

# Drawing Nigh to God

by David Wilkerson

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*David Wilkerson emphasizes the necessity of approaching God with a sincere heart, free from hypocrisy and sin, to truly draw near to Him.*

**Duration:** 59:47

**Scripture:** Isaiah 1:10, Isaiah 50:4-7, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Seeking God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of patiently waiting for God's word. He refers to Isaiah 50:4-7, which speaks of Christ having the tongue of the learned and being able to speak a word in season to the weary. The preacher encourages the congregation to stay focused on God and not let their minds wander during worship. He warns against coming to God's house without cleansing and hiding their sinful actions in the dark. The sermon concludes with the preacher sharing his personal experience of seeking God's guidance when he feels unable to continue preaching, and how God always provides him with a word.

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## Transcript

This message is one of the Times Square Church pulpit series. It was recorded in the sanctuary of Times Square Church in Manhattan, New York City. Other tapes are available by writing WorldChallenge, P.O. Box 260, Lindell, Texas, 75771, or calling 903-963-8626.

You are welcome to make additional cassettes of this message for free distribution to friends. However, for all other forms of reproduction or electronic transmission, existing copyright laws apply. I want to speak to you this morning on the subject, drawing nigh to God.

Drawing nigh to God. I want you to go to Isaiah, the first chapter, the first chapter of Isaiah. And if you've been coming to church, Times Square Church, a short while, maybe you've only been here a few weeks, would you please remember that you must bring your Bible.

That's a part of our worship. And we want you to prove what we say is true by checking us in the word of the Lord. First chapter of Isaiah, please, and if you don't have your Bible, if you're visiting, peek over to your neighbor's Bible, if you will, please.

First chapter of Isaiah, beginning of verse 10. This is Isaiah speaking in the word of the Lord. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom.

Give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord? I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beast. I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or he goats.

When you come to appear before me, who has required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations, incenses, abomination unto me. Your new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with its iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, your appointed feasts, my soul hates.

There are trouble unto me, I'm weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I'll hide my eyes from you. When you make your prayers, I will not hear.

Your hands are full of blood. Heavenly Father, we're talking this morning about this wonderful privilege of drawing nigh to you. And I ask your Holy Spirit to open our eyes and our understanding.

God, as I speak, let words flow out of my heart from your throne room. Sanctify this vessel in a way that there's nothing that would hinder this flow. Lord, I don't know who's here.

I don't know why you prepared this particular message, but you have a reason for all that you say and do to us. And we ask you to sanctify our hearing, give us ears to hear and eyes to see, and hearts that are broken and melted, that you can mold us and shape us into the image of Christ. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Isaiah's day, it must have been quite a sight in Isaiah's day to go to the high feast days and see this incredible sight of people coming from all over Israel to the high holy days. Three times a year they were supposed to come to Jerusalem. And in this process, they called it coming to the face of God, coming to meet God.

It must have been quite a scene. You would, at the house of the Lord, lined up outside the outer court. You would have seen wealthy princes with their servants holding a very expensive ram by the neck or collar with a rope.

You would see people of all ages and all different standards of living with their bullocks and their rams and their sheep and their goats. You would have seen people standing in that line with caged pigeons because they were poor, that's all they could afford. And it must have been something, the braying of the animals and the animal noises and the people checking their lamb with others and examining them and comparing all of the sacrifices that are coming.

It must have been a sight, quite a sound, the noises and the chatter. People bringing their sacrifices to the altar. Then came the high priest examining the animals to see if they were worthy.

And then, of course, came the bleeding, the slaying and the bleeding of the animals. And then the high priest would take the blood of their sacrifice, of the animals, and he would spray some of it with his hand on the ground. He would take some of the blood.

He would spray it on the instruments in the tabernacle. Some of the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar. Others were smeared on.

He took some blood in his hands and smeared it on the horns of the altar. It was quite a religious thing that was happening. In fact, the most religious thing you could do as a Jew was to go to Jerusalem to meet the face of God.

This is what it was called. You come to meet the face of God. You're drawing nigh to God.

And this was something that if you had asked anybody in that line waiting to sacrifice, what are you here for? He said, I'm here to meet the face of God. I'm here to draw near to God. I came from Bethlehem.

I came from Dan. I came from Beersheba. And I'm here with my sacrifice.

I'm coming to meet the face of God. That's exactly what they would tell you, drawing nigh to God. Now, Isaiah the prophet had witnessed this scene for many, many years.

He was a prophet through four kings. One of the most wicked was Ahab. King Uzziah, remember, died in shame.

He died as a leper. He tried to come into the temple of God and sacrifice as a priest himself. And he turned into a leper.

And then Ahaz followed him, his son, in a very wicked generation. The priest became corrupted. The whole nation was backslidden.

They offered their children as human sacrifices to that belly god in the Valley of Hinnom. And Isaiah for decades had seen this bloody scene of sacrificing. All the people, they could live as they pleased.

They came in half-heartedly. They came in. Their minds were elsewhere.

This was just by something they had done by rote for many, many years. Come three times a year, bring their sacrifice, and go home saying, I met the face of God. I did what's required from me.

Went back to their idolatry and their adultery, their fornication, their lying, their cheating of widows. They went back to their old lifestyle of corruption. But they thought they're religious as long as they went and met the face of God three times a year with their sacrifice.

At one point in time, and it would have happened either at the end of Isaiah's reign or perhaps under Ahab. I would suggest it was under Ahab when Israel and Judah were at their worst. They were totally backslidden, full of sin and corruption.

And once again, they bring their sacrifice to the altar. And God, this time, said it's enough. And he sent the prophet Isaiah to the temple.

And he stood outside that temple. And he began to cry out God's word to these people who were lined up. There were the princes and the rulers lined up with their sacrifices and the pigeons.

And what a sound it was. And everybody, this was a religious celebration. This was a religious thing.

It was all religion. There was no spirituality to it whatsoever. And in verses 10 and 11, this is the message God told them to preach.

Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom. And give ear to the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Now, he's talking about people coming to meet God and to have fellowship with him.

Hear those that are coming to meet the face of God. He said, you're all of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom is in your heart.

You, many of you have sexual addictions. And many of you are living in sin. You come here not even wanting to be redeemed.

You don't want to be cleansed. You know nothing about the blood that you see shed, what it represents to you. You don't know anything of the freedom.

You're coming haphazardly into the kingdom of, into the house of God. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me, say the Lord? I am full of your burnt offerings of rams and fat and fed beasts. And I delight not in the blood of bullocks and lambs and he-goats.

When you come to appear before me, who's required this at your hand to tread my courts? He said, whatever, where did you get this idea that you could live like the devil? Whatever gave you this idea that then you can come into my house You see, the sacrifice represents praise. Bring a sacrifice of praise to the Lord. Incense represents prayer.

And on that altar, incense was poured so that you could hear, you could smell that odor, that of incense all over Jerusalem. Filled and wafted through the air. And God said, it's a stench in my nostrils.

He said, I don't want to see this blood sacrifice anymore because your heart's not in it. Your heart's not in it. He said, you come in haphazardly.

He said, where did you get the idea you could come in, make your sacrifice, and then just tramp around my court nonchalant like a tourist? To tramp or tread the court is to trample. They trample because they came in. If you had looked at them, they would look religious.

It looked fine. But there was sin in their lives and they come in. And the picture of it is people coming today into the house of God, habitually bound by sin, have no heart for God, don't even want to be delivered, but still go through the religious traditions.

There are Pentecostal traditions coming into the house of God, raising their hands and praising the Lord. When all along it said, he that hath clean hands and a pure heart alone shall ascend the holy hill of God. And God says, I will not accept this kind of sacrifice.

And I wonder how much of the praise, we talk about this generation being such a generation of praise. We have praise conferences, we have worship conferences, and I wonder how much of it God is receiving. Or rather he should send prophets and say, listen, I can't receive this kind, you can't draw nigh to me unless you want to be cleansed, unless you want the Holy Ghost to mortify your sins, unless your mind and your heart is in it.

How many of us today, and I say it lovingly, how many of us came into this church today with your mind set on the Lord as you worshiped and as you praised him? Was your mind somewhere else this morning?

Was it on your car? Was it on your house? Was it on shopping? Was it on your marriage? Was it on your children? Was it on problems? Did your mind wander? Did you come in and trample his courts this morning? Did you tread on his courts? And God says, what makes you think you can do that? How dare you come into my presence? And he's saying this through the prophet. How dare you? Listen to it again when you come to appear before me. Who is required or who allowed you to think this way that you could tread my courts, that you could just come any way you please? You say, well, God ought to be pleased that I'm here.

As far as God's concerned, you are not here. You're wherever your mind is. It's very important.

God spoke this to me years ago. It's very, very important when you come into his presence to keep focused on who he is and why you're there. To be focused on him.

If your mind wanders, get up and go out, but don't just start treading around his court. Just don't go walking around his courts nonchalantly, yawning and just looking around. Go out and do your thing and come back when you're at your best.

Because God says, I want your very, very best. Amen? Wherefore, the Lord said, for as much as this people draw near to me with their mouth and with their lips they honor me, but they have removed their heart far from me and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. And they seek to hide their counsel from the Lord and their works are done in the dark.

He said, you know, the night before they do these things in the dark when nobody sees and then they come into my house without cleansing, they walk right into my presence and their heart isn't even with me. Jesus took these words of Isaiah, this passage I just read to you, and applied them to his generation. Listen to what Jesus said to the Pharisees and scribes.

You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesied of you. The very prophecy I read to you this morning. Well did Isaiah's prophesier say of you, this people draw nigh unto me with their mouth and they honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

And Jesus saying, Isaiah was talking about you. He wasn't talking about his people alone. He said, this is a new prophecy.

He's talking about you. We could do the same thing. We can take what Jesus said today and we could say to any hypocritical person who believes they can come into the house of God and just say, I went to God's house.

I saw his face. I drew near to God. I spent two hours at Times Square Church and I worshiped with the people.

How did you come here? Did you come with deeds done in darkness that you didn't come to him for cleansing? You didn't come here for power over sin. You came here to ease your conscience, to do a religious thing. And God said, I won't accept that.

I won't have it. Now, we all know the scriptures about drawing near to God. Let me give you some of them.

Let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace and help in the time of need. Let's come boldly. Here's another verse.

In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Let us draw nigh with a true heart and full assurance of faith. A true heart is with nothing hidden.

With nothing hidden. Come with a true heart. Come with nothing hidden.

You want to come and have God expose everything that's in your life and say, God, here it is. I'm not hiding anything. I come to meet you.

Now, Lord, expose it and then give me the power to deal with it. And he's promised to do just that. Recently, I was praying over James 4a.

You know this. It's very familiar. Draw nigh unto God and he'll what? He'll draw nigh unto you.

And I've been praying that. I pray that every day. But recently, the Holy Spirit was urging me to press in on that.

And I would walk up and down in my prayer room saying, oh, God, draw nearer to me than you've ever drawn. I want to know you more than I've ever known you before. There was such a hunger to reaching out.

God, what's it take to get closer to you? What's the cost? Let me know. I want more than anything else to seek you. I want you to draw nearer to me than you've ever been before.

I've talked about knowing you, but I really don't know you like I want to. Lord, I want to get closer to you. Now, how many have prayed that prayer? Have you prayed that? Lord, I want to get closer.

I've got a hunger in my heart because if you really are walking in the Holy Spirit, that's His work. He's going to keep drawing you. He'll keep urging you to get deeper in the Lord, get closer to Him, more intimate.

That'll be there until Jesus comes. You'll never be satisfied in that direction because it's always upward and onward into the depths of Christ till finally you have waters to swim in. And that urge is there.

And I kept praying that. And it suddenly dawned on me the question, how do I draw near to Him? What's involved in drawing near to Him? I keep saying that. I keep praying, what is that about? And I said, Lord, tell me what I have to do.

Tell me what the process is by which I can get very close to you and likewise, I can have you because you promised that if I get close to you and draw nearer to you, you'll draw nearer to me. And I want that. And I began to plead with the Lord, show me.

I kept seeking God, what do you mean? What's required? Have you ever figured that out? You say, well, it's more prayer, more intense prayer, more time alone with God, get into His word more. Yes, that's all a part of it. That didn't answer, that didn't.

I knew there was more to it than that. I've done all of that and I still don't feel near. I don't feel as close to Him as I want to feel and I know I'm not as close as I want to be.

Lord answered me with a question. Why do you want to draw near me? What's your motive? Why do you want me to come near you? What's your motive? Because God's interested in motives if you see here

their motive was wrong and God says, I'll not accept it. That's why I gave you this background this morning.

My first thought was, well, Lord, that ought to be obvious. I want to draw near to you because that's what Christians do. That's what this Christian walk's all about.

Draw me nearer. Oh, boy, what a song. Brother Carter, where are you? I was bleeding inside.

We've all prayed that. God, I want to be closer than I've ever been to you. Draw me nearer and the Lord said, why? I know your heart and your motive.

You want more of me but do you really know what your motive is? I know what it is but do you know what it is? Have you ever prayed this prayer and then you feel this drawing nigh to the Lord? Let me talk about some of the motives we have in drawing nigh to the Lord. One of the most subtle motives of all is competitive holiness, competitive holiness. Let me tell you what that's all about.

Now, we should all be holy. We should all desire to be more holy. We should pray about being more holy but I'm talking about a competitive holiness and it's something like this.

It's a subtle desire to be a little bit holier than the most holy person you know in your circle. I'm going to touch some nerves in just a minute here. Now, I'm not talking about this evil desire to be holier than thou like the Pharisees had.

That's not it, is it? These are sincere people like you and me. We want to get close to God. Genuine Holy Ghost hunger in us to get closer and closer to the Lord.

This is a righteous person who's convinced that some brother or sister has passed them by in holiness. I'm just beginning. Nothing is said outright and you dare not even think it but it's so subtle it's down deep inside.

It's just a slight peeve at God. A little grievance that goes something like this. Lord, I've sought your face diligently.

I have prayed with faith. I've fasted. I've been faithful.

I live victoriously. I'm obedient to your word. I have no other desire in the world but to get to know you better.

I've drawn near to you. So why doesn't anybody think of me as holy? Why does everybody look at sister so-and-so and all they say is she is so close to Jesus? Lord, with all of my praying and all my seeking your face, why doesn't anybody even consider me holy or righteous? I'm just an ordinary Joe. I'm just an ordinary person and everybody tells me about brother so-and-so.

Well, when you're around him, you feel God. Around them, you see Jesus. They are so righteous.

No guile in them. And Lord, here I am. I'm running as fast as I can to meet you.

I'm doing everything right. And nobody knows anything about my righteousness. We don't say it.

We don't even want to think it, but it's down inside. What's wrong with me? Why you bypass me, Lord? I want to be holy. Why? I want to draw closer to Jesus.

Why? What's your motive? Think of King Saul. I tell you, you've got to be an awful, humble, mighty man to put up with what Saul put up with. Coming home from the battle, he's victorious and he's riding his white horse in and all the women are coming up, pounding their tamarins and dancing and singing.

Saul has slain his thousands and he smiles. David's in the horse behind him. And they look right past Saul.

Yeah, Saul has slain his thousands. Turns right on David. But David, 10,000.

Lord, he's holier than I am. Now, I tell you, folks, I don't know. I think now at my age, I can handle it.

When I was a young preacher, I don't think I could handle this. When you have to stand by and you hear somebody behind you being praised to high heaven, and you're being ignored or bypassed. Let me tell you why I believe Saul lost it.

Saul lost it, not because of the praises heaped on David, but it's what Saul saw in David's life, his pursuit of God. And he felt that he can't compete with that pursuit. He can't keep up with him.

I'm sure Saul tried. He tried and tried. Because you see, God had anointed him with the Holy Ghost.

God had called him and God had even told him the plan of God was to make him a sure house and establish him forever. God had a plan for Saul. Saul could have repented as David did.

He could have said, don't take your Holy Spirit from me. David could have said, I don't understand this, Lord. You're going to have to deal with me.

There were things that could have been done. But you see, Saul's comparing himself with David. He sees David growing in the Lord.

And now he feels that God has shortchanged him. Somehow God loves David more than him. And this becomes a competitive holiness.

It becomes a competitive pursuit of holiness. And Saul, I believe, when he lost it, he looked at David and thought, David's so far ahead. David is so loved.

And I've tried so hard and missed it. I'll never catch up to David. I'll never be like David.

I'll never have the blessing on my family like he has on his family. My children won't be blessed like his children are being blessed. His work and ministry, I won't be blessed.

God has somehow, God's mad at me. God's left me behind. I've been shortchanged.

Why try? And Saul gives up and opens himself to demonic oppression. And when you compare yourself with others, you're going to be disappointed all the time. I wish a prophet could have gone to Saul and foretold the story of David.

And here's Saul feeling so left out. Here's Saul feeling that he does not compare to David's holiness and it gets worse every passing day. And the competition is so heavy for him.

And I wish somebody could have gone to him because you see, you can look at the holiest person you know and know nothing about them. You don't know their battles. You don't know their struggles.

You may be far holier than they are in the sight of God. But you see, I wish somebody could have told him, said, I'm a prophet and God sent me. I want to tell you about this man that you are competing with.

I want to, this man that you measure yourself by. You feel so defeated. You can't measure up to him.

I want to tell you something about that man. Yes, he loves God, but I want to tell you about his success. But I want to tell you about his failure.

This man that you are holding up so high this man that you're measuring yourself, you're not to look at man because he's just a man. He's going to cheat. He's going to commit adultery.

And he's going to murder a man and call blood. And then he's going to disgrace God in Israel. He's going to number the people.

And 70,000 of his men are going to die because of his sin. And this is the man you're measuring yourself by. Folks, every time in my life that I've seen God, I know I've been associated with some of the most holy men.

Now, thank God that I know many of them. I've never measured myself by them. And they died and went into eternity with honor and the joy of the Lord and holy before and righteous before the Lord.

But every time I have measured myself by another man or woman that appeared to be so holy, I have been utterly disappointed. I could name two or three right now that I would go home and tell my wife, I said, man, I wish I could be that righteous. Man, I wish I could be like him.

I'll never measure up to that. I can't preach like that. He gets revelations I've never seen.

Instead of just thanking God that he made me different. He made you different. He loves you just the way you are.

God made you. You have your place. And every time those very men disappointed me, fell left and right.

Some of them that I held so high esteem turned on me and literally murdered me by things they said and did. And then I say, God, I wasted all that time, all that energy trying to be like them. Folks, get your eyes off people.

You can't go into the presence of God trying to ask God to make you holy so that you can rise above somebody else. No, it's really not a matter of, it's not pride that I'm talking about. There's something there that says, I don't want anybody to pass me.

I used to say, I don't want anybody to pray. There's only 24 hours a day. I don't want anybody to pray more than I can pray.

I don't want anybody to believe any more than I can believe. I want to be as righteous as any man by faith. And when I die, I want them to write on my tombstone, he was a man of God.

Yeah. Folks, that sounds righteous. But if our motive isn't right, it can be the worst kind of stinking pride in the face of God.

No, forget everybody else. Let them go their way. You spend your own time.

I'm going to the Lord just to worship him. I want to get to know him. He'll give me the measure of knowledge that's good for me.

He knows how much I can stand. He has a place for me. I'm not in competition with anybody.

I can assure you, there is no preacher on this pulpit in competition with another. We're not in competition with one another. God blesses, when God blesses me, pastors, associates, they just thank God.

And when they get up here, I'm like a father with sons saying, thank God, when I see the results and see what God is doing. Honestly, before the Lord, God's put that in our heart where there's no competitive holiness and we all are drawing nigh unto the Lord. Our measure of what he's promised us.

Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Secondly, we miss the purpose of drawing near to God if we do all the talking and no listening when we get there.

We want to leave his presence edified and we want to empty our souls so that all our burdens, we leave them. Bring your burdens to the Lord and leave them there. Yes, that's all scriptural.

We want to shower him with praises, but we go into his course and we talk and talk and talk. That's not fellowship unless you give him the privilege and the honor to unburden his heart to you. Unless you allow him to speak to your heart.

He's wanting to give you direction. He wants to give you answers to things that are plaguing your heart. He wants to speak his mind to you.

How many of us go into the house of prayer, go into the secret closet and you can spend hours worshiping him and praying. You come out feeling great. It's invigorating.

It's marvelous. It's healing. Folks, you're just treading the court if you don't give him time.

If you will not listen to him because it's been the scriptural pattern all through the Bible that God's purpose in having you draw nigh to him is that he can draw nigh to you, to govern you, to speak to you, to answer every question you have, every one of them. To tell you how to get out of a financial fix, how to overcome sin and the steps that you need to take to break the chains and bondage of sin. He wants to speak to you about your marriage.

He wants to speak to you about your ministry. He wants to speak to you about all of these things. But we don't tarry in his presence until he speaks.

We run in with our praises. We run in and make our petitions known. Thank you, Jesus.

I believe you. Out we go. Back to our own interest.

Elijah said, as the Lord liveth before whom I stand. Stand there is a word that means tarry or wait. And the prophet Elijah is saying, as the Lord lives before whom I tarry and upon whom I wait.

And then you find him speaking a word of direction. He's waiting before God as a prophet and he speaks these words. There shall not be dew or rain these years but according to my word.

Now how does a man stand before a whole nation and says, according to my word, my word alone. There's not going to be rain or dew for three years. There's going to be a famine.

There's going to be a drought. According to my word. How can you stand before God? And he's saying that.

He said, as the Lord liveth before whom I have been waiting on. And he said, I heard a voice. All that he said was what God told him to say in the secret closet of prayer.

You find him saying the same thing later when the drought was to end and Ahab's out to kill him and Ahab with his army is searching the whole nation to find him. He says, I get him, I'm going to kill him. The moment I see him, he's a dead man.

Then suddenly, this man who's been waiting on the Lord was told by the Lord, I want you to go. His chariot's going to come down this road. I want you to go down this road and stand there and stop him.

Ahab comes down with his army and Ahab said, there he is. And Ahab doesn't give him a chance to speak. Ahab, or rather Elijah said, as the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand.

In other words, I've been in the presence of God. I've drawn near to the Lord and I have the word. And he said, I want you to meet me on Mount Carmel.

I want you to go into the city, round up all the false prophets of Baal and I want you to bring them up on the mount. Get all of Israel and bring it. And he said, yes, sir.

Every demon and devil in hell will have to tremble at a man or woman who is truly heard from God. Truly been in the Lord's presence and he comes out and he speaks the word with authority. How about Elisha, his young preacher, trainee? Remember, Jehoram and Jehoshaphat, two kings come to see him because they're about to make war and they want a word of direction from God.

Here's Elisha, as the Lord of hosts liveth, same words, before whom I stand. Elisha said, I've learned that I don't do anything until I go into his presence and I hear his voice. And he said to Jehoshaphat and Jehoram, get me a minstrel.

In other words, get me a stringed instrument band and bring them. And as they're playing, he's waiting on the Lord. I don't know if it took all day.

It could have taken all night and the next day and he's waiting on the Lord. He's not saying a word. He's just waiting on the Lord.

And then suddenly the word of the Lord comes. Thus saith the Lord. Clear direction comes at 2 Kings 3.14. Clearest word you ever had about digging ditches, everything, the whole plan God had laid out while he was waiting on the Lord.

The same thing in the New Testament, the same pattern. You see it witnessed with Peter. He goes up on the housetop to pray.

Around noontime. And three times while he's praying, see the Lord puts him in a trance. He's already had his time of worship and praise.

He has prayed. He has honored the Lord. And now the Lord says, I want to speak.

Probably the only way you can get talking to Peter to be still is to put him in a trance. God put him in a trance to keep him quiet. And three times the Lord, the Bible said, the Lord said, the Lord said, the Lord said.

Three times he spoke. And then he woke up. And then the Holy Ghost comes to him.

You see, he's waited on the Lord. He has the word. And now the Holy Ghost said, Peter, go downstairs.

In just a few moments, three men are going to knock on the door. Now that's pretty clear. That's clear direction.

Three men are going to knock on the door. They're going to ask you to go with them. Clear direction.

Same with Paul the Apostle. He goes down to Antioch where some wonderful men of God are waiting on the Lord, the Bible said. They are praying and fasting and waiting on the Lord.

Then the next thing he said, and the Holy Ghost said, separate Saul and Barnabas for the work that I've called them to do. It was the word that came out of that. Folks, that's what, why do you want the Lord to draw nigh to you? First of all, to govern you.

You say, Lord, I want to be totally submissive to you. I want your mind. I want your presence in my life.

But I want you to speak to me because there's no other place to go. Folks, where do you go today in such a complicated age? When you have problems, when you have to have answers to questions you can't get from any psychologist. You can't get from any expert.

You can't get from Abby. You can't get from anybody. You can go to counselors and there's going to come an end to that.

The Lord says, I want you totally dependent on me. You come into my presence. You worship me.

Yes, you draw nigh to me, but I will draw nigh to you if you stay. And that's what happened. When we come into the courts of the Lord, people come in, make their petitions.

They pray and offer their incense. And then they walk around a little bit and they walk out. And the Lord, I believe this with all my heart.

When he said, come into my courts with praise, he waits until all the tourists are gone. He waits till all the treaders have left and gone their way. And he waits for those who say, I'm not leaving this court until I have a word.

I am desperate to hear from God. And I'm not leaving his presence. And I believe the Lord waits for that holy remnant that wants to know him and does not know him, but know his voice so clearly.

And you can't know it until you spend time waiting. Quietly, patiently with faith, absolute faith. Because he said without faith, you can't please him.

Come in, praise all you want. Worship all you want. Ask him all you want.

But without faith, you can't please him. Can't accept the sacrifice without faith. And he waits till all the treaders are gone out of his court.

Then he says, draw near to me now. Let me come near to you. And he says, now tell me.

When I'm preparing a message and I hit a brick wall, you know, you know what that is? You're getting a message. You're halfway through and suddenly everything stops. Inspiration's gone.

And you struggle. You go to your reference books. You pray and say, God, what happened? I'm not getting anything.

Boy, how many times? Pastor Carter explains it headbanging. And you put your head on the desk at this bank. So God, where do I go from here? I'm a blank, writer's block, preacher's block.

I can't get through. You know what the Lord's taught me? I used to say, Lord, what's wrong with me? Are you mad at me? Have I done something to offend you, Holy Ghost? Are you not speaking to me because you're trying to say something and I'm not hearing you? Lord, everybody else is getting revelation. Where's mine? I'd look at my notes and say, look, there's nothing here.

I can't preach. There are times I thought, I'm just going to get up there and just talk. I'd never do that, but I'm kind of threatening the Lord.

I'd say, Lord, you don't want to see or hear that. But you know what the Lord taught me? Whenever I reach a place, I can't go any further. I close my Bible, I put down my pen, close all my reference books, everything else, turn out the light, and I go sit in the chair, my favorite chair.

And I worship and I wait. I said, Lord, 14 years I've been preaching this pulpit, never once have you failed me. And I build up my faith.

Lord, you've always given me a word. There's been something that's touched me and I was able to get up and let it flow out of my heart. Lord, you're going to do it again in your faith.

I'll wait. Sometimes you have to wait an hour or two hours. Sometimes you wait overnight.

No, you're not up all night. I'm not going to fool you and try to make you think I'm so holy I stay up all night praying. There are a few times I've done that, but that's when everybody else was around and I didn't want to leave before they did.

If you're going to do it, let them ask in faith, nothing wavering, for let not that man think he received anything of the Lord if you doubt and you waver. Don't think you're going to get anything from God if you waver. So I sit there and I wait.

And you know, I was so surprised when I opened my Bible and I read something in the scripture about drawing nigh to God in Isaiah 50. Will you turn to Isaiah 50, please? Just turn right to chapter 50. I'm going to close in just a minute.

You see, some people wait 15 minutes and they'll look at the clock and say, Lord, I've been here 15 minutes. You haven't said a word. This doesn't work.

No, patiently, as long as it takes. Isaiah 50, verses 4 to 7. The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned. This is speaking of Christ, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that's weary.

He wakeneth morning by morning. He wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God hath opened my ear and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.

I gave my back to the smiters, my cheeks to them that plucked off their hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me.

That's the faith. Therefore, shall not be confounded. Therefore, I've set my face like a flint.

I know that I shall not be ashamed. Look at me, please. That's Jesus.

They're speaking of Christ. The Lord is saying every day He wakes up my ear. He gives me a sensitive ear.

And if He didn't speak to you last night and you waited on Him, if you believe God with all your heart, He'll wake you up with the word. You'll get up and the word will be there. He'll wake up your ear.

He said, Jesus, every morning He speaks. He wakes up my ear. He makes me sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

He'll do that. That's a step of faith that we've got to take and believe that with all of our heart. For the Lord God will help me.

Therefore, I shall not be confounded. He'll not leave you in confusion. And He will never put you to shame.

In that verse, in verse 7. Finally, my last thought. I found another scripture that says it's possible not only to draw nigh to Him but to live in the court. Draw nigh to me.

To live in the court. Would you turn now to Psalm 65. There's one verse I want to give you and then we close.

Psalm 65, verse 4. Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house even of thy holy temple. Look at me, please.

The Lord said, if you will come by faith, draw nigh to me. And if you will believe my word now. And here's how I'm going to close this.

And I want you to listen closely now. Look at me, please. Well, you don't have to look.

Look past me if you want, but give me your ear. If you've been feeling a pull. If you... I can't explain to you how strong that pull is in my heart this past year.

But if you feel that pulling to draw nigh to the Lord as never before. You have a hunger and a thirst and you're not satisfied with what you have so far and you know there's so much more. That is God choosing you, causing you.

He said, I will cause you to draw near to me. I'll cause you. It'll not be a struggle to you now.

Folks, if you have that, rejoice in it. That's the Lord fulfilling this very prophecy out of Isaiah. He said, how blessed you are.

He said, I am causing you. I read it again. Blessed the man whom thou chooseth.

He's chosen you because he put that hunger. He put that thirst in you. Now I'm gonna tell you, there are many, many Christians, even in this building right now, they're satisfied with just going to church and a little bit of a couple of scriptures and a little devotion a day.

That's all they want and they're happy with it and they'll probably be saved if their heart's sincere. But there are others. The Lord said, no, I'm gonna put a hunger in you.

I'm gonna put a thirst in you. Like you have never known and this is the way you know that I put my hand on you and I've chosen you and I'm causing you to draw nigh to me because I've got something for you in the way of a walk with me that so few have known. I'm gonna lead you and guide you in the words that you speak.

But folks, you will never again have to say, oh God, when Moses waited on you, you put a glow on his face. Oh God, there was an aura about him. I wanna be so close to you, Jesus, that you put some kind of an aura on my countenance so that I can walk the streets and anybody who sees me will fall under conviction and get saved.

No, no, no, no. See, that's the kind of motive I sing that's evil and it's wrong. I'm gonna tell you, if you really get the touch of God and the sign of God, he'll make you more natural than you've ever been before.

He'll make you smile. You'll be able to laugh. I was in a restaurant recently.

Some people from Ohio were visiting and they'd been reading my mail for so long and they think I'm a prophet and I'm not. And I was in a restaurant and I was laughing with my kids. Said, he's laughing? They were mortified.

A prophet's supposed to walk around sober. I'm no prophet. I like to laugh and enjoy life and the closer you get to Jesus, the more natural you'll be.

Hallelujah. Glory to God. God wants to take all the sweat out of this thing.

He wants to take all of the burden out of seeking him. He wants to take the burden out of counting the hours of how much time I've read the Bible or how many scriptures. Get away from all of that.

I just love Jesus and I go to him because I love him with all of my heart. Hallelujah. Let's stand.

We don't want any phony religion in Times Square Church. Hallelujah. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Hallelujah. There's one word the Holy Spirit gives me and it's confusion. I'm going to get an invitation for those up in the balcony main floor and in the annex.

You came to church this morning with confusion in your life, been confused about things that have happened in your life, things that are going on in your life and there's been some tremendous confusion. Hurt. And the Lord's made it clear to me that he wants to clear up that confusion.

That confusion often is caused by neglecting drawing near to the Lord, neglecting his call to you. He keeps calling and says, you'll come to my presence. I'm going to satisfy and he said, I'll not leave you in confusion.

You'll not be confounded. That's the scripture I gave you at the last point here. You won't be confounded.

You won't be ashamed, but there's some confusion and the Lord wants to heal that. I'm going to ask you, and even in the annex, we usually don't do this on Sunday morning because of the crowd, but I'm going to ask you even in the annex to go out to the lobby. If this is you, if God's speaking to you, you came this morning and there was confusion mounting in your life and in your mind.

God wants to heal you. Now, if you're not right with God, if you're backslidden, you don't really, you have drifted away from the Lord, you really don't know Jesus in a personal way, I want you to come. Go back in the annex.

Just go to the lobby. Ushers, will you please put a couple of the, show them how to get down here and walk down this aisle. Come and meet me with those from the auditorium that will be coming.

In the balcony, you go to the stairs on the other side and come down any aisle, but if that is you, now I know the Holy Spirit put that in my heart. If that's you, I want you to come. I want you to move very close to make room for all of these that are coming.

And if you have drifted away from the Lord, this is the time to get it right. And this is the time to have all that confusion removed from your heart and from your life, once and for all. Now, listen very closely.

Whenever you're in a hard place, whenever you're in a situation where you can't figure things out and where there's confusion, the Holy Spirit's always spoke in my heart. Always focus on Jesus. The Holy Spirit, when you come to the Father, He's going to have you focus on Jesus.

The Holy Spirit came to focus on Jesus, to bring us to Christ. So whenever there's a problem, whenever there's confusion, just bring Jesus on the scene. In your heart and in your mind, focus on Jesus.

Begin to worship Jesus. Begin to love Jesus. Begin to praise Jesus.

Begin to talk to Jesus heart to heart. And always, when you bring Jesus to the forefront, the devil has to flee. You bring Jesus to the forefront.

And by faith, that praises the Heavenly Father. And that's the ground upon which the Holy Ghost can work. That you're willing to have the Holy Spirit magnify Christ in your life.

That this is all about Jesus. See, it's not really about you and me. It's about Him having provided everything we need and our coming to receive it by faith.

Look at me, please. Is there anything God can't do in your life? Is there any problem you have that's bigger than His ability to solve it? You've got to deal with that now. There's nothing that I face, there's no confusion in my life that He can't straighten out.

If I will get alone with Him, spend time and let Him speak to my heart, He'll give you direction. Folks, every conference I've had with these people on this building, so help me, they think I'm some kind of a brain. Where did you get all of this knowledge about real estate? Folks, I'm a country hick.

I don't know anything, but when I pray and wait on the Lord, last Tuesday when I prayed and sought the Lord, the Holy Spirit was waiting on me and said, this next meeting, the most important, don't say anything. Keep your mouth shut. And just let me do it.

And I went there and I told the attorney, I said, you're going to have to do the talking. I told the attorney, I said, I'm going to convince you. Our attorneys are Jewish, they're wonderful people.

I said, we're going to convince you God answers prayer. And I said, I'm going to shut my mouth. And I shut my mouth.

And God just began to, it's incredible what I saw. And you see, He removes all the confusion because you're letting Him take control. Let Him speak to your heart and your mind.

Come by faith, come with repentance. He'll not let you down. Would you pray this prayer with me every one that came forward? Pray it out of your heart.

Pray it from the depths of your heart. Jesus, I can't handle anything. I don't have any answers anymore.

And times I'm overwhelmed. There's confusion, things I don't understand. But you do understand.

I've heard, Lord, even this morning, that if I came to you, draw near to you with a true heart, I worship you. And I praise you. And I make my petition known.

And then if I just wait in faith, patiently, believing God to speak, asking Him to speak, that He will. He'll not leave me in shame. I'll not be confounded.

And He'll draw near to me. And you will hear a word behind you saying, this is the way. You will hear a word.

Amen. That's what He said. You'll hear a word behind you saying, this is the way.

Walk in it. Pray this with me too. Lord, I come to you for forgiveness of all sins for every drifting, for every backsliding that I've had.

And I confess it to you. I give it to you, Jesus. And I believe you that you're my Lord.

And I surrender to your Lordship. Govern me, lead me, guide me. I surrender in Jesus' name.

I'll give Him thanks now. I'll give Him thanks. Lord, I give you thanks.

I give you praise. I give you thanks, Lord. And I give you praise.

Hallelujah. And in closing the service this morning, I want you as a church, if Times Square Church is your home especially, and we even invite those who are visitors here to join us in prayer, the time to pray now is more than ever. I can tell you now, the enemy's not going to just walk away.

He's going to do everything in his power to resurrect this and try to make it happen. So we need to pray. I want you to join me.

I'm intending to pray more than ever. Lord, put a wall around us now. Don't let the enemy have one inch.

The devil, the enemy, I'm not saying that any of these people are demon-possessed or anything else. I'm just talking about a plan. See, God uses things for His glory.

And the enemy has ways to use human nature, to use ordinary people to do his bidding unaware of what they're doing. And so I'm not calling anybody names or suggesting any of these people are demonic or

anything else, not at all. They're very good people.

It's just that the enemy uses this. And I know the plan was to try to shut this church down for a few weeks and more than that, to disrupt the Holy Ghost worship. So will you join me in prayer, please? I beseech you, I beg you, in the next two weeks, pray with us.

God, now let there be no loopholes. Let there be nothing done legally. Send warring angels.

Do what you have to do, Lord, nail this down. Folks, we know nothing can be done now without our signature, and I can assure you we won't. But I don't know whether legal, they talked about dropping the gauntlet.

In other words, we're not going to give up. I can't conceive of any way they can do it, but that's all in God's hands. I worship and praise Him for what He's done to this point.

I thank God. I have confidence in my heart that nothing ever can be built on top of this church. Nothing at any time ever.

I have that faith. Praise the Lord. This is the conclusion of the message.

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