

# The Crisis Of Contemporary Christianity

by Andrew Strom

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## Transcript

Okay, let me just, I would just like to pray as well, so, Father, we do pray God that this would be a moment just that we can draw close to you. Father, we pray your holy presence in this place, that we would just be in you, and that you would be powerful on high, oh God. Father, we pray this would not be a man's words, but only your holy words, oh God.

We pray you would be glorified, and let your Holy Spirit descend upon us in this place that once was a throne of God. We pray these things in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Okay, please turn with me to Ezekiel 34. Ezekiel 34. I want to talk a bit before we read it, but it's a pretty sobering word, a very sobering word.

I just got back from Uganda one week ago, and it was my first time there, and previously I've been to Nigeria, I've been going to Nigeria regularly, but Uganda was an eye-opener for me because I suddenly realized how deep a crisis we're in, in the world, in the church. The reason I say that is because we think that prosperity gospel and prosperity teaching are contained in a kind of small grouping of denominations. I'm a Pentecostal by background, so I accept some of the things that are spoken about the Holy Spirit and so on, but I want to say to you we have, sincerely we have a worldwide disaster on our hands that I have not come to grips with.

I've even written about it and I've spoken about it before because I've had reports from all around the world. A lot of my ministry is on the internet, so I'm getting reports from places like Brazil, all through South

America, Central America, even India, but in particular Africa, that have led me to think, okay, we're getting a lot of this type of message, booming and expanding, but when I got to Uganda, I suddenly realized that we're in an emergency, and I just, even though I'd had these reports, I never realized it. In Nigeria, I've commonly seen things like, you know, I stayed in the pastor's house one time, he had two Mercedes sitting in the driveway, brand new, he had a plasma television the size of this wall here, and he's in Nigeria, and who's he preaching to? He's preaching to the poor.

He's preaching to people that can barely afford on their feet flip-flops to wear, that maybe only have two shirts or maybe one shirt. And these people, you know, it's become the accepted norm. I got used to, in Nigeria, having to spend literally all of my time teaching on what Jesus said about money.

Because, of course, the famous prosperity line is Jesus spoke about money all the time, and I just add to that, I say, yes, he always spoke against it. He always spoke against it. He said, mammon is a competing god with me.

It's in the Sermon on the Mount. You either will hate one and serve the one, or you will serve the other. You cannot serve both.

Sadly, in Nigeria and in Uganda, I would say in the large cities, because they were giving me reports from their nearest large cities, I would say all across the world right now, we have just an inundation of, I would dare say, thousands and tens of thousands of ministers who believe that this is normal, this is orthodoxy. The problem I find in Nigeria is that nobody's ever heard a teaching against it. That it is so orthodox to be after money, for the preachers to be living like kings while the people live like paupers.

That is so normal, nobody questions it. Nobody questions it when you go into a meeting and the offering takes, you know, 25 minutes, and it's all absolute manipulation and extortion of poor people. I've had people say to me, I've had a principal of a school say to me, he hardly dares go to any Christian meetings anymore because he knows, because he's a principal of a school in Nigeria, he will be hit upon for money.

They're so direct, they'll almost prophesy over you that you must give to them. In fact, they will prophesy. I've known of it happening.

They see the guy coming, they start prophesying that he's to give them money for a blessing for favour. I tell them straight up in Nigeria, I say, you know, the very most prosperity-oriented parts of the United States, say Dallas, Texas and Tulsa, Oklahoma, would be embarrassed to put up the signs that you guys put up because they're so extreme and they make out that God is all about money, that the gospel is all about money, that everything's all about money, that we only go to God for blessings. We already have a crisis on our hands in the West.

We think it's bad. You know, I call it the advertising gospel. What's the advertising gospel is when every preaching sermon you hear starts sounding like an advert on television.

They're all promising you something. None of them are about death to self and taking up the cross of Christ. What are they about? They are about the exact opposite thing, what I can get for me.

Come to Jesus. He promises you this, he promises you that. Well, if we can expand that by multiplications of a hundred, we start to see what's invading the third world.

And we can't stop it because it's on television. And we say, okay, maybe we can cut off TBN or send a nuke up and just nuke their satellite, which sometimes I would be in favor of. However, even this solution now will no longer work because all of the Nigerian guys have learned so well this prosperity gospel, now they themselves are far more outrageous in the way they present it on television every single day.

And so I'll go back there maybe twice a year sometimes and I'll go back there knowing full well that even though we preached truth the first time, by now it's worn off and all of those guys have been soaking in this all that time. When I say that we're in an emergency and a worldwide crisis, I'm serious because to me, Jesus is interested in the poor of the earth. I've rejoiced lately because we all know that in the West we've been bereft of real revival for years.

We've been bereft of the real gospel for years. I often preach and I get old grandmas and stuff coming up to me and saying, oh, we were in the Brethren in the 1970s and we used to hear preaching like this. And it almost makes me want to weep because they haven't heard anything like that since and I'm just thinking, I'm only preaching the most basic things, you know, sin, righteousness and judgment.

I'm preaching repentance. They haven't heard this for how long? How long since we heard a message on what it's going to be like to stand in front of the judgment seat of Christ? When I go to Nigeria it's even worse. I spend, you know, in the pastors' conferences they literally, it's like their jaws are hanging open for the entire time.

It's so radical. And it's the basics. It's the basics of the gospel.

The basics of the gospel. I wrote an article one time that says we've lost the gospel. We don't even know what the gospel is anymore.

We don't even know what Christianity is. We've lost Christianity. We haven't got the faintest idea what these things are.

So we're in a crisis and an emergency and I want to tell you, God is not amazed. God is not in any sense surprised. God has seen all this before.

God has dealt with this situation before. What does God do in these situations? He starts looking around for people like you and me. That's what he does.

He says, I don't care that they are frail human beings. I deal with frail human beings every day of my life. I'm going to raise me up some preachers.

I might start them on the streets. I'm going to start sending them into the churches. Do you know what I believe the harvest field of the earth is? The most important harvest field of the earth is the church.

We have a completely unsaved church. Utterly unsaved. They bring forth none of the fruits of true salvation.

The new birth is unknown in the truth and the depths of their being. John Wesley would get out his sermon, number 16 or whatever it is, Marks of the New Birth, and he'd read it out and everybody would be shocked and horrified. Why? Because the marks of the new birth are not in them.

This is the state of things. I believe it's worse now than any time I can find in history. Well, it's no surprise.

We're in the last days. But do you know what the last days says? Do you know what the Bible in Daniel says about the last days? It says that people in that time will stand up. There will be a righteous remnant that will stand up and will convert many to righteousness.

And they will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. So I believe that God is calling right now for a remnant like that. And those street preachers who think, you know what, I'm comfortable preaching on the street, I want to say to you, Central America is crying out for you.

And if you're in America right now, if you're listening to this, it only costs you \$200 to get down there. So jump on a plane and go. Because the church is dying for lack of truth.

We need a reformation that's basically a teaching reformation. Anointed teaching has to come forth. Why? Because we've lost all the basics.

Lost all the basics. People never really hear. I often ask the question, how come we don't ever preach a gospel where we show people what they're supposed to flee from? What are they getting saved from? Isn't it the wrath to come? Didn't John the Baptist say, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Well, we don't warn them anymore to flee from anything.

We just say, over here are wonderful, lovely things, and you can have them all if you'll only come to Jesus. Utter falsehood. Not being saved from anything.

We're holding up the carrot and there is no stick. The opposite of what the apostles did. They preached sin and righteousness and judgment.

Ezekiel 34. I don't want to dwell on this passage. It is an awe-inspiring passage, in a sense, and a frightening one.

The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Woe be the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and you clothe yourself with wool.

You kill them that are fed, but you feed not the flock. Etc. Woe unto the shepherds.

Let's go straight over to 1 Kings chapter 17. What does God require of us in this day? Those of us who have seen these truths, we can all gather in a conference very easily. I want to say, if this conference doesn't compel you to go out and speak truth, it's done nothing.

Because all we're gathering, and we're doing our own version of tickling our ears. That's all we're doing. We say, oh, I love Paul Walsh's preaching.

I'll go hear him. And we think we've done something by going and hearing someone. We haven't done anything.

There's only one thing that God requires of you. That is to take the kind of action that the apostles and evangelists in the Bible would take in an emergency. That's it.

We're in a worldwide crisis. We don't have to go far to see it. You just go to the biggest cities in the third world where God has been moving, and you find the devil has not only sowed the tears, but the tears have

jumped up into a gigantic tree and are killing the first fruit of that revival.

Just utterly destroying it. Uganda had a massive revival in the 1990s. Because suddenly they had freedom.

Suddenly they were able to worship God. The dictatorships were gone. So God moved powerfully in prayer and in preaching.

And mighty miracles occurred. And people came in their droves, in their thousands, into the churches. Now what are we training those pastors to be? We're training them to be wolves.

We're training the pastors to be wolves. We're saying, here's, you know, you're feeling poor in your ministry. Here's how you gain more money.

Here's how you get ahead. Here's how you can get your ministry on television. Here's how you can get your ministry on the radio.

And they all want to do it. Kampala, Uganda. Nairobi, Kenya.

Every single part of Nigeria that I've ever visited. Including the parts where goats are running in and out of the meeting. Those people know prosperity doctrine, man.

They know prosperity doctrine bigger than we do. Bigger than we've ever heard. They've got denominations in Nigeria called Winner's Chapel and Success Arena.

And I say to them, so do you go there to worship success? Success Arena. Do you go there to worship success? Is that who you're going to worship? Do you go to Winner's Chapel? Do you go there to worship the winners? Isn't that what it's about? Why do we go to Joel Osteen's church in America? Isn't it the same thing? Exact same stuff. It's worldwide.

It's being propagated on television at such a rate we cannot compete unless we send forth prophets of God. And I want to say to you, you can be a two-month-old street preacher with about as much knowledge as having read half a copy of Hell's Best Kept Secret. Off you go.

Off you go. We've got a crisis on our hands so bad. So bad.

The famine of the hearing of the word of the Lord is so terribly bad. You know more than half the pastors I'm meeting around the world, sincerely. What is God going to do about this? He says, I will build my church.

The gates of hell will not prevail against it. I'm relying on God to do that. Because I want to tell you, I look at the situation, I've gone through dark periods of just despair.

I visit another country and I just, the western countries are almost as dead as the doornail. All of Europe is just, dear God, all of Europe, UK, New Zealand, Australia, a few little sparks of life in Oz. South Africa's good.

I like South Africa. America has sparks of life and absolute nightmares of junk all combined. I do love America.

I believe God has in his heart one last wave. Amen. Doesn't God have in his heart one last wave? 1 Kings 17.

This is the arrival of Elijah. This is a man that I liked. God has been in these situations before.

What does he do? He raises up companies of prophets and companies of young people and companies of older people and he doesn't care as long as they're willing to open their mouths. As long as they're willing to stand up in the face of everything. Elijah being the most extreme example, but we can learn from this man.

1 Kings 17 verse 1. And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, of course Ahab is the king, As the Lord God of Israel lives before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word. He says, see this is his introduction. If Ahab had any sense and any spiritual discernment at all, he suddenly realized that God just sent in the nukes.

God just went from arrows trying to pierce Ahab's heart about the sin that he's doing, and he's just upped the ante into nukes. If you just will read this one sentence that Elijah says, because what does he say? He says, the Lord God before whom I stand. The Lord God before whom I stand.

You see nobody stands before God. There is nobody else standing before God. Elijah has just made a positional statement that should have rocked that king and thought, I'm about to die.

If I don't get my act together I'm about to die because this man stands before God and he says the next thing out of his mouth. It will not rain. You're not even going to get dew for the next three and a half years except according to my word.

Elijah represents something, a ministry and a calling. He represents something very deep in the heart of God that comes forth in times of crisis. John the Baptist goes forth what? In the spirits and power of Elijah.

He goes forth in the spirit and the power of Elijah and yet has worked none miracles. Elijah worked many miracles. Elisha worked many miracles.

John the Baptist works none. Why are we hearing that he's going forth in the spirit and the power of Elijah? Because this comes forth only in a crisis. This type comes forth when you have to prepare the way for the king when there is a limited amount of time, when the emergency is dire, comes forth Elijah.

Where does he stand positionally? He stands before the God of the universe and he speaks from there. You better listen when an Elijah opens their mouth. You know you get talking in some of these conferences before pastors and you know in front of you are a bunch of people who have been trained how to rip off their flock.

And I want to tell you some of the thunderous words that have come forth out of my mouth that have shocked even me. Why? Because there's a crisis on and because even the donkey can open his mouth and speak and it will thunder forth at such times. And I want to say God is calling forth a remnant and a people who do not sit in conferences but only go there to hear what needs to be done and then stand up, get their backpack on and go.

This is not a revival conference unless something comes out of it that is more than just sitting and listening to doctrine that we agree with. We all think there's a crisis with asking Jesus into your heart, which there

is. We all think there's a crisis with people not getting filled with the Holy Spirit, truly filled with the Holy Spirit of God, which there is.

We think there's a crisis of charisma on one hand and dead orthodoxy on the other. There is. These are western problems.

What am I seeing in the third world that's breaking my heart? There's a crisis even bigger than that and I never thought I would say such a thing. I always thought the hope was in the third world. I've been going to the third world because I find more hunger there.

I went to a township one time where sincerely I think half the town had never seen a white person. We had glorious meetings there. I was preaching every night against idolatry and witchcraft and such like in open air meetings and every night more and more would come.

They're idolaters, they're worshipping idols, they're into witchcraft. They know I'm preaching against it and still they're so hungry they will come. That's why I love going to the third world.

I've always loved going when I get the chance. And to see the situation where God has brought revival, huge revival, massive moves of God and the devil is overtaking these moves and bringing in such destruction. This is heartbreaking to me.

Right around the world I want to tell you the harvest field is in the church. It's in the Church of the West which we can hardly get into. They lock the doors and bar the gates as soon as they hear that you're preaching repentance and holiness.

I don't know what we do about that. What did Wesley do? Went out and preached in the highways and byways. Did you know Wesley was banned from every single church in England? Every church in England banned John Wesley.

He was a popular guy. Every church in England banned John Wesley so he's out there preaching to the coal miners. 20,000 of them are gathering in Bristol not far from here.

Tears running down their coal miners' faces, they're leaving streaks. Can our God do this? He can do this again. But do you know the hunger is in the third world and it is so sad to be seeing what's happening there and they're using television.

Why does television and prosperity go together? Because when you're preaching prosperity doctrine you gather in bulk funds to fund your next program and the guys that are competing that are speaking truth and they're saying, hey, but Jesus said this and this about money. In fact, he told the rich young man, go and sell everything you have and give to the poor and then you'll have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.

That's what Jesus says about money. I quote all these things. This is why there's a jaw-dropping silence in many of the pastors' conferences but I do see results.

We see actual repenters. We've even seen guys on their knees weeping at times. Pastors.

But I'm feeling all the time like it's a drop in the ocean, all the time, all the time. It's a drop in the ocean. The Lord God, before whom I stand.

This is what we must be able to say about ourselves. The Lord God, before whom I stand. He says, sir, that you must stop stealing from the precious sheep of Jesus.

That your offerings, sir, are a complete disgrace. That the love of money is written all over you. That we cannot have in the church this crisis anymore.

We cannot see this kind of robbery anymore. This is unacceptable to God. We know that Elijah went on.

The challenge came with the prophets of Baal. He gathered 400 prophets of Baal and there was one prophet of God. That's all you need.

We think we're outnumbered. No, we're not outnumbered. God thinks it's a perfect match.

He says they've got 400 times maybe 10 or 100. He says, yep, you've got enough guys, no problem. We have it covered, says God.

Why? Because when you have the words of the living God in your mouth and they're as simple as the words of Jesus. Blessed be you, Paul, says Jesus in Luke chapter 6. You can't even say blessed be you, Paul. It's very simplistic.

Blessed be you, Paul. Yours is the kingdom of God. Woe unto you that are rich.

You've already received your consolation. Simple, isn't it? The words are right there. I could just go to a sermon on the mount and just read stuff out.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on this earth where mother must decay. It's a commandment of Jesus. Lay not up for yourselves.

I only have to point out just a sprinkling of scriptures and they're in desperate trouble because prosperity gospel, when you start looking at it, it's just built on the most feeble foundations on earth. And I just say, okay, and the other thing they quote is the Old Testament. They say Solomon and Abraham were rich.

I say, okay, well, you go follow Solomon and Abraham's religion because it's Jesus we're supposed to be following. It's the New Testament we're supposed to be living in. Those guys did not found a religion, did they? They didn't found a teaching school where they taught people how to grow rich.

Solomon is not our example in the New Testament. In fact, we are given virtually the opposite example. Jesus lived an opposite lifestyle to Solomon.

Who do we follow? We are supposed to follow Jesus Christ. Should we be luxuriating in our Mercedes and so on? Absolutely not. The Old Testament is a shadow of that which is to come.

So Abraham had faith. He had faith. He had heart attributes that Jesus loved.

I'll follow all of those. The Old Testament is a physical covenant. I'm not going to live there.

I'm going to follow the covenant of Jesus Christ. I'm going to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ and the lifestyle of Jesus Christ. Amen? Amen.

These are the basic things that led us straight on. We're flipping around the scriptures. I'm not going through in depth into what happened with the prophets of Baal apart from to say this one thing.

We have prophets of Mammon today. We have at least 400 of them. We may have 4,000 or 40,000.

We have them in abundance. They're prophets of Mammon. They're preaching Jesus out of one side of their mouth and Mammon out of the other.

In fact, Mammon's winning the race with a lot of these guys. If you come to Jesus, you will get rich. They even preach it to poor people like I say in that one set of clothes.

Why? Because they'll get more money for themselves. They'll get more money for their ministry. I heard of a lady, the only thing she had this is on my most recent book the only thing she had was one of those old Singer treadle sewing machines which she used to make clothes and stuff.

The preacher is preaching that you've got to give up everything to Jesus. Of course, giving up everything to Jesus basically means giving it to the preacher, doesn't it? This lady brought her one thing which was her livelihood. Giving it in to a rogue and a thief.

To a man that God he'll rue the day that he was born. This man will rue the day that he was born. He's committing such deep sin against the people of God.

This is the problem is that prosperity gospel is really being used as an excuse. You never hear it as bad in the West as you hear it when you're in Africa. It is the worst I've ever heard of.

The manipulation is unbelievable. And it's all about money. 400 prophets of Argana on Mount Elijah was there to face them.

Elijah, this man who stands before God. He stands before God. What does everybody else do when they get even close? They fall on their face before God.

I dare say in Elijah's life there was a lot of that before he ever got to stand there, do you think? There's a lot of falling on your face before God before you ever get to stand in God's presence. What happens to sin when it gets, you know, sinful people approach God's throne, what will happen to them? I don't believe they'll even last. They won't survive the experience.

They'll be consumed. They can't get close to the throne of God. Elijah is standing before the throne of God.

Whose righteousness is he standing in? Whose righteousness are we called to stand in? It's the righteousness of Jesus, isn't it? I cannot stand before God in my own righteousness at all. But whose righteousness can I stand? I can stand in the righteousness of Christ. Stand in the presence of God and deliver messages from him.

Because all I've got to do is write the scripture down. Most of the famine that we see is simply a famine of the hearing of the word of God. It's really simple stuff.

It's taking the world, taking the world. I want to say to you, the church is being invaded. Has been.

What are we going to do? How close to God are we going to get? Are we going to open our measly mouths? I don't believe anyone in this room is gifted with some of the oratory that has probably gone forth from this pulpit over the years. I don't give anything for oratory. I don't care about oratory.

Oratory doesn't impress God. What is God looking for? He just wants you to open your mouth to be willing because even Balaam's donkey could do that. I don't care if you're a woman.

People say, oh, it's got to be men. Well, I want to say it's a crisis. Ladies, if you feel like going, be my guest.

I'm not joking. If it wasn't an emergency, what happens in the Old Testament when there's an emergency? Why is Deborah raised up? Because there's an emergency, because there's a crisis, because the guy that's available isn't available. Off you go.

I don't care. I've had enough of seeing the church being raped. I know what Christ is returning for.

He says, I want a spotless bride without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. And I know she is being raped around the world right now and all the people that are poverty-stricken people. I have the image, even in my mind, you know, on the last day, preaching in the open air, all these little children, the most precious item we could give them was our empty drink bottles.

They honestly had nothing. They would be competing with each other to get our empty drink bottles because then they might have something to play with. All these little children, you say, praise the Lord to them.

And they all say, Hallelujah. Hallelujah. The preachers, as television spreads, this is the thing about the area we were in, the last area we were in, we had great success.

Why? Because television has not yet reached the area. As soon as television gets there, they immediately stick the Prosperity Guys on television every day. And before you know it, all the preachers are preaching.

And they think, here's what they think, they think, well, America and England are so successful, they must have it right. You know, we seem to read the Bible, it doesn't really seem to say that, but these successful guys on television, they've got to be right. Surely what they're saying is true.

They're so successful in that country. The ministries are so huge, they're worldwide on television. This is a reason for the judgment of God.

If any, I've seen, upon America right now, because he's got to cut the cable somehow. America's falling into chaos slowly. There's a slow leak, but it's not stopping, is it? Every month the unemployment gets worse.

What's Britain like? What's God going to do about this? Where does he want to send us? What does he want us to do? What activity do we do when we come home from this conference? I want to say to you, sir, and you, sir, and you, sir, you're all preachers, as far as I'm concerned. As far as I'm concerned, every person in this room is a preacher. So I'm going to dress you as preachers from now on.

Because we're in a crisis and you have to go. We've got to do something. Turn with me, please.

1 Samuel 17. This is David. I like the heart attitude of David because God says, this man has a heart after my heart.

His attitudes are basically like mine. He reacts to things like I do. That's what a heart after God means.

When you see something grievous, when God is grieved within you, when you feel like weeping, I remember coming home, on this most recent trip, I remember coming home, going into my room, after hearing all the guys tell me what the situation was with the preaching in the cities of the land. I just came home, I just went in my room, and I just wept. Went in my room and just wept.

Because what are we supposed to do? Who is sufficient for these things? Look at the size of the problem. Look at the size of Goliath. 1 Samuel 17, verse 26.

David spoke to the man that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? You will notice that David's reaction to this crisis was different to every single other person. David's heart welled up with this one fact. He's very young, he's totally inexperienced, apart from he's killed lions and bears and stuff, so he's not totally inexperienced.

Let me qualify that. So he comes to this situation. What wells up in his heart is these things.

This is unacceptable before my God. It's unacceptable that my God would suffer the diminishing of his glory in this way. Because here's Goliath calling out the threats against the people of God.

David comes to the situation. What does he see? He sees something which is utterly diminishing the glory of his God and the people of God. And it wells up within him.

He's not calculating. He didn't go away for three days fasting and praying. He didn't need to.

Why? Because his attitude is already the right attitude. If you go away and think about things too much, you just overanalyze them and you don't react the way God wants you to react. God wants us to get upset.

God wants us to get righteous indignation rise up in us and say, there must be something done about this. This cannot be accepted. And that was my reaction being in that situation again, that we cannot live with this.

This is worse than I ever thought. We cannot live with this. The church of Jesus Christ, the poor of the earth, those are the ones being destroyed by this.

This we cannot live with. I can live with a lot of things. I get upset about them.

I might write about them or whatever. This, no. Something has to be done about this.

We cannot live. And look, he immediately is going up and saying, what should be done to the man that kills this Philistine? There he is standing, however many feet tall, nine or ten feet tall. Might as well be an acre.

What will be done to the man that takes this guy out? Violence has arisen in David's heart. Isn't it an interesting scripture when it says that the Spirit of God came upon Samson and he rose up and killed a hundred Philistines. There is a righteous indignation that can arise and it's not from the devil.

It's simply this. It's saying, you know, we can't live with this. God has to be glorified here.

There has to be something done. Amen. And takes away the reproach from Israel.

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? So we have 400 prophets of Mammon. We have also in the West, we have this Gospel being preached, that's the Advertising Gospel, but it's not getting people saved. What is the basic lifestyle of a person that goes to church in the West? You try and be a decent person.

You've prayed the little prayer. You try and be a decent person. You go to church every week.

You put money in the offering. The preacher tells you that you're going to heaven. There's no sign of salvation in that, is there? There's no sign of being a disciple of Jesus.

So we have a crisis in the West. It's mostly in the church. We have a crisis in the Third World.

It's mostly in the church. And I want to say to you, for all those street preachers who think it's out there, it's in here. It's in here.

Where did Charles Finney spend his life preaching? He preached in churches and church halls. He spent his whole lifetime preaching to Christians. Why? Because he found they were unsaved.

He found that they were unsaved. What is a Great Awakening? A Great Awakening is the return of the Gospel. A Great Awakening is always a return of the Gospel.

Who taught the Gospel to John Wesley so he could preach it? It was the Moravians and George Whitefield. Before that, he didn't know what the Gospel was. He'd actually never heard it before.

Did you know that? John Wesley was brought up all his life in a religious-Christian home. His father was a preacher. Did you know he didn't know what the Gospel was? He had no idea what the Gospel was.

Why? Because the Gospel needs to be restored and an Awakening is the thing that restores it. Who are the great revivalists? They are the guys that discover what the Gospel is and start preaching it. Did you know that? They're a rarity because everybody thinks they know what it is and everybody goes around preaching their idea of what they think the Gospel is.

Everybody accepts it and we just have four spiritual laws. We ask Jesus into our heart. We do all this other stuff.

We have altar calls. We have lovely worship bands. We have this, that, the other thing.

I want to say to you, we've lost the Gospel. The Church has lost the Gospel. We don't know what Christianity is.

My definition of Christianity is being a disciple of Jesus Christ, doing the things that He commanded us to do. I don't see anybody doing it. Do you? Where are the churches doing that? I saw a little documentary the other night and it was pointed, they went around asking people and saying, do you know any, these were Christian people that they met on the street, do you know any commandments of Jesus? Do you know any commandments of Jesus? Hardly anybody, actually none of them came up with any.

Now what are we supposed to be teaching people to be disciples? We go into all the world, we preach the Gospel, we baptise them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them whatsoever I have commanded you. That makes a disciple, correct? Well, we're not doing that. Most people don't know what that is.

Many times you go into places and they've really never heard Jesus' words preached. Why? Because they're too shocking. They're way too shocking.

You've got to do stuff with your money, you've got to do stuff with your possessions, you've got to do stuff with your life that you haven't dreamed of doing because you're just going to church and everybody's happy going to church. But we're not disciples doing that, are we? We've equated churchgoing with discipleship. We're going into all the world and creating good churchgoers of every nation, not disciples of Jesus.

We don't know what a disciple of Jesus looks like, we hardly know any, including all the best preachers. We hardly know what it is. We've lost Christianity.

We don't know what the gospel is. Let's get on to something that's important, but I haven't got much time to spend on it. Hebrews chapter 6. We're talking about the foundations of the faith that must be preached here.

You know, I did a little study just a few days ago looking at people that the Bible says stood up. You know, there's a certain crisis or a moment in time that says Peter stood up at that moment and began to speak. There's crises in the Old Testament that says so-and-so stood up and he began to speak or he took action at that moment.

There's a reason that we have a book called The Acts of the Apostles and the reason is simple. The apostles acted. The apostles took action.

They didn't just listen. They got endowed with power from on high and they went out in that order. They got endowed with power from on high.

So the question is not how much experience you've had, whether you've been to Bible college. I know that all the people in this room know a lot of truth and my question is, how is it now going to get out? Because you know a lot of truth. You know more than many, many audiences I ever speak to in my whole life.

Gathered in this room, I'm told people that know more truth than most of the pastors I'm preaching to all the time. So I want to ask you, how is that truth going to get out of you if you're not one of those ones that the Bible says so-and-so stood up? So-and-so stood up in this moment of time, began to speak, began to utter truth. That's all you have to do because the words of Jesus will do the rest.

It's not up to us to manufacture anything. You know, what did Leonard Abraham say? He says, with all your getting, get unction. He says.

You know what that is? It's just the endurance of the Holy Spirit on your words. You don't manufacture anything. You don't have to be glib.

You can be stammering all over the place. If you can just get your mouth around the words of Jesus and let them do the work. I tell you, the famine is for the hearing of the word of the Lord.

Just an ounce of understanding and people's eyes. I can watch sometimes. I see the gears changing in people's minds and I think, praise God, he's got it.

And his preaching will change forever. You know, it's one of the basic things we preach. You know, just that difference between a selfish gospel and the gospel of the cross.

People get, and when they get it, when they get the sense of, you know, not preaching to make people get something for themselves, but actually preaching a gospel where it's you take up your cross and deny yourself and go after Jesus. They suddenly go, so much of my preaching has been like that. The selfish preaching.

That's what we're taught to do now. Yeah, yeah, the cross, yes. Selfless preaching, preaching of death to self.

Hebrews 6 verse 1 and 2, in my view, should be sewn onto the repels of every preacher in the world because these are the foundations of the doctrine of Christ. Hebrews 6 verse 1 and 2, in fact, it's the only time that they ever laid out this simply in this way. It says, therefore leading the principles, some translations will have elements, or the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ.

Let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of, and there's six things here, repentance from dead works, faith towards God. We've covered those things very well in this conference already. The doctrine of baptisms.

Why is baptism important to the apostles? Why is baptism important to the apostles? Because it's the death of the old life. What does Romans 6 say? We think it's symbolic. Many parts of the church say, oh no, it's just all symbolism.

Well, what about from God's point of view? Why didn't he just have Paul say, oh, it's a symbol of these things. Don't worry about it too much. It's just a symbol.

Why does Paul go and say, do you not know, brothers, that as many of us, as we're baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him in baptism into death. Why does he write that? Amen, because it's true. Why does Jesus send his disciples not just teaching, but baptizing? All the way through the third world, they can understand this.

This is simple stuff to them. They see the burial. They can have faith for that.

Here's what I believe we're supposed to be doing with baptism. We're supposed to say, sir, can you have faith that Jesus will kill you today? Your old life will be gone. Every part of you is about to be buried.

Can you believe him for that? They'll nod. They'll say, yes, I can believe that. I can have faith for that.

That's what the Bible tells me baptism is for. I always preach it that way. I believe that's where the power is of baptism.

So this doctrine of baptism, as you notice, it's one of the six basic fundamental principles of the doctrine of Christ. The next one, laying on of hands. Controversial.

We might have left it out. Too controversial to preach about. Why the laying on of hands? What does it bring to mind? Immediately, the Holy Spirit.

Immediately, all the way through the book of Acts, the apostles are laying on of hands. The Holy Spirit is being poured out. What happens when the Holy Spirit comes? Number one, revival.

Number two, controversy. Everybody gets mad. Why? Because it's not according to their doctrine.

What was the famous cry coming out of this building in the 1904 Welsh revival? What's one of the famous cries coming out of this? Evan Roberts would teach even the children to pray this. This is a fundamental thing coming out of the Welsh revival. It was simple.

It was, he got everybody to pray, send the Holy Spirit now, O God, for Jesus Christ's sake. Then he would say to them, now I want you to pray again. I want you to say, send the Holy Spirit even more powerfully, O God, for Jesus Christ's sake.

And then the third time, he'd get them to pray even more strongly for the Holy Spirit. The Welsh revival is all about the Holy Spirit. One of the things that most concerns me about this movement that I see slowly forming out of people that love holiness and love Jesus and hate false gospels.

It's a movement that I love, to be honest. One of the biggest dangers is that we go everywhere preaching repentance and forget about the Holy Spirit. This is the biggest danger.

I want to say to you, there can never be a revival without the pouring down of the Holy Spirit. In fact, that is revival. If you look through all the histories of revival, you don't see that they just started preaching repentance and that was the revival.

No, the Holy Spirit came. Charles Finney, in fact, says in its antecedents and its precedents, everything in revival is just like the day of Pentecost, you see. That's what it's like.

That is the revival. How did Charles Finney experience revival in his own life? On the day that he repented, he said that such was the baptism of the Holy Spirit that came upon him when he went to his home. He said, five great waves of the Holy Spirit come upon me in such degree that I had to cry out to God, please stay your hand, O God, lest I die.

He said the very next people that he met, all he had to do was mention a few things about the salvation of their soul. And what happened? He said it was like they were struck by an arrow. They were convicted by sin instantly.

He was a revival preacher from that moment on. He trained under his pastor, who later confessed to being unconverted, and went out and started to preach. And revivals happened everywhere.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit induces you with power from on high and begins to convict of sin and righteousness and judgment. That's revival. It's all about what the Holy Spirit does.

It's not about what we do. We are forming a movement, I believe, right now, and I believe it's in grave danger of becoming a repentance movement and not a Holy Spirit movement. Listen, we go out there preaching that, we give them nothing.

Sincerely, we don't. Godly sorrow leads to repentance. The Holy Spirit has to be poured out upon people to see a revival.

So the laying on of hands is one of the six foundational principles of the doctrine of Christ. Do you preach it? Repentance, faith, baptisms, laying on of hands. Next one is resurrection from the dead and eternal judgment.

All six. A radical list. These are the foundations of the doctrine of Christ.

Let's see them put into action because I need to come to a close. Acts chapter 19. These guys had a revival.

This was the first revival in Ephesus. Paul's first visit there, I believe. And it's all about this question of repentance and the Holy Spirit.

So it's a good one to look at. Do you know if you go into these third world places and you are not moving in the power of the Holy Spirit, number one, they'll tell it instantly. These are guys who cast out demons for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

So they're not going to be impressed by some guy mouthing words. You better go there in the power of the Holy Spirit. How do you get that? You pray.

You pray real hard that God will anoint your words and you just go. It's not rocket science. Acts 19 verse 1. And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper coast, came to Ephesus and finding certain disciples.

He said unto them, Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? Now this is a dramatically interesting question to ask because he's just met these guys. It says he finds disciples there, but his instant question is, there's something wrong here. He says, have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? Is there any such thing in the New Testament as Holy Spirit-less Christianity? No.

It was filled with the power of God from the start. There was healings and miracles of all kinds. I'm an old Pentecostal, so of course I'm biased on these things.

He said unto them, Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? The dichotomy I love in this passage, and this is what I'm trying to take note of here. It's not just about the Holy Spirit. It's about this interplay between repentance and the Holy Spirit.

And we'll carry on. Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? And they said to him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit. And he said to them, Unto what then were you baptized? There's that word baptism coming in.

They said unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people they should believe on him which would come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

And here it comes. When Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Now, I'm not wanting to enter into the obvious controversial waters of discussing that.

What I want to point out is simple. Here's the number one thing. As soon as the Holy Spirit comes, there is immediately controversial accompaniment of that outpouring.

All of the problems in revivals down the ages, from Wesley to this one here that was in Wales, you read all the accounts. What is the controversy? Where is the... It's all about what the Holy Spirit is doing to people. Always.

Why? Because there's people falling on their face and weeping. There's people over here literally dancing for joy because they feel like, Oh, that's totally clean. There's whole congregations like just about

swooning because they're feeling the presence of God.

There's other people running out of the church because the holy, fearsome presence of God is making itself known to them. And there's newspapers around about starting to criticize and mock the meetings and saying, This is not of God at all. And there's wonderful, well-known preachers of great sturdiness and repute standing up and saying, Oh no, this is just an emotional excitement.

All of this happened here. It happened in Bristol with the Wesleys. It happened all over the world.

It's happened to every revival. Of course, it happens with the flaky ones today too. How do we discern? We discern by knowing the heart of God at the heart of the revival.

If the preaching is really holy, anointed preaching, we know it's from God. If the preaching is not like that, we know it's not. And in this revival, in the Wesleys revival, that's the way it was.

But there was untold, unusual things. Wesley would sometimes say, Oh God, send a sign that what I've just preached is true. He did that and stopped doing it after a while because he would find thousands of people falling down under the power of God.

Motionless for hours afterwards. Probably an agony of conviction of sin. It's not just what we call slaying in the spirit.

In the Pentecostals of today, we're talking about guys who preach total heart piercing truth. Here's the point I'm making in this passage. They came across guys that were specialists in repentance.

Paul is coming across a bunch of people here. These guys know repentance back to front. They've gone round the world all these years since John the Baptist died.

They're faithful followers of John the Baptist. They've gone round the world preaching repentance, these guys. Immediately, Paul meets them.

He senses something wrong. He says, Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed? You see, the Holy Spirit, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is essential to real Christianity. It's not a by, it's not out there in left field.

It's essential to real Christianity. Can we go around the world preaching all the foundations? Can we see a revival in these last days that restores us to book of acts Christianity? Can we be prophets that stand up like Elijah stood up and simply open his mouth? Or any prophet, minor or major, that we see anywhere in the Bible. Do you know, they're only ordinary men.

They're not, Jeremiah is just a weeping, wailing guy who didn't actually enjoy probably one moment of his ministry. Did you know that? Jeremiah and Jonah are just guys that are the most miserable ministers on earth. And what did God do with them? Sent them and profoundly used them.

Even their failures. Very weak and feeble people. Weak.

God wants to use you. He didn't bring you here to send you home having heard nice sermons. He didn't send you here to watch the videos later.

Please. He sent you here to get a word inside of you where you can speak it to the people around you. You can, even if you're not going yourself, you can activate other people to go.

You can help. There's a crisis. It needs all of us.

All of us. Amen? And when we go, let us go in the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us go in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Please stand with me, I just want to pray. If you want to just rededicate your life to God just in a new way today, if you want to dedicate your mouth to speaking the words of God, the simple words of Jesus in a new way, please raise your hands. I'm going to ask God to endue us all with power from on high.

Because even those who may have had this experience years ago, we need fresh and fillings all the time. So let us pray. Father God, Father, I pray, oh God, for all of us raising our hands to you, God.

We pray, endue us with power from on high, oh God. Make us Holy Spirit vessels of the highest order, God, where we can speak your truth, Father, and it's anointed by your Spirit, God. Let us have unction on our preaching, God.

Let us be anointed men and women of your word, Father. Let us speak forth truth. Let us be used in this emergency, God.

Use us. Here am I, oh God. Send me.

God, we surrender anew to you. We say, Father, our heart is yours. Our life is yours.

Every part of ourselves, our mouth we give to you afresh, oh God. Place your word in our mouth, oh God. Let us speak to this generation, Father.

Let the third world not be lost, oh God. Send forth your prophets in this age, Father. Make us one of the 7,000 that never bowed their knee to Baal, oh God.

Let us be prophets of the Most High God. Let us speak as the oracles of Jesus. Let us speak forth your truth in this hour.

Make us mighty men and women of valor in your service, we pray. Glorify yourself and bring a real revival, oh God. Bring an awakening and the return of your gospel, oh God.

In this generation, we pray. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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