just by the cessation of the storm, because that is a negative response. The calm did not come about because the storm ceased, but the calm came about because God CREATED the calm. I do not know if you can see the difference. It is like what we read in John 1:5, where in the KJV it reads, “*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not,*” but if we look in the original Greek we see it should read, “*...and the darkness did not overtake the light.*” We think that darkness is the absence of light, but darkness is not the absence of light. Darkness is always there, but light throws the darkness into retreat. Light overcomes the darkness, and the calm overcame the storm! In other words, it was not a passive result.

We feel that if we get up today and things are all right, then everything is fine (We are at peace, because there is no war). However, we are not at peace because there is no war! That is the mistake that the world powers have made. They said, “Let us prepare for war so that we can frighten the enemy into being quiet, so that we can have peace.” We, however, must create peace. By the Word of God! Because it was by the Word of God that the worlds were made! It was by the Word of God that God created the light. In Genesis 1:3, it says, “*And god said, Let there be light: and there was light.*” It was by the Word of God that God separated the water from the land and brought the earth and the universe into being.

Jesus turned and rebuked the disciples. He said, “*Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*” Then (in Mark 4:41), it says that they became astonished, and they feared with a great fear and said to one another, “*What manner of man is this...?*” They became afraid of Him now. “*What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?*”

We read further on in Mark 5, that as they came over unto the other side into the

country of the Gadarenes, that He confronted the Gadarene demoniac. This man had a legion of spirits. The unclean spirits in this man were so strong that he was bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him and the fetters broken in pieces; and it says, “...neither could any man tame him.” The fetters could not hold this man. Chains could not stop him. The spirits were so powerful that nothing could stop him, but Jesus was greater than the fetters.

Jesus asked him, “*What is thy name?*” He answered “...*LEGION: for we are many,*” and the demons began to speak and beseech Jesus not to send them away out of the country. Then, beginning in Verse 11, it says,

“Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea....”

Jesus again prayed and there was peace in this man, and the man was healed.

We see here the power of God, and that is what we are talking about here tonight. We are talking about the power of God and the weakness of the disciples—because after Jesus did all that, then He came and He raised up Jairus’s daughter, and then they saw Him feed the five thousand. Then, in Chapter 6, it says that after this,

“He straightway constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out. For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, BE OF GOOD CHEER: IT IS I: BE NOT AFRAID.”

The word He used for “...*IT IS I*” in the Greek is “*eimi*.” It just means “*I am*.” This is the same word that we translate “*Jehovah*.” This was a word that Jesus used very frequently, and that is why the Pharisees were so wild against Him when He said, “*Before Abraham was, I am*,” because “*I am*” was “*God*”! They would not even use the word because it was so holy, but He was using it in relation to Himself.

The scripture goes on to say here, “*And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.*” Again, they should not have been amazed. You and I would say that they should not be amazed, but they were amazed as if they did not know that Jesus could walk on the water. But Mark put a footnote here. He said, “*For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*” They had just before seen Him feed the five thousand and yet they were afraid.

Finally, I want to bring a word to you, that the key to this is that we seek God. We pray much and we need to pray more, and not just pray. We used to get up in the morning and have a good prayer session in the morning. Now we are praying, and when I say “praying” I am talking about getting down and praying as a two unit family, and praying three and four times a day. We have to pray, and I want to encourage you that prayer is this key. It is good to preach, and to hear preaching. It is good to listen to tapes. It is good to prophesy and to sing the songs of Zion, but the thing that is really going to bring us through is prayer, because it is not that prayer is going to move the hand of God as much as it is prayer that will move us closer to God. Prayer will give us and empower us to drive the enemy out of our house, and out of many of the houses.

I do not know why I am impressed to say it, but many of the houses tonight of the good saints of God are infested with enemy bugs! When we went to Florida, they told us that in Miami, at least, you could not live roach free. I have been praying for my wife because she has a phobia and is afraid of every insect and every crawling thing, and she hates roaches with a passion.

She would not sleep. Before we moved our things into the house, she went around cleaning all the corners. We scraped up all the garbage and picked up everything, and we sprayed. We did not call in the exterminator because they spray the bugs with something to makes them come back in three months time—when the warranty is up. We sprayed and we worked out a system, and one thing that God gave us is that if you do not feed them, they will not stay around! We first we got rid of the eggs and then we kept absolutely no food. By this, I mean that we do not even use our garbage cans for scraps from our meals, because if you do, the roaches will get to them. We put it in plastic bags and put it in the refrigerator until garbage day, and believe you me, there is not a one in our house. People come and they are going to stay with us overnight, and the first thing they say is, “But I do not see any roaches?” **Now I am saying all that to tell you this, that if you do not feed the devil, if you do not feed the evil spirits, they will not stay around. At the first, there was cable TV in the house, and we cut it out. If you have that garbage coming in, I believe the bugs come in with it. I believe the enemy comes in with what you read, and with what you listen to, and with what you watch, and what you give yourselves to.**

The Bible says to resist the devil and he will flee away from you. Draw nigh unto God and He will draw nigh unto you, and the only way to do it is by prayer: by much prayer and supplication, and seeking the face of God.

I just want to give you one more scripture in the Old Testament and then I am going to quit. In 2 Chronicles 6, there is Solomon’s prayer. I wish I could stand here and read that prayer for you, but you can read it yourself, for it is a long prayer. But Solomon went down the line, and he really propositioned God:

“...If thy people Israel are put to the worse before the enemy...then hear thou from heaven.”

“...When the heaven is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against thee, yet if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when

thou dost afflict them; Then hear thou from heaven.”

“...If a man sin against his neighbor...then have respect therefore...to the prayer of thy people.”

Then in Verse 28 of 2 Chronicles 6, *“If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be: Then what prayer or what supplication soever be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when everyone shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive....”*

I feel deeply, deeply impressed tonight that as we look over the land, there is dearth in the land—there is drought. There is drought for the Word of God in many, many churches. The Word of God is, for this case, not some radio or TV program, though once in a while on them you get a kernel of truth from the Word of God.

“...and, if there is pestilence....” We are living in a time of great pestilence, and it is increasing daily. The cocaine and the crack and the marijuana, and all of it—It is pestilence!

There is drought in the land, and you who live in the farm belt of America, you know the pain and the agony of farmers losing their land. It may come to your door! It may come to your door, whether directly or indirectly. You may not be a farmer, but you work in the farming industry and if it goes down the drain, you are going to be faced with it.

There are critical times that are coming and do not let anybody fool you. No man, no politician is going to do it—no matter what they promise—no matter who they are. For it seems that there is a hand—a movement of history—that is greater and stronger than any politician. No matter what they promise that they could do, they cannot do it, because what we are facing in this day and time and in the times to come, is greater than any human power or what human ingenuity can do. And here the Word of God says there is dearth in the land, there is pestilence in the land. The very environment is poisoned. They come up with nuclear plants in order to give electricity, and so on; and the nuclear plants create nuclear waste and no one knows what to do with it! You know? And it is a trouble.

There is blasting, and mildew, and locusts; and it is both literal and spiritual. I do not want you to spiritualize and believe it is not happening literally—it is both literal and spiritual.

Solomon spoke of when locusts and caterpillars and the enemies besieged them in their cities. *“Whatsoever sore....”* Today we have AIDS—the sore of AIDS. They have just reported that they have found another sexually transmitted disease that is spreading among the people. Condoms cannot do it, and the vaccines that they are seeking cannot do it, and no technology can do it, because the answer is in the Word of God.

Solomon was wise enough to say, *“...Then whatsoever sore, or whatsoever sickness there be: Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all*

thy people Israel, when everyone shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according to all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) That they may fear Thee, to walk in thy ways, so long as they live in the land which Thou gavest unto our fathers...."

And he goes on and he goes on, and God received his sacrifice, and so on. God answers Solomon, and we read God's answer beginning in Verse 12 of Chapter 7, "*And the Lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice...."*

We know where the house is. I do not need to tell you what the house is and what the temple is, because it is us. "*If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; **If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open and my ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.***" Glory to God! "*For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.*"

So it is, "*If My people who are called by my name: ...shall humble themselves, ...pray, ...seek my face, and ...turn from their wicked ways.*

We need to seek God's face, and it would seem to me it is much more than just "saying prayers." We have passed that state and it seems to me that praying is but a little dimension of "seeking God's face." It seems that praying is only one gear or one level of getting in touch with God. But when you pray, you turn to seek God's face. And that would be a whole week of meetings if we were to talk about seeking God's face and really yearning after God. As the psalmist says, "*As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God!*" (Psalm 42:1-2)

So, we need to go back to the drawing board, and go back to the house, and go back and clean up, and go back and pick up the little pieces of garbage and food, and stash it away where the cock roaches cannot get to it, because if you do not feed them they do not stay around. We must pray and pray and seek God's face, and when we do, I guarantee you that the devourer (the tormentor) will leave the place! If it does not leave after one time, then we seek the face of God again and again and again, and God is bringing us to the place where we will really seek God's face.

One other thing and I will close. I heard one man recently say it, and I suppose he was making an illusion to recent events among the TV evangelists; but he was giving an altar call in a big convention meeting and he said, "Listen, if there is anything wrong among you, you can come to God now. Come to God now and confess your sin to God, while you still have a chance, because when He decides to go public, then you are in big trouble!"

I do not believe that God is a vindictive God with a big stick just waiting to knock you down the first time you make a slip. I do not care who preaches it. I do not care who says it.

After the first time, or even the first year that you made a slip, God does not knock you down and kill you and expose you, strip you naked and turn you out in front of the nation. You and I know that that this is true, for we are living examples, and we confess our sins to God and beg God to clean us up, and God has not done anything to us. However, the Scriptures say that he who is often reproved and hardens his neck, that he shall be cut off, and that without remedy, and stripped naked. God promises that the love of God covereth a multitude of sins (and believe you me, it is more than a multitude), but there is a place we can come to where we are exposed and stripped naked. So, while we have a chance, while we have our families intact, those of us who see signs of trouble creeping into our families, let us get to our knees and let us seek God, and supplicate to God. Because God has promised that He would rebuke the devourer for our sakes. That is a promise we have from the book of Malachi, where he was talking about tithing. But tithing is not just the tithing of money. One man said this about the tithing of money, “You are just paying your rent for an empty house. You ain’t done nothing yet when you tithe.”

I do not want to discourage you if you are a tither, but if you are a tither you have only just started, because it is like renting an empty house and paying the rent for the house. You still have to clean it up and put furniture in it, and you have to put drapes on the windows, and all that good stuff; so that, tithing is just the tip of the iceberg.

And with the tithe, God promises that He will rebuke the devourer for your sake. He is talking there about the caterpillar, and about the business loss, and about everything—He will rebuke it for your sake.

Now, in the matter of giving God a tithe of our time, there are twenty-four hours in a day and so a tithe would be 2.4 hours for each day. This is not 2.4 hours just spent asking God for a good day, and asking God for things—that is [something you do] in your time, you know, because that is something that is for yourself. Not even the giving of thanks to God for what He did yesterday—that is your time. You are on your own time! But the tithe of your day (and I am putting it to you in a literal way—the tithe of your day is 2.4 hours) is that part that you do purely for God and for your neighbor. And you could spend that in prayer and in seeking God alone.

God knows, I want to encourage you tonight that there is nothing to be afraid of. There is no tribulation, there is no demon, nor death, or whatever there may be, that can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor anything in all of creation can separate us from the love of God! We do not need to be worried and troubled.

What we need to be troubled about, is to get to that closer walk with God. To walk with God like Enoch walked with God, until God took him. And we are all striving to be there. I am not standing here to tell you I have gotten there, but that is the beauty of it—that we are striving to be there—pressing on to that mark of the high calling which is to be found in Christ Jesus. For we have not yet been perfected. We have not yet already attained, and it seems that God would have us to constantly train our spiritual muscles and our spiritual

appetite. If I may say it this way, there are many ways to lose weight, but there is only one way to get fat. There is only one way to get spiritually fat, and it is to stay with God and walk with God, and seek a closer walk with God.

Singing about it is fine. But seeking it involves our really stretching our muscles, and stretching our hearts and our minds to this walk with God. Then we will see that we have nothing to be afraid of—we are going to be all right. We will make it through!

The little ones, the children, have nothing to be afraid of. We have nothing to be afraid of because God has promised us that He will never leave us—even unto death! We never heard of any of the apostles squawking and squealing. It is more like we heard them saying that it is an honor and a glory to go on to be with the Lord, and to stand before the enemy's firing squad for God. If it was going to be the firing squad, that would be fine, because "boom," you know, and you are gone.

I believe...this little insidious thing that is creeping upon us daily, in our daily life—we are facing the decision, every day, whether to compromise or to stand strong. God bless you.

