

The Touch of God (Birmingham Conference)

by David Wilkerson

David Wilkerson emphasizes the critical need for the touch of God in our lives and ministries through prayer and repentance from sin.

Duration: 37:01

Scripture: Exodus 18:17

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that God does not choose super people or those with great skills to fulfill His plans. He often chooses unknown individuals and even educated individuals like Paul had to start over and be made nothing before God could use them. The preacher also highlights the importance of seeking God and having a right heart before trying to implement any strategies or methods in church or ministry. The sermon also addresses the chaos and changes happening in the world, pointing to Bible prophecy and the need for God's guidance in such times.

Transcript

I didn't anticipate preaching what I'm going to preach now. In fact, I didn't want to preach it. I just didn't.

I said, Lord, I want to just go down to Alabama and bless everybody. I want people to get happy because I've been called by God. I'm not a prophet, never claimed to be a prophet, but I've been led of the Lord to prophesy occasionally and to speak a strong message, and I didn't want to preach this, and I had something else chosen, but the Holy Spirit said no.

I want to talk about sin. Now, please, no clapping. There's something just stirring, brewing in my heart, and I can't get away from it, so we're going to talk about the touch of God, the touch of God.

Father, I will obey You, but if I'm going to obey You, I am asking You have to help me to speak this with mercy and with great compassion. Lord, I need this as much as any minister, any one minister or otherwise who's here tonight, this morning, this afternoon, and I pray, Lord, that You give me grace, and Lord, speak from heaven, speak from Your throne. Oh, God, people don't want to go just to meetings anymore.

We've had too many meetings. There are too many things going on. There's so much confusion.

We've got to have You speak right into our hearts. Oh, God, give us open hearts. Let us not put this off, but deal with us with Your love.

God, You mean what You say. Lord, You're not a grandfather who just dotes on his children or grandchildren. You're a father who has a word that's been given in love, but You expect us to abide by it, and I pray, Lord, You speak to every heart that's open, and God, cleanse me, sanctify me that what I speak comes from Your heart.

In Jesus' name I pray, amen. How does God deal with a world in chaos? Folks, what's it going to take when everything is spinning out of control, when the laws are being changed? We see a United States of Europe developing now. We see everything in Bible prophecy coming to critical mass, and you look around and you see the gay agenda.

You see and hear things that 20 years ago you couldn't believe possible. Where I live now, a governor in New Jersey, right across the river from New York, acknowledges that he's been living a double life and he's resigning because of a gay love affair. Things that I would never anticipated in my lifetime hearing publicly.

And we see this race toward destruction, and in the past 10 years, the evangelical Protestant churches have lost 10 percent. Ten percent fewer people now, in fact, I believe it's in the last eight years, and the church numbers among evangelicals that are claiming that in just about 15 years now the evangelicals will be a minority in the United States, mostly through immigration. And you see, now for us in immigration, we have 103 nationalities in our church, and we thrive on immigration because many of them that come in are godly Christians, and they come from all nations of the world, and they add something wonderful to our church.

So I'm not even making a statement on that, but when I look at the conditions, I say, God, what's it going to take? Then you go into church history, and you see God's plan. God didn't send angels. He didn't send armies from heaven.

He touched men. He touched women, ordinary people, not supermen, not super people. He takes men that were unknown, people that didn't have much of themselves of skill.

Now occasionally you'll find an educated Paul, but even Paul said he had to unlearn everything he'd learned in the schools of the Pharisees. He had to count it all done, and God had to start over with him, make him nothing before he could use him. So what is God's plan for the United States? What's the plan for your town, for your area? What's the answer on the mission field? It's God taking young people, God taking young people like we have here, and touching them, and changing them.

And God, the scripture said, when Israel backslid time and again, the Lord would raise up Jeroboam, Bedan, Jephthah, Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemy on every side, and you dwelt safely. God said, I took men. I took women, and I stirred their hearts, and I called them.

And there are certain things I called them to do, and when they obeyed me, I touched them. I raised them up. I stirred nations.

I stirred people. I brought kings to their knees because of men that I could speak to, men who I touched through the power of my spirit. God always uses men.

They were God-touched men. Now you can abort the call of God like Saul did. God said, I have plans for you, Saul.

I want to give you an everlasting kingdom. And you can abort that by getting into the flesh and getting away from God's plan and the touch of God. He's certainly a man who was filled with the Holy Spirit and touch, and he aborted that.

What does God expect of me if I want his touch? I meet pastors who don't want to be touched. Let me tell you honestly, straight up front, I meet pastors of even small churches, 70, 80 people that they like to hunt, they like to fish, and they don't want too many people to pastor. I've met many like that.

Now, if you're here like that, and you don't want God to use you, you don't want the touch of God, forget what I'm going to say the rest of this message. It's not for you. But see, I have this one chance now to unburden my heart.

You came from all over the United States and around the world, so there's no time for playing games. I'm going to tell you straight from God's heart, because God's dealt with me. I know what it's like to pastor a little church in a country or hillside.

I know what it's like to sit in front of 80 to 100 people week after week after week, the same people, same complaints, same elders pushing me on all sides. And I know what it's like to stand in the pulpit and say, if this is all there is to Pentecost, I don't want it. If all it is is sitting within four walls and talking in tongues, you can have it.

I don't want it. And I said, God, if I can't see souls saved, and I can't get my people to witness, then you've got to start in me. And God said, you want my hand on you? You want to be touched? Then you get on your face.

And that's the first call you receive. If you're going to be touched by God, God will call you to the mountain to pray. We had a mountain, a hillside by our parsonage up on the hill.

And I got tired. I got weary. I said, Lord, I'm not going to spend the rest of my life.

Now there's not God calls pastors and pastors to small churches, to large. It has nothing to do with the size of a church. It has to do with the man's heart.

Am I satisfied to spend the rest of my life getting sermons and beating my head every week to bring something to the pulpit on Sunday or whenever it is? And I'm going to get up sometimes to just wing it? Or when people come to the church, am I going to be a man who stands there and I have been on my face and I've heard from heaven when people sit in that congregation, they know they've heard from God. They know this man hasn't been out just golfing. This man hasn't been out just playing.

This man's been shut in with God and he comes with the Holy fire in his guts and his soul. And I had a little place up on the hill. God said, David, you better give me the prayer and seek my face.

And there was something came on me. There has to come this sense of I can't live like this. I can't live and be a dead man.

God, something has to happen or your Bible isn't true. God, you made promises and they're either workable. They're my promises or they're no promises at all.

And I'd rather dig a ditch and go on empty hearted and just going through a dead routine, bearing and bearing and fellowshiping. And I told my people, our people in Times Square church, I said, no, if you want me just to play ball games with you and come and just fellowship with you, that's one thing. But I'm going to be a man of God and your kids are going to get to heaven.

They're not going to go to hell under our watch. I have to be alone with God. I have to be a man of prayer.

I'm not here just to fellowship with you. I'm not here to have supper with you or play ball games with you. I'm here to come to the pulpit from the throne room of God.

So your kids are convicted of their sins and every friend that you bring to this church will come under the conviction of the Holy Ghost and get saved. I was a little town of 1800 people. I said, God, I am tired of this.

And I would go up in that hillside and I began to pray. I went out in the woods and I told my wife, if somebody comes blow the horn, I'll come out. And for a summer every day with my Bible up there.

Yes, I did my, my work. But you see, when you pray and seek God, you can do more one hour under the anointing of the Holy Ghost than you can do a whole week without praying. And by the way, God takes care of a lot of those calls before they ever get to the throne, to the phone before you.

He'll take care of a lot of these things that won't eventuate in a big problem. He solves them. Folks, it got to the place where almost every page in my Bible was marked, not speaking.

I began to weep before God because you see, when you pray, God called Moses to the mountain. He said, the Lord came, the Bible said the Lord came down on Mount Sinai at the top of the mountain. The Lord called Moses up to the top of the mountain.

See, the mountain represents prayer being shut in with God. And the Bible said that Moses went up and the people stood afar off. Moses drew near to the Lord.

And I began to draw near to the Lord. Let me tell you straight out pastors don't pray. You know who told me that? One of the greatest prophets who ever lived on this earth, Leonard Ravenhill.

Well, Revival Terry's wrote many books. He died in his late seventies, a real prophet of God. And he died partially of a broken heart because he saw the declension in the ministry.

And he spoke in one of my conferences and he said, preachers just don't pray. They're so busy. They don't pray anymore.

Now that's not an indictment against everybody. Many of you here have been praying and seeking God, but he said, they get so busy. They don't pray anymore.

And I remember seeking God for months. My wife will tell you what the changes that happened to me. And one day I went to church and the spirit of God came on me and I fell prostrate and I fell under the seat.

And I just began to weep and wail before God. It was a burden of the Lord. And I didn't know what it was about.

And it's been told in the cross and switch, but I went home after service. I said, I don't know what's happening to me. I don't know if I'm having a breakdown, but I can't stop weeping.

There's something going on. God's trying to say something and I don't know what it is. And that very next day I picked up Life Magazine and there's a picture of seven boys indicted for murder.

And the Lord said, that's what it's all about. And that was the story of the cross and switch, but God sent me out. He called me out of that city and put me in New York city to minister to the Lord.

But folks, I can tell you now, if I had not obeyed that call to go up to the mountain, may I tell you honestly, I'd be backslidden. I have four children in ministry. They would have been all divorced.

I would have probably been divorced because just before that time we were having some difficulty in our marriage and it was all my fault because I wasn't seeking God. I wasn't praying. I'd become a mechanical preacher, sitting watching television for hours because of my frustration.

Of course, you know, this story, television went out and you see, God said, pray. And that's the call of the Holy Spirit here. And this is what God spoke to me.

There has to be something of the Holy Spirit, get a hold of your heart today and speak to you and talk to you about your prayer life. There are no shortcuts. You can go to all of these conference.

You can buy all these books and folks, it's not going to work. It's not going to change your heart. Why should we have a meeting and give you all kinds of books on how to do church, do all of these things.

If your heart's not right with God, if you're not been seeking God, what are you doing? Now, Moses is a busy man at this time. How would you like to have the biggest congregation in the world in all of history? Eventually he winds up with at least 2 million people in his congregation. And he's so busy, his brother-in-law Jethro comes to him, he said, this is wrong.

You're to go be with God and you hear from God, you come and tell us what to do. You tell the people what to do. You go here with God, you go be with God on the mountain.

Be thou for the people Godward, let others be appointed to bear the burdens of the people. And Moses went up to the Lord and he drew near to where God was. He drew near to where God was.

But see, he was not the only one called. God said, I want you to bring your brother with you. I want you to bring Aaron.

I want you to bring his sons Nadab and Abihu. And I want you to bring the 70 elders. And they go halfway up the mountain and I call that halfway camp.

They were called to come up with Moses, to be alone with God. Now God knew what was in their hearts. These are all ministers of the Lord.

These were all anointed. See, Aaron is going to go soon. The tabernacle has not been built yet, but see, God knows that he's going to have to go into the Holy of Holies.

And he knows he's going to have to be a pure man. He knows that God, he could, he would be stricken dead if he goes in the way he is now. And God loves this man.

He says, I want to use you. You're going to go in the Holy of Holies. You're going to know something of my presence.

Very few men know I'm going to use you in a way you can't conceive, but I can't use you with what is in your heart now. So he calls them halfway up the mountain. He calls Nadab and Abihu because these are his priests.

And he knows that they're committing adultery and fornication. He knows what they're doing at the very gate of the sacrifice, at the very gate of the sacrifice. He knows what's in their heart, but he's still patient and he loves these men.

He knows the 70 elders are not under authority because they're the same elders that later are going to rebel and say, you're not the only holy one. We're just as holy as you are. And God calls these men like he's calling us today.

He calls us halfway up the mountain and suddenly God appears. Now this has to be a theophany because God is a spirit and he comes down in some kind of manifestation. He comes walking down a Sapphire road and he seats them and he feasts with them.

And once you get this picture, please, how would you like to be present at the utter holiness of almighty God? How would you like to see a God of such mercy who loved you so much? He came from heaven literally and sat with you and ministered to you and loved you in spite of the adultery, in spite of the sin, in spite of what is in Aaron's heart of jealousy from his brother and these men not being under authority and God in his love saying, look, I'm going to expose you to my holiness. I'm going to bring you now into my presence. And I tell you on authority of the Holy Spirit, I would to God someone when I was a young preacher would preach what I'm preaching to you.

How many tears I could have saved, how much guilt and bondage I could have avoided. If somebody who came and looked me in the eye and said, God loves you. And I was exposed to the holiness of God and tell us, oh God, I'm a sinner.

Oh God, I've got a problem in my life. I'm speaking to some right now who are hooked on pornography. You're hooked.

You went out of curiosity and you said, I'm not going to hook. I'm just curious. No, no, no.

You see, once you get on that track, you almost can't get out of a miracle. You have to have this moment that you're having right now, a moment of love when nobody's condemning you. Nobody is saying shame on you, but the Holy Spirit is coming and say now because I love you, I'm bringing you into a moment, a moment.

I'm bringing you to a place of utter holiness where all mighty Holy God says, I love you and I want to use you, but I can't use you with what's in your heart. And if you go on, you're going to die in it. One young leader of one of our centers got hooked on pornography, lost the anointing, lost his touch.

I brought him into our home for two or three days with his wife. He had forced his wife to watch the filth with her, with him. And she said, no, because it's killing me.

It's destroying me. And I saw him leave the ministry and marry a witch, lose the anointing. God calls them up halfway and he deals with him in love.

The scripture says, and God said to Moses, come up, you, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, the 70 elders of Israel worship afar off. Moses alone shall come near. Lord, they shall not come near.

Neither shall the people go up with him. Why couldn't they go to the top of the mountain? Why couldn't they go to the glory cloud? God had to walk away. And he said, Moses, don't let them come near me because they're not hearing the given.

They're not hearing me now. For six days, Moses told them, wait for me. Moses anticipated coming back very soon.

No doubt. Here's the promise they had been given. These men had been given it.

He says, I will sanctify the tabernacle, the congregation and the altar. I will sanctify also both Aaron, his sons to minister to me in the priest office and to the elders. He said, I will make you priest unto me and a holy nation.

These were promises. God said, I'm going to use you. I have plans for you.

I have an anointing for you. I have a touch for you. I'm going to bring you into my holiness.

I'm going to speak to you. I want you to yield. He calls Moses aside up the mountain.

Come, he said to the others, worship afar. Come not near me. Cannot come up to the top of the mountain.

Only Moses shall come. They saw the God of Israel under his feet, a paved work of sapphire stone. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel, he laid not his hands.

Moses went up to the mount of God and he said to the elders, carry here till I come again unto you. Evidently they had supplies there. They were to wait.

I don't know who left the camp first. I would suggest Nadab and Abihu had to go back to their fornication. I don't know who's going to go home to your secret affair or go home to pornography.

I don't know who's going to go home. You say, President, are you preaching this in a minister conference? Yes, because I'm led by the Holy Spirit to do so. Nadab and Abihu go back to their horrible sin.

And I think the 70 elders probably followed because they picked up a chance. This is our chance. Where is Moses? We don't know what's happened to this man.

They bring that report back. We don't know what happened to him. And we're just as holy and they take leadership.

And there's Aaron who goes back to the golden calf. And a man evidently had a sense of sensuality in him because he allows them or perhaps instructs them to strip naked and dance around the calf. Only Moses goes up to the top of the mountain.

You see, everyone here this afternoon at one time knew what it is to pray. You know what it is to have a time. You had a time every day.

Nothing could stop you. And you were called to pray. You were called to seek God and for a time you did.

I believe Nadab and Abihu once were fine young men who had a touch of God. Now thank God for Aaron. God got a hold of that man's heart and he finally did end up in the Holy of Holies.

The 70 elders evidently died in the uprising of Korah. Nadab and Abihu, you know, they brought in strange fire and God smote them dead. But you see, God called you to pray.

What happened? You got busy. You have time to shop. You have time for friends.

You have time for everything and you say, I'm too busy to pray. Pastor, if you're not going to pray, don't. I suggest getting a secular job.

I say it kindly. I was with the pastor and his wife. They asked me, in fact, the pastor's wife asked to have lunch or supper with my wife and I. And when we sat down, we hardly gotten into the meal and she said, honey, will you tell him now? I said, oh no, another confession of adultery.

I didn't want to hear it. She said, if you don't tell him, I'm going to tell him. And he started haltingly.

He said, I pastor of a church, a thousand people. He said, brother, have you preached on prayer? He said, I have to confess. I have not prayed once in one year.

He said, I know how to do it. And his wife was a woman of prayer who'd been praying for him. He bowed his head.

He said, I know how to do it. Successful. Oh, you can do it.

If you're a CEO, if you've got the skill, if you've got the charisma, you can do it. You can build a church of 20,000, but one day you're going to stand before God. And more people are going to hell through many of our churches than anybody in bar rooms, right through our churches because you've been cheated.

There's another call not just to come up, but to come out halfway up the mountain, halfway to a touch of God. And they turn aside. I want to talk to you now about this, this call to come out at this time.

Israel remembers in chaos, sin had broken out in the camp. And because of their sin, because of the fornication, the adultery, and because of the, they were worshiping their little gods, Rempha, and the other little gold mice they brought out of, out of Egypt. They'd hidden them in their tents.

And now this broke out in the camp and the glory departed. The glory absolutely departed from the camp. And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp, far off from the camp and called it the tabernacle of the congregation.

This is actually his prayer tent. This was where he adjudicated and, and settled this major disputes. And it came to pass that everyone which sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of the congregation.

See, God's presence had been lifted from the camp. Have you ever been in a church where the glory of the Lord's departed? Have you ever been around a man or woman of God that you once knew but touched by God and the anointing is gone? I remember a pastor coming to, an evangelist coming to one of our conferences a number of years ago. This man had been known by television.

He's not a modern one. This is way back. He was popular 30 years ago.

And he came to my meeting and his wife introduced him. I had never met him. I knew his name.

When I was a young man, he was television popular and everything, but sin had brought him down. And I went to shake hands with him. And this is what he gave me, a dead fish.

And I looked in his eyes. There was no one there. There was no one there.

I was sitting in a room, pastor's room one day. There was a knock on the door and the secretary spoke into the passage and he said, well, come in brother Dave's here. He came in.

I didn't recognize the man. He was all crippled up, sad looking man. And his pastor after he left said, do you know who he is? And he named, he was one of the great healing evangelists.

He said, sin brought him down. It was something he had in his life and he wouldn't let go. You see, God left the camp.

Folks, if I don't have the anointing, if I don't have the presence of the Lord, and God is so patient, he's so loving and he will endure so much, but there comes a time when God says, wait, I have dealt with you in love. I've dealt with you in mercy. And now I have to, I have to lift this anointing.

That's saying God walks away from you. His spirit will always call, he will always urge, he's patient, he's loving, he's kind. But there comes a time the issue is the anointing.

The issue is, is God going to use you anymore? Is he going to use me? And God says, Moses, you get out of the place of defilement. This camp is defiled. This place is defiled.

Oh, I've been to churches and folks, may I tell you that we have over 600,000 people on our mailing list around the world. I think that may be close to the amount right now. The number one complaint, many of you here are on my mailing list.

The number one complaint is I can't find a church where there's anointing, where I can feel the presence of God, where I hear a word from heaven. Number one complaint by the thousands over a period of a year. God said, if you're going to be used, and here's what God is saying.

He's saying that to us here this afternoon. If you want to be anointed, if you want God to use you, you've got to come to the mountain. You begin to seek me with all your heart.

You give me time. My wife knows when I go into my secret place, no one, no one can get through, even if the president calls. And his office did call.

And the answer is always the same. He's talking to the Father. There should be no one able to interrupt you or intercept you.

Folks, I've not arrived yet. I'm so short on what I want to see, not just in time with the Lord, but the intensity, the hunger and the thirsting. Because once you hunger and thirst after God, it's like a snowball.

It keeps creating more hunger and more thirst for the Lord. But you see, until Moses gets out of the place of defilement, and God will not use me, he will not use you if you're in the place of defilement. He had to get outside the camp.

The Bible said far off from the camp is what the scripture says. Came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle of the cloudy pillar, descended and stood at the door of his tent, and the Lord talked with Moses. You see, the Lord takes the pillar, the cloud in his presence, and he moves it over top of Moses' tent.

Here's a man without defilement. Here's a man who seeks God's face. Here's a man with no other plan but to go to God and seek him for direction and plead for his people.

And the glory of the Lord, the presence of God comes on top of his tent. And the Bible says, and it came to pass that everyone which sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of the congregation which was outside the camp. Everyone that stood at the door of the tent and they were hungering after God, they went outside the camp.

They left everything. They left everybody. They didn't go out to be entertained.

They didn't go out for any other reason. They're not worried about being offended by anybody. They're hungry.

They want the glory. They want the presence of the Lord. They want meaning in their life.

And it's outside the camp with one man that's been shut in with God. One man out of the place of defilement. And they go out there, and let me tell you, you want to build a church, sir? You want God to use you in your work, whatever it may be? You may be in the office, whatever.

You want to be a witness? You want God to use you? Then you begin to seek God and you get out of the place of defilement. And folks, those that came out there were hungry for God. I don't want a church full of curiosity seekers.

I want a church full of hungry people that want God willing to go outside the camp. You say that's Old Testament theology. Well, let me give you a New Testament in closing.

Know you're not that you're the temple of God. The Spirit of God dwells in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. Nobody has been blessed with the patience of God more than I have. He's been patient with me.

I'm not to put a burden on you that I wouldn't bear myself. This is born out of dealings in my own heart. And please don't try to figure out how I failed God.

You'll be thinking of adultery, you'll be thinking of everything else. Not an adulterer, but folks, there are things in our lives that so block and hinder the work of God. God uses men.

With this, I'm drawing to a close. Could you tell me if any other day in your history, in your time, I don't care how old or young you may be, do you know of any other time when God so needs men that are touched? Men that are shut in with God? Men who say, oh God, I just can't sit and watch this filth anymore. God, I can't bring these videos into my house that curse the name of Christ.

I can't do that anymore. I can't do it. I can't let my eyes and my thoughts run rampant.

Lord, I want you to bring everything under control of the Holy Spirit. Will you stand? Lord, I'm asking you if I've been merciful enough.

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