

Constantly Failing the Purposes of God

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being passionate about righteousness and living a life that is pleasing to God, and warns against the dangers of spiritual adultery, brainwashing, and tolerance.

Duration: 38:09

Scripture: Ezekiel 47:1

Topics: "Repentance", "Righteous Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being passionate for righteousness and God, drawing parallels between the failures of the children of Israel in worshiping false gods and the current societal captivity with pleasure, power, material possessions, and sex. It highlights the need for repentance, desperate prayer, and a return to God's ways to avoid judgment. The speaker urges for a revival of passion for God and righteousness, pointing out the dangers of being lukewarm or indifferent in one's faith.

Transcript

Take me out in the deep waters, and there's that beautiful picture that the Lord gave Ezekiel and took him out into that marvelous river of life where he had no more control and only the head showed and that's all it needs to show because the head is Jesus Christ and Then when he came out of the river he ended up in paradise Came out of the river in paradise, so you can't lose by letting go but Aren't we blessed to have such a shepherd as Pastor Chuck, so let's just welcome him I'm the blessed one to have sheep like you The children of Israel It seems we're constantly failing the purposes of God There Would be times of spiritual revival But they would soon revert back to their practices of worshiping the other gods And God would bring them into a place of distress hardship bondage They cry unto God and God would hear and answer and God would deliver them and For a while they would serve God, and then it would be back, and it was a repeated pattern over and over I Think that it is important to note the gods that they were worshiping They were worshiping Molech Who was the god of pleasure They were work worshiping Mammon who was the god of material possessions power They were worshiping Ashtoreth who was the goddess of sex They were worshiping Baal Who was the god of the intellect As we look at our nation today What are the things that are captivating the minds and hearts of the people?

Pleasure power Material possessions sex So in reality we find that we are pretty much as guilty as were they of of spiritual adultery They were constantly Falling away from God's best for their lives Constantly

going back again into bondage Because these things were mastering them.

They were guilty of Not being a separate people God said that he wanted them to be a separate people that they weren't to really intermarry with the people of the nation's roundabout because that's where this Idolatry and all came in Even Solomon With all of his wisdom in In disobeying the commandment of the scriptures multiplied unto himself's wives and in the end The wives did exactly what God said that the wise would do if a king would multiply wives they would turn the heart of the king from the Lord and And at the end of Solomon we find him Into idolatry as he was building temples and altars for the various wives Who came from the different countries roundabout in an endeavor to please them So intermarriage Was a big problem because that led to the worship of the different gods of

the nations that surrounded them Ultimately God allowed them to go into captivity Ultimately they were conquered by The Babylonian army 606 and they carried away hostages There was a rebellion the Babylonian army came back again and again Until Jerusalem was destroyed burned with fire and the people were taken away captive The children of Israel had failed in obeying the law of God Concerning the Sabbath rest for the land Every seven years they were to allow the land to go fallow They were to not pick the fruit they were to leave it for the poor people and and for the animals and They were to just give the ground rest every seven years from the time of the reign of Saul Unto 606 BC was 490 years And so God said well Because you have not given the land the Sabbath rest the land has 70

years of rest coming to it and So you will be captive Unto the enemies for 70 years in order that the land might have its Sabbaths the 70 years are now expired and The decree goes forth in 457 I Mean bigger part and in the year five oh Let me get it for you here five Haven't exactly 36 BC the decree went forth from Cyrus For the rebuilding of the temple and Those that wanted to return were given the privilege of returning As Cyrus was fulfilling the prophecies in Isaiah 45 544 where God calls him by name says you're my prince and you will allow the people to return from their captivity and led by Zerubbabel and Joshua they came back and they began to rebuild the temple Haggai the prophet was there to Encourage them on to urge them on in the rebuilding project and so they rebuilt the

temple now some 79 years later in 436 I mean for oh boy Senior moments, you'll experience them one of these days in 457 BC Under a decree by Artaxerxes long Germanus Ezra Was sent back to set up a provisional government and to Sort of Reestablished the temple worship over the 79 year period that the temple was rebuilt they had sort of just again neglected the temple worship and So Ezra was sent back to rebuild the worship and to establish the Provisional government Now as Ezra came back We read in the ninth chapter in the third verse of Ezra that well verse 2 that he heard that they had taken of the daughters for themselves and for their sons So that the Holy Seed have been mingled with the people of those lands Yea, the hand of the princes and the rulers have been chief in this trespass.

They were doing The very same things that caused the captivity so many years earlier They had gone right back To these same practices that led to idolatry that caused them to lose The the land that God had given to them and when Ezra heard this We read that in verse 3 I rent or tore my garment and my mantle I plucked off the hair of my head and my beard and I sat down astonished or in astonishment and He sat there all day long just stunned That the people would go back to the very things that caused them to lose the land in the first place.

I mean he was just astonished at this and tears his clothes plucks out his hair and Sits there astonished Now Ezra was a man of different cloth than Nehemiah twelve years later in 445 BC as Nehemiah met

some fellows that had returned from Jerusalem and He began to question them. How are things going in the Holy City? How how is it to be in Jerusalem and they said oh, hey, it's terrible The walls are still broken down We have no defenses the enemy comes in and raids us during the night and and everybody is just absolutely discouraged the morale is just at the bottom and And Nehemiah was so disturbed over this report of Jerusalem that he began to fast and he began to pray and Weeping came his turn to Take the cup to the king because he was the king's cups bear, and it was the same Artaxerxes long long Jimenez And as he came into the king he said what's wrong you Look, I've never seen you look sad like this before You're not sick. It must be sorrow of heart And Nehemiah said how could I be happy when the city of my God is lying waste The king said well, what would you like me to do and one of those arrow prayers? I prayed unto the God of heaven, and I said to the king I would like permission To go back and to rebuild the walls in the city so in the first of Nisan in the year 445 BC Nehemiah received the decree to go back and to restore and to rebuild the city Now this is 12 years after Ezra had gone back with about 2,000 people to reestablish the worship and all and when Ezra when Nehemiah came to the city he found The same thing was going on this intermarriage and we read in Nehemiah 13 In those days verse 23 I saw The Jews that had married wives from Ashdod and Ammon and Moab and the children speak half in the speech of Ashdod They could not speak in the Jews language, but according to the language of each people I contended with them I cursed them I Smote certain of them and plucked off their hair and made them swear by God saying you shall not give your daughters to their Sons nor take their death.

He's a different sort than Ezra. Ezra pulled out his own hair his own beard but Nehemiah went after these fellows pulled out their hair and Made them swear that they were going to get rid of these wives. But the thing that I note is That these men were passionate For the things of God I think that one of our problems today is the fact that we don't have that kind of passion for righteousness These were men that were passionate for righteous living Now we know that our God is a very compassionate God He is a gracious God He is slow to anger he is plenteous in mercy Gail is just press this into our minds and we know that this is true.

He's slow To anger God is not willing that any should perish in Ezekiel 33 11 God told Ezekiel say to them as I live saith the Lord God. I Have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. I Desire that the wicked would turn from their wickedness and live turn turn from your evil ways for why will you die? Oh house of Israel But because God is long-suffering because God is compassionate because God is So slow to anger and so plenteous in mercy Sometimes people make deadly mistakes Because they interpret the long-suffering of God as ignorance Because God hasn't brought immediate judgment Because God hasn't taken immediate action They sometimes have that feeling that God doesn't know What I'm doing but the psalmist said fools When you will you become wise? He that is taught knowledge Does he not know? He who created your ear.

Do you think that he is deaf? Do you think the one that created your eyes cannot see in? In Psalm 139 David said O Lord thou has searched me and thou has known me you know my down sittings and my uprisings and you understand my thoughts afar off and in the Hebrew that is indicating you understand my thoughts before I even think them and Then David said such knowledge is too wonderful for me. I cannot attain into it God you know me so thoroughly and It's a mistake to think that God doesn't know Many times people misinterpret the in the patience of God as weakness They feel that God cannot judge or worse There are many who misinterpret the mercies of God as approval That somehow God approves of what I am doing because God hasn't brought the hand of judgment upon me and therefore God approves or and Unfortunately, I've found this with many ministers When you face them with an issue in their life They'll say

well if God didn't Want me to do what I'm doing, why would he continue to bless my ministry and they misinterpret the grace and the patience of God as Approval God is approving or else.

Why would I still be able to? reach people and minister to people well God is gracious and he honors his word and It is the Word of God that he honors and these ministers one day will stand before Jesus and they'll say Lord Lord Didn't we not prophesy in your name Didn't we not cast out devils and do many marvelous works and they'll hear the words of Jesus depart from me you workers of iniquity I Don't know you Paul wrote to the Romans in chapter 2 verse 2 We are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth upon them which commits such things and You think this you who are guilty of judging a man for the things that you are doing yourself That you are going to escape the judgment of God Do you despise the riches of his goodness and the forbearance and long-suffering?

Do you not know that the goodness of God is intended to lead you to repentance? But your hard and impenitent heart is stirring up against you wrath And when the day of wrath comes and God reveals his righteous judgment He will render to every man according to his deeds unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth But obey unrighteousness They will face his indignation and wrath and there will be tribulation and anguish Upon every soul of man that is doing evil God had been merciful to Israel and In his mercy, he delivered them from their captivity He allowed them to go back to their homeland and to rebuild the temple However, it did not take very long until they were back into the same old patterns that have brought them into captivity in the first place Ezra was a godly man He had purposed in his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach the people the law of the Lord and When he comes to Jerusalem He sees what's going on and he becomes passionately righteous as He tears his clothes pulls out his beard and his hair sits down astonished I believe that God is looking for men like Ezra and women Who will be passionate? for the things of God Who will be passionate? for righteousness among the people we're living in a day and in an age in which Toleration is sort of the Rule of the day we need to be tolerant You mustn't really be too Passionate in in the righteous things, but learn to accept live and let live It is interesting to me that the most intolerant people in our society Today are the people who are constantly pressing us to be tolerant toward them But if you dare speak out a bit against their lifestyles, you'll find out what intolerance is all about They'll pick at you.

They'll Castigate you they're extremely intolerant and yet they are the ones that are crying tolerant tolerant, brother If you dare to classify what they are doing as sin They'll denounce you as a radical fundamentalist a bigot a hate monger And they'll try and get laws passed in order to silence you from condemning their activities but through the media We have been slowly brainwashed now the technique for brainwashing is to Say or to do things that are totally shocking To say filthy words that just totally shock you You have this response against it just You know just that shock but to continue to say it until you're no longer shocked and When you are no longer shocked you've been brainwashed Now you can hear that kind of filth and it doesn't shock you it doesn't move you just you know You sort of stuff it off and and that's what brainwashing is all about I can imagine that there are many of you Who the first time you were sitting in a theater and You heard some really filthy Blasphemous language you were so upset you got up and you walked out of the theater sort of mumbling at what's going on In the world in which we live today but now You can sit through an entire show All kinds of filth all kinds of vulgar language all kinds of blasphemous and You just sit through it You can still sit through the whole you don't walk out anymore What does that mean? That means you've been brainwashed You've come to accept the unacceptable and the media today has brainwashed us So that we don't get Passionate against evil We are not passionate for righteousness Because we've been brainwashed by the media. I did notice how passionate

people got when our angels won the American League Championship and are going to face now San Francisco in the World Series I Mean I They stood around there. They were screaming.

They were yelling. They were had paint all over their bodies all over their faces they were you know, just very passionate and I noticed as the news media was showing the celebration afterwards They were commenting and commending them You know these loyal fans and look at how they're selling on they were just excited because oh my they're so passionate But if we would dare to be passionate About the glorious victory that we have in Jesus Christ They would not report it as Wonderful fans supporting fans, but they would report it as a bunch of weird fanatics Why is it that the world can get so passionate over a victory? Which could be very short-lived those same rabid fans Should we lose to San Francisco? You'll see them going home with long faces and and and you know, just totally miserable It's a good example of the difference between happiness and joy Happiness is an emotion that is predicated upon pleasant outward circumstances and at football games You can see the whole gamut Last week when Florida was playing Miami When they got down within Phil gold range the Florida Crowd was all on their feet. They're all excited.

They were really jumping up and down Until he hooked it and it went left and then the Miami side all went up in the Excitement and all the joy of the thing or the happiness of it. It's not real joy. Joy is a It is a thing of the spirit and it is independent of outward circumstances The joy of the Lord the Lord doesn't really promises happiness as much as he promises joy Here's Ezra he is passionate He is touched.

He's moved the next thing we see Ezra is in prayer Desperate in prayer Over the sin of the people and as you read the prayer of Ezra You see how desperate he was one of the greatest problems. I think that we have today is That we are living in very desperate times But the church is not really desperate in prayer we're not really drawing together for prayer for our nation and yet our nation is probably in one of the most critical points of its history and and the church isn't desperate and and I think that Our hearts need to be stirred By the Spirit of God Ezra knew that the way people were living was certain to bring them into the judgment of God again upon their land and I'm convinced that the way America has turned its back on God the way people are living That it is certain to bring the judgment of God upon America.

I Sent revival a Turning of our nation back to God, but it doesn't look like it's going to happen But I think that that's the only hope for survival for our nation And I do not do not believe that that will happen apart from the church really becoming passionate in prayer desperate in prayer You would think that the church would be packed with believers calling upon God for mercy And for repentance It was interesting 9-11 last year that following Sunday our church was packed People I hadn't seen in a long time and people I'd never seen But it is interesting how quickly We got over the shock And we got back to business as usual And I believe it was a real wake-up call for America and I think that we sort of aroused for a moment, but then Rolled over on the other side and went back to sleep again God loves America God loves the world But when any nation or people turn their backs upon God the face of God is against that nation those people It's hard to get people away from their television sets on Sunday night To get them out to church And you say okay you quit preaching you've gone to Midland But Jesus warned us that those days that would precede his coming there in Luke 21 as He talked about his coming again and his rapture of the church He said take heed to yourselves Lest at any time your hearts are overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life So that that day find you unprepared For as a snare it shall come upon all that dwell upon the face of the whole earth Watch ye therefore pray always that you may be accounted worthy To escape all these things that are coming to pass and to stand before the Son of Man But Jesus warned that there would be that eating drinking and the cares of this life would be as a trap and

that when he came many people Would not be ready Not be watching Jesus talked about the various types of soil upon which the seed fell in those kingdom parables in Matthew's gospel and He said some of it fell on the wayside some fell on the stony ground some fell on Among the thorns and some fell on good soil and as he began to explain The parable he said in that seed which fell upon Around the thorny ground.

He said that They are those that receive the word The but the thorns grow up with it and they choke it out that it becomes Unfruitful and as he describes the thorns, he said the cares of this world the deceitfulness of riches They choke out the world and it becomes unfruitful tonight Would you say that that perhaps describes you the cares of this life? the deceitfulness of riches Are so occupying your life that you're not really fruitful in the things of the kingdom Some things I'd like you to ponder what kind of a Christian would you gauge yourself to be? Fervent passionate or would you say well I'm sort of a take-it-or-leave-it kind of a guy Probably lukewarm or in being honest, would you confess? You know, I've really grown cold it is true the the things of life have just sort of crowded out and The Word of God in my life, and I'm not really bearing fruit You know that Jesus talked about that lukewarm condition and he said he was gonna spew it out of his mouth It was not acceptable. I pray that the Spirit of God will help us to become Passionate again towards the things of God Surely in these days these days in which we're living today days in which our future is very Threatened the world is in a total mess conditions are desperate and It's time that we get desperate before God. It's time that we get passionate about our relationship with God.

I Think that there's probably not a single one of us here tonight that don't hope that when we die, we'll go to heaven But what kind of provisions are you making to assure the fact that you will? God gave his all for us Can we do less? Then give him our best And live for him completely After all he's done for us God help us to be passionate For the things of God father we look at the world in which we live today and our hearts are deeply troubled We look at the church today Lord and our hearts are deeply troubled Because we realize Lord that the ship is sinking but people don't seem to be aware of it These are crisis days And yet people are going on as though nothing was happening Lord, we look at men like Ezra. We look at men like Nehemiah and we see how passionate they were That people start living righteous lives Help us Lord that we too will become passionate for righteousness Passionate against evil Passionate Lord in our service to you and may we give to you our lives That we might serve you Lord With a passion and a zeal In Jesus name we pray Amen You

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