

Mid South Conference 1981-01 What Doest Thou Here ?

by Aldy Fam Fanous

The sermon explores the themes of courage, prayer, and divine encounter through the story of Elijah and God's call to reflection.

Duration: 28:54

Scripture: Exodus 4:2, 1 Kings 18:22, Matthew 10:32, 1 Corinthians 1:9, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 6:14, James 5:17

Topics: "Christian Fellowship", "Power Of Prayer"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of fellowship and communion with the Lord as the secret to power and strength in the Christian experience. He observes that life in the USA and the world moves very fast, with a constant sense of hurry. However, in the Christian life, it should not be so. The preacher uses the example of Moses and his encounter with God through the burning bush to illustrate how God meets our needs and equips us for the tasks He calls us to. He also highlights the significance of prayer in the life of a believer, emphasizing that it is a crucial need for the church, families, and Christians everywhere.

Transcript

I can't tell you how delighted I am to be here, but my own regret of my wife was not able to come with me. We have a 19-year-old child, a young man, and he's home from college, and she felt that he's going to leave soon to college, and she thinks that we must stay with him all the time we can. And I think mothers will understand, fathers will too.

However, she sends greetings to you all, and we remember your kindness to us in the past, the fellowship we had here two years ago, and thank you very much indeed for your invitation. Ever since I realized I am going to be privileged and also have the responsibility of the first message in this conference, I was praying the Lord to guide me as to what he would have me say to you. As from tomorrow, God willing, I'm going to take a series of lessons with you from the history of the people of Israel.

But tonight I'm going to say a special word, a brief one, to you for the first message in mid-South 1981. I understand this is the 25th. I didn't think that Brother Philan is that old.

But pray the Lord for his blessing to us in the past, and we look forward to a blessed time together until the Lord comes. Elijah secured a great victory on Mount Carmel. And always watch it, child of God.

After a great victory, there is a big temptation for you. And so there was a big temptation for Elijah. Jezebel sent a word circling in that he would die like one of the people he had killed, the prophets of Baal.

And he thought this was going to be dangerous for his life, so he had run away. And God put a question to him in verse 9. What doest thou hear, Elijah? What doest thou hear, Elijah? And I would say the same to every one of us here tonight. What doest thou hear? God, perhaps, is saying the same thing to you and to me.

Why have you come here tonight? You've been waiting for weeks to come over. And at last you've made the trip. And you're here.

God will meet with everyone. This is our prayer. And will meet the need of everyone indeed.

And I want you to think with me in three words. The person, the place, the purpose. The person, the place, the purpose.

The person was Elijah. He was a man of great courage. He could stand before Ahaz and say to him, As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there will be no rain except of my word.

Now think of it for a moment. There will be no rain except of my word. Who is he? Who is he? He knew God's mind, and he could pray according to God's will.

And he knew he had God in his sight. Physically, geographically, he was standing before Ahaz. But spiritually, and in fact, he knew he was standing before God.

As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, And this is the source of power. Child of God, the only powerful place for you, the only blessed place for you, is the place where you are in God's presence. Is the place where you have fellowship with the Lord.

You are a strong Christian because you have fellowship with the Lord. The secret of power, the secret of strength, lies in this fact, that there is fellowship and communion between you and the Lord. Life in the U.S.A., life in the whole world, moves very fast.

We invent inventions to save time. I shall never, never get over the feeling when I go to a department store and see those escalators. Why do they have escalators there? So we don't tire ourselves to climb.

But I still see people climbing the escalators. They are climbing, and they climb up now. Why is that? Why is it? Speed, hurry, hurry, hurry.

I told you many times, or told my friends many times, as a man from a different culture, if I'm asked to summarize life in the U.S.A. in one word, I would say the one word would be hurry. If I'm asked to summarize it in two words, I would say hurry, hurry. That's life here.

But in the Christian experience it should not be so. It should be take time to be holy. Take time with the Lord, because this is the secret of power.

As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand. He was a man of courage. And he was a man of courage to stand in Mount Carmel and defy the four hundred priests of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Baal.

He had the courage to stand, and to stand alone. You know the chorus, you sing it. Dare to be a Daniel.

Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose firm, and dare to make it known. Dare to make it known.

Friends, you and I should be witnesses to the saving grace, and the keeping power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not be ashamed before him. What happens to you when you go to a restaurant, for instance, you go and sit down to eat, food comes along, I know you must say grace, I know you must get strength, but what do you do? You begin to rub your forehead, I'm sure you're saying grace, but why do you do that? You are ashamed to confess the Lord before the people. Friends, it should not be so.

If you are in touch with the Lord, he will fill you with courage, he will fill you with strength, and you will be a witness to the saving grace, and the keeping power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Secondly, he was a man of prayer. He was a man of prayer.

The Holy Spirit summarized his life, wrote his biography in two words. Two words only. Elijah was a man subject to passion like you and I are, and he what? He prayed.

He prayed. This is the need today of the Christian church. This is the need of the assembly today.

This is the need of families today. This is the need of Christians today everywhere. He prayed.

Friends, if you know the value of prayer, the value of prayer is not... We don't need more money in the church. We have plenty of money. The church has plenty of money today.

We have plenty of pews. We have plenty of musical organs. We have plenty of organizations, but we don't need organizers.

We need organizers. People try to organize before God in prayer, and God has not changed. He has not changed.

You say, where is the God of Elijah? I would answer and say, where is the Elijahs of God? Where are the Elijahs of God? People who can stand as the Lord's livers before whom I stand. There would be no rain on earth except at my word. And God has not changed.

His part is the same. He has not changed. We have, but he has not changed.

And friends, he was also a man of faith. He knew God would send a fire. He knew God would answer his prayer.

And he had faith, and without faith it is impossible to please him. And listen, what is faith? Faith, really, is belief plus trust. You trust God against the circumstances.

We have no thing in the Christian experience called accidents. Accidents do not exist for the Christians. There are incidents.

All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose. All things without exception work together for good. And so by faith you take everything.

I praise God for what happened. Praise God for what happened today. This man, who was a man of courage, was a man of prayer, he was in great need.

He was in great need. And let me say something, friends, to you. I'm not a mind reader.

I'm not a prophet to prophesy your condition. But I can say with full assurance of the word of God, there is not a single person here tonight who does not have some kind of a need of honor. Right? Physical? Spiritual? Or otherwise? We have needs.

We have difficulties. We have circumstances that are beyond our control. What must we do? Throw our hands in the air? Hopelessness? Say no use? No hope? No friends? God has not given that spirit to us.

He's given to us the spirit of love, of a sound mind, of power, because he is alive today. My Christ is not dead. My Christ is alive today.

He arose, a victor from the dark domain. With us people in the Middle East, when a name is given, there is a great message with it. When two names are given, there is a greater message with it.

Who actually took part in the embalming and the burial of Jesus our Lord? We read of a man by the name Joseph of Arimathea. What does Joseph mean? We have two names mentioned here. And I told you, whenever a name is mentioned, always think of the message associated with the name.

And when the two names are given, there is a greater message. Joseph of Arimathea. When Joseph's mother Rachel gave birth to Joseph, she said, the Lord will add another child to me.

Joseph means the Lord will add. All right. What does Arimathea mean? Lifting up.

The Lord will add a lifting up. This burial is not the end. This grave is not the end.

God will add a raising up. He will arise. And praise God for the fact of the empty tomb.

My Christ is alive today. And he's alive forevermore. And all power is given unto him.

Your circumstance, your need may be great, but God is greater than our greatest need. Jesus Christ is greater than our greatest need. I know many of us, or perhaps all of us, have passed through difficult circumstances.

Through tight situations. And we have experienced God's power. Yes, God's power.

Paul the apostle had the sword in the flesh. And he didn't like it at all. He prayed once, and he thought God would answer his prayers.

But he persisted. He prayed twice, and he persisted. He prayed three times.

Three times. And what was the answer? My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. What grace? Can you believe it? The thorn in the flesh was God's grace to him.

God's grace to him. This is faith. Grace to him.

Can you say, Thank you, Lord, for the thorn in the flesh I have? Thank you, Lord, for the disease I have? Thank you, Lord, for the difficulty I'm passing through? Why? Because in this weakness, the power of

Christ is made perfect. In this weakness. This weakness is not for your defeat.

It is for your victory. We are on victory side because we have an empty grave, and Christ is risen. We lived in Beirut, Lebanon, within driving distance from Jerusalem.

Very, very many times we went to Jerusalem. Every time we went. We never missed once visiting the garden too.

And every time we were there, we went inside the tomb and sang this glorious hymn. Up from the grave he arose, with a mighty triumph over his foes. He arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lived forever with his praise to reign.

He arose. He arose. Hallelujah.

Christ arose. This is the person. He had a physical weakness.

He was hungry, up and eat. He was in need of rest and sleep. And he slept three, he slept twice.

And spiritually, he was afraid of Jezebel. But the Lord met his need. Now, Moses had a great need too.

He had a great need too. He was away 40 years from Pharaoh. He was afraid of Pharaoh.

And he had a great task to be done. God had called him to a great task. He knew in himself that God was going to send him and to send him for a great work to deliver the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Of course, he did it in his own strength, and he ran away. He failed. But he needed something.

And the Lord knew what he needed. He knew what he needed. He appeared to him in a burning bush, and something happened.

Please turn with me to Exodus, chapter 4. A change had to be wrought in Moses to teach him a lesson. Exodus, chapter 4. Moses had to learn a lesson. And Moses answered and said, But behold, they would not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice, for they will say, The Lord has not appeared unto thee.

And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. Now, please note, it was not any rod. It was not any rod.

It was the shepherd's rod, the crook. And this is a very important instrument for the shepherds. If you were living at that time, and you noticed a shepherd's rod, you noticed there were a number of nails in the head of the rod.

Every time a good shepherd killed a wild beast, he drove a nail in the head of the rod. And the more nails in the rod, it showed that he was a really brave and good shepherd. And the sheep grew by innocence, and no death.

To know death, to see if there were many nails in the rod. Perhaps this is behind, the meaning behind the saying, Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. They comfort me.

Why? Because he is a good shepherd who gave his life for the sheep. And so he said, What is this in your hand? He said, The rod. He said, Catch it down.

Why? Because this was his personal glory. And before God, there should not be any personal glory. God forbid, I should glory, saved in the cross of Jesus Christ.

God forbid, that I should glory, saved in the cross of Jesus Christ. This was his need. He had to learn that in himself, he was nothing.

But with Christ, he was everything. You have Christ, you have everything. So he had to throw this rod.

And this rod even became a snake. Cursed thing, he ran away from his own glory. He was afraid from his own glory.

And he ran away. Maybe there is someone here tonight, who has something to glory of, and he has to learn the lesson, cast that thing in the ground, and look up to Jesus. I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live.

Yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me. This is the secret of victory, and this is the secret of blessing. Something else.

Verse 6, And the Lord said furthermore to him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom. And when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow.

Leprosy, the most loathsome disease. Most loathsome disease. A horrible disease.

And his hand, it became leprous. What could he do now? You know a leper, I told a friend of mine, at that time, a leper had to put a, something on his upper lip, cover his upper lip and cry, unclean, unclean. Why the upper lip? Why especially the upper lip? Come with me now to the Middle East, even today, and you will notice something.

Every boy, at the age of 12 or 13, would be looking at the mirror. Why? He would be looking and watching if there is a sign on the upper lip, if his hair is growing, if he is growing a moustache. Because our glory, the glory of every man in the Middle East is in his moustache.

He may shave his beard, but never his moustache. I'm corrupted by the other standards. However, you see, and to make any promise certain is not sufficient to sign a paper.

You can contest a signature in court, but if you twist your moustache when you promise a thing, that's it. It's done. This is the word of honor.

You can never go back on it. You will have no rab of honor if you do. But a leper has to cover his upper lip.

He has no glory. No glory. Nothing to glory of.

And this is you, and I by nature, my friend. It's you and I by nature. Nothing to glory of.

By nature, all we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. But praise God, what you lost in Adam, you gain in Christ.

Through the disobedience of one man, all have been made sinners. Through the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ our Lord, we have all been made righteous. Praise God.

So it is, Elijah had to learn the lesson, and Moses had to learn the lesson too. Now we come to a second part of it, and the place. What is the place? The place is Horeb, where God was.

And friend, you have come to Horeb today in the spiritual sense. You are going to meet with the Lord day by day. And it's my prayer that you have time with the Lord in prayer every day, in your secret prayers, in your private time, with the Lord.

And ask Him for a blessing. Ask Him to show you. Ask Him to show you what you need, what your need is.

Your need is an encounter with the Lord. And He had an earthquake, and the Lord was not in an earthquake. The Lord sometimes seeks an earthquake.

Some people need an earthquake, He will send it. Some people need a strong wind, He will send it. But praise God for the small, still, small voice that speaks to you.

His Spirit speaks to you now in the still, small voice. How loving our Lord is. How wonderful His voice is.

It calms my ears. It calms my fears. And He speaks peace to His people.

Even to Judas Iscariot, who did not deserve any love, the Lord showed him tremendous love. You know, with us people in the Middle East, one of the beauties of the host at the table is to take a piece of bread, a sop, and dip it in the dish and give it to the honored, distinguished guests. This is the first thing he should do.

And then afterwards, distribute the bread. And the Lord Jesus did that. He took a piece of bread and dipped it in the dish, and He gave it to the distinguished guests.

Who was he? Who was the distinguished guest? Judas Iscariot. Judas Iscariot. What love, what merciless love, what wondrous love.

Judas was shown by the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he came to betray Him, what did the Lord say to him? You traitor. You scoundrel.

Did He? No. Friend, wherefore art thou come? Friend, wherefore art thou come? What love, the still, small voice. Are you out of fellowship with the Lord? Is there anything in your life which is not according to God's will, not in harmony with God's will? Hear the small, still voice tonight in Mount Horeb where you are now, the place.

And come to our saving knowledge. Come to the fellowship of others with the Lord day by day, every day, the place. It was a place also of divine revelation.

He revealed Himself to Elijah. Are you afraid of disabling Elijah? I'm alive today. Are you afraid, child of God, of some kind of a happening that you don't want to happen to you? Are you afraid of old age? Are you afraid of any want of any kind? Are you afraid of this or that? Remember, the small, still voice comes to you.

I am alive today. I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. It was also a place of great humiliation.

A great humiliation. What doest thou hear Elijah? What doest thou hear Elijah? A place of great humiliation. I shall never forget the experience I had when I first read Genesis 32.

I can never forget it. It must have been many, many years ago. And ever since, when I read this portion from God's Word, I'm struck forcibly by the incident of the meeting, the encounter between Jacob and the Lord.

What was the need of Jacob? More tactics? No. More plans? No. More trickery? No.

What did he need? He needed a meeting with the Lord. And we read that Jacob was left alone that night. Was left alone.

I pray the Lord that you may be left alone. Of course you will be with other people, but alone with God in your thoughts, in your prayers, in your meditation. What doest thou hear? Be left alone with God.

And what happened? He meditated with him all night. And Jacob was powerful. He prevailed.

But then afterwards, he touched the hollow of his thigh. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint. And now he saw his need.

Now he was humiliated. Now he couldn't run. Now he couldn't fight.

He was humiliated. And then the question. More humiliating question.

More searching question. Jacob, you need a blessing? What is your name? What is your name? And friends, what a far searching question that was. I believe this was the crisis in Jacob's life.

The turning point. All his life there appeared before him. All his past came before his eyes.

What is your name? You know, Jacob means supplant. A man given to trickery. Jacob in Arabic is Yaqub.

Yaqub in the same root as Aqib. And Aqib means heel. Heel.

He's a man who takes people by the heels. He's a man who tricks people. And that's not a good name.

And I can imagine Jacob when he heard the name. There's the question. What is your name? He must have held his head down.

What shall I say? Jacob? Or son of Abraham? Son of Isaac? Ben Isaac? Ben Abraham? He could have said Ben Isaac. He could have said Ben Abraham. Which was quite legitimate.

Until today in the Middle East we say Ben somebody. Ben Gordon. Ben Gorion.

Ben Bella. Ben Isaac. Ben this, Ben that means son of.

No. No. He knew what was implied.

He knew the implication of the question. And he admitted it. He said my name is Jacob.

Oh friend of mine. Tonight the Lord is standing here. He's whispering in your ear.

You want a blessing. I want to give you a blessing too. I'm more eager to give you than you are eager to receive.

But first of all what is your name? What is your name? Oh I pray that you would answer squarely with the Lord. Honestly with Him. My name is prayerless.

My name is cold hearted. My name is timorous. My name is faithless.

My name is this. You know it. You know it.

And if we confess our sins He's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. What is your name? That was the crisis of Jacob's life. And so the place was a place of humiliation.

And if we confess our sins He's faithful and just. And now the purpose. What was the purpose of the question? What doest thou here? What is the purpose? I believe the purpose was to rebuke him.

He should not have run away. He had a task to do. And he gained a great victory.

And God has proven mighty on his behalf in a number of cases in the past. Why should you run away? Why are you running away? Why are you afraid? Why are you afraid? It was to rebuke him. And friend the Lord looked at Peter and that look only without a word made him cry bitterly.

Why? He was rebuked in his heart. But praise God when he returned he was restored and he received power and he came back and confessed to the Lord. Friend, is the same with you too? And with me? If the still small voice is speaking a word of rebuke to you what doest thou hear and put your name? Honestly confess it to the Lord and he is faithful and just.

And also it was to restore him. What doest thou Elijah hear? Come out! What doest thou hear? And lastly it was also to recommission him. Recommission him.

Go and do this and do that. Anoint Hazir. Anoint Elijah.

And anoint Jeho. It was to recommission him. You are not finished with the Lord.

The Lord is not finished with you. There is a great work for you to be done. And in the weeks ahead in the months ahead in the years ahead there is a great work to be done.

And friend before you are tempted the Lord has prayed for you. The Lord has prayed for you. Remember what he said to Peter? Satan has desired you.

To sift you. To sift you. Satan has a sieve.

Christ has a fan. And there is a great difference between a sieve and a fan. A sieve lets the sweet drop and keeps the chaff.

But a fan does quite the contrary. The Lord has a fan. He will not leave you alone.

He will not leave you helpless. I would never leave thee nor forsake thee. And friend we have a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Dare to be a Daniel therefore. Dare to stand alone. Dare to have a purpose firm and dare to make it known.

There is a chorus we used to sing when we were younger. I don't know if they sing it in this part of the world. When your fears rise mountains high and will block your pathway wait to wait upon the Lord believing as you pray.

Then your eagle wings will grow up up up five ups. You go over hallelujah over with the mountains down below. We praise God that He is not far away from us.

That He is not dead. He is alive today. And He is alive forevermore.

Shall we pray? Loving Heavenly Father we bow in Thy presence tonight. We thank Thee for this time together before Thee for Thy words for Thy power have not changed. Thou art the same yesterday today and forever.

Forgive the times when we have not glorified Thee in our words in our thoughts in our deeds. Father we pray that Thou wilt help each one of us in Thy presence tonight from now on determined not to know anything but Jesus Christ and Him crucified to the honor and glory of God. Father we pray to bless us each one give us sound sleep tonight refreshing sleep and blessed coming days of the camp.

We ask it in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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