

The Call For A Solemn Assembly

by Douglas Small

This sermon emphasizes the need for a solemn assembly and a remnant of believers to rise up in prayer and repentance, acknowledging the current state of the nation and the church. It calls for a shift from individualism to communal relationships, a focus on corporate repentance, and a deep understanding of the accumulating effect of sin. The message highlights the importance of becoming a new race of people, a holy priesthood, and a witness of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, leading to a new era of the Spirit and a new kingdom.

Scripture: Acts 2:1, Joel 2:15, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Revelation 8:3, Romans 8:34, Hebrews 10:12

Topics: "Corporate Repentance", "New Era of the Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

Church and Kevin Jessup who put together, had on his heart, he's carried this burden for the nation for three years and pulled together he and Jonathan Cahn the return in Washington, D.C. What a formidable, formidable lineup and I'm humbled to just be to be here tonight. I want to conclude with something that I even this afternoon, I got up early this morning and reviewed these notes two or three days ago. I scribbled out some notes and said I knew this is what the Lord had given me.

At least I thought it was what the Lord had given me and then this morning I got up and reviewed this all day long. I've kind of worked through this on my heart for what, for this evening and I've had some doubts. I've had some second thoughts.

I've wondered about what I want to share with you because in a sense, I don't want you to hear me as saying I'm giving up on the nation but I do feel like a chord needs to be sounded for balance and we need to hear what God might be doing that we are not comfortable with, that we don't like and that's kind of what I want to talk to you about tonight. So I want to tell you what I want to talk to you about and then you can decide whether you want to stay up, stay with me or not. In 1992, that's a long time ago, I was asked by my denomination to write a manual for solemn assembly and at that time there were many other

denominations, Southern Baptists being the leader in this, who were calling their denomination and their churches to have a solemn assembly.

Richard Owen Roberts, who's already been mentioned, was one of the voices. He probably is the principal living expert on the solemn assembly. So for 30 years now, I have been praying for a national solemn assembly.

Richard Owen Roberts says there were probably 12. Now we're not talking about normal solemn assemblies. We're not talking about the festivals, the Jewish feasts as solemn assemblies.

We're talking about something that is extraordinary and these extraordinary solemn assemblies were days in which they were grappling with the soul of the nation and the survival of the nation and they realized that their only hope as a nation, the nation of Israel, the nation of Judah, was prayer and repentance. Of these 12 radical and special and extraordinary solemn assemblies, eight were called by kings or governors and three were triggered by prophets and one by a priest. Now just here's my thinking and here's my great concern.

If it is a king or a prophet or a priest that calls a solemn assembly, think about our own government here. The king is represented in terms of leadership by the president. He's the servant of the people.

We don't have a king, but he is the president, the lead citizen who is serving the people. The Congress are the representatives of the people proper and they stand in the place of a priestly community and the prophets represent the conscience of the people. I'm sorry, the Supreme Court represents the conscience of the people and they stand in the stead of, in the role of the prophet.

And when the framers were constructing our nation and the separation of powers, they were drawing off this idea of prophet and priest and king. What is the possibility in your mind, honestly, that the Supreme Court, as we know it, will fall to its knees and cry out to God? I can tell you, despite David Ford's discussion about faith and creating an atmosphere of faith, I'm having trouble believing and seeing that. And what's the possibility that Congress will fall to its knees and cry out to God and have an old-fashioned prayer meeting and repent before God and there's reconciliation and neck hugging and kissing between Democrats and Republicans? I'm having a hard time believing that it's going to happen.

The last president to call a solemn assembly was Woodrow Wilson. That's 120 years ago. And by the way, the last really serious solemn assembly was called by Lincoln, and that's over 150 years ago.

And in that solemn assembly, Lincoln charged the nation to reckon with God about what was happening, the civil war that was tearing it apart. Now, I can tell you that in the days of George Bush, following the collapse of the Twin Towers, there was discussion about a call for a national solemn assembly, but there were people around him who felt like that was too overtly religious a thing to do, so that was put on hold. The current president has been presented the idea of calling for a solemn assembly, and he had earlier indicated that he would be at the return.

Instead, he ended up campaigning, but there was some discussion among a handful of his leaders about the political advantage or disadvantage of calling a solemn assembly. Here's what I want to suggest to you. That Acts 2 is the kind of solemn assembly that, in a sense, has given up on the priesthood, and certainly on the government, Herod and Pilate, and, of course, the prophet, the lead prophet, the principal prophet of the land, and his predecessor, John the Baptist, have both been killed.

And in this vacuum, when solemn assembly is typically for powers, for the lead powers of a nation to recognize that they have offended God and call that nation back to God, in the vacuum where that does not exist and where those powers will not do that, there is the wild card of 2 Chronicles 7.14. If my people will humble themselves and pray or repent and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven or grant them a hearing in my courtroom. This is the wild card. This is the bottom-up movement of prayer, and this is, I think, what we need today.

I think I have almost given up hope that Washington will have a radical turning to God. I pray that it will. I hope that it will.

Let's stop right now and say, God, would you invade Washington, D.C. with an outpouring of your Holy Spirit? Would you invade the White House and Congress and the Supreme Court and all the administrative buildings? And would you bring a fear that causes men to tremble before you? I want to keep praying prayers like that. But in the absence of that kind of groundswell and movement and our continued petitioning and even natural disasters that should prompt a solemn assembly and a call from one of the three powers or the branches of government, then I think it becomes time, in the absence of that, for us to say we're going to assemble ourselves together. We're going to find some way to connect, and we're going to, from the bottom up, begin to cry out to God for a mighty move of His Holy Spirit.

So this is a kind of break with the traditional view of solemn assembly, and Acts 2 is not typically considered a solemn assembly gathering, but I would recommend that we reconsider that based on this. Christ has been crucified. He's left the earth.

The nation of Israel has rejected Him. The hands of the priest themselves are bloody, as are the hands of Pilate, though he has washed them. And so the nation will not reckon with God, and because it will not, there is a need for a solemn assembly by the humble, by the open, by the common people, by those who followed Him to say to God, we realize our nation has gone astray, and we're obeying You and asking You to intervene in behalf of our nation.

You know that there will not be a solemn assembly, even if Christ has been crucified, and He has risen from the dead, and there's evidence that He has. Pilate is not going to call a solemn assembly. He is not going to say to the people, I did wrong.

I made a mistake, and Herod is not going to call a solemn assembly, and the high priest who was complicit in the crucifixion of Christ is not going to call a solemn assembly. So you have this wild card. If my people, if they will pray, if they will humble themselves, if they will seek my face, if they will turn from their wicked ways.

So here is a band of disciples whose Lord has been crucified, and yet they know that He is not dead. He has risen, and not only risen, He has ascended, and He sends them to the upper room, and He tells them to wait to conduct a vigil of prayer, and they are waiting for the promise, and He has called them to be witnesses. What does that mean? As far as they know, that means that He's calling them to the same kind of death that He died 50 days earlier, and they follow, and they are ready to give their life, and they are ready to commit themselves, and they are ready to die if necessary for the cause of Christ.

They have no premonition, no idea that what He is talking about is a mighty rushing wind, and tongues of fire, and breaking the language barrier, and 3,000 people being saved, and the whole city being stirred. They can't imagine that kind of thing happen. All they can see is His death, and then His resurrection, and

then His off and on appearances, and then His teaching them things about the kingdom of God, and then the salt covenant that He does the last night.

He's with them, and then He's being taken away, and they know now that even if they experience martyrdom, they'll live, and they know now that they'll not go to the grave below. They'll go above to heaven itself, and they know now that He will be with them in some mysterious way that they don't fully yet understand, and so when this crowd becomes rowdy on the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly stands and declares he does not cower anymore. He does not deny anymore.

He does not distance himself from Christ anymore. He is no longer fearful of the consequences of following hard after Christ. What does this mean, Peter said? Well, it means you killed Him.

You killed the Messiah. Jesus was the Messiah, not just a good man. He was the Messiah, and you killed Him.

He's not being nice. He's not playing Mr. Nice Guy with them. He is being forthright, and what we've done for 50 years, we've tried to play Mr. Nice Guy with the culture, and we've continually backed up until we're now in an untenable corner, and it's time for us to call a solemn assembly to say we're not sure that the nation, listen, I don't mean to be faithless.

We're not sure that the nation is going to turn around like we had hoped. We're not sure that Congress is going to fall on their knees like we prayed for. We're not sure that there's going to be thunder and lightning dancing over Washington, and the Supreme Court is going to reverse all of its bad decisions over the last 60 years.

We're not sure about that now, but one thing we are sure about, we have to obey God. We have to do what we have to do. We have to give ourselves to full and complete obedience, even if it means death, even if it means persecution, and I'll tell you what, that is not where the church has been for the last 50 years.

We've had an easy believism gospel. We've had a sweet little sing these songs and hear this wonderful message about how to be successful in life, and that has to change. Here's what I'm saying, hearing the Holy Spirit say very, very, very clearly, that has to change.

I'm changing that, and it's as if the Lord is saying, I don't really care if the church as I know it, you know it, ever opens up again. I am calling for change. I am calling for radical change, and I'm calling for a new kind of holy boldness.

So the goal, the goal is not to save the nation. The goal is to become a nation, a holy nation, a peculiar people, banded together as a remnant, maybe a persecuted remnant, that nevertheless declares the Word of God and stands the culture down and says with tears in our eyes, that's wrong, that's sin, and if you do that, it will lead to destruction. It'll destroy your marriage.

It'll destroy your life. It'll destroy your kids. It'll destroy you, and there is another, there is another way.

The goal is, the goal is to give birth to an humble, yet bold, valiant, witnessing church that is committed to witness even if it means death, and by the way, the word witness, martyrius, didn't mean martyr then in the sense of losing one's life, but it came to mean that, and we have to remember that because we've had it very safe and very nice here in America, and it may get very messy before it's over. Acts 2, I'm suggesting,

is that moment when something happened that I don't think we commonly perceive. It was a watershed, a watershed moment, and 40 years later, the political structure of Jerusalem would collapse.

40 years later, Jerusalem would be folded, its walls laid down, its gates burned with fire. 40 years later, the temple would be destroyed. The structure that had rejected Christ, listen, the structure that had rejected Christ would continue for a season, and then it would collapse, and I'm saying to you, we're dealing with the structure.

We're dealing with a nation that once knew God. It has rejected God. It's crucified Christ.

It's silenced the church. It said you can't pray, not here, not in that name, and maybe it's time for us to say, and it gives me no pleasure or joy to say this, maybe it's time for us to say, all right, we may never have the kind of favor that we once had. We may never have the kind of privilege that we once had.

We may lose greater standing, more standing, tax exemption, etc., etc., etc., but none of that matters. We're not going to compromise on those issues in order to have our message toned down. We will not be the puppet of the state because sooner or later, political systems, social systems, religious systems that stand against God, those systems collapse, and we can't guarantee that this nation will continue as it is and as it has been.

If there is not a great awakening, and if there's not a great awakening, I think we have to recalibrate our goal. We have to recalibrate our focus. I'm not suggesting for a moment that the church is a replacement for Israel or that America as any way a replacement for Israel or that we were a Christian nation.

We were never a Christian nation. We were a nation of Christians who used Christian principles to build a great and wonderful culture and society that favored the church and became a platform for the gospel to go around the world, but that day may be over. So what do we do? Well, we need an Acts 2 moment.

We need to find our way back into our upper room, and we need to cry out to God for an infusion of the power of the Holy Spirit upon the church. God save the nation. God send a spiritual awakening in the nation.

God turn Washington around. God intervene in behalf of your own purposes, but if the intervention is not in the political, social, popular, cultural dimension, would you empower a remnant church to rise up and be what you want it to be for your glory? I want to go through about five things here that I'm concerned about. I'm going to stop and pray after every one of them.

So you've heard my thesis. You've heard where I am going with this. One of the problems that keeps us from getting where I think God wants to get us is that we live in a culture of hyper-individualism, and so we talk about personal salvation, and we choose churches that minister to our personal needs and feed our personal experience, and we switch churches if they're not ministering to our personal, felt, spiritual needs, and we choose churches based on the quality of services that they provide for us, and unless we were born in that church and raised in that church and we have family in that church, rarely are there deep relationships in that church.

We worship around people, we shake hands, and we are friendly with one another as we're told to do in church, but deep relationships don't typically form. We come for the singing, we come for the show, we come for the preaching, we love to be in a church where there's an engaging speaker, a good children's church for our kids, a good youth group for our our teams, and that is not enough, and that is not the

purpose of the church. The purpose of the church or the community is to find a place that's a good fit for the missional call that is upon my life, because I have had a personal encounter with God, and I have had a personal experience with God.

Let me say it again in a different way. Much of the Bible, the majority of the Bible, is not about personal experiences with God as much as it is about what happens with individuals in the context of community. Adam didn't sin alone, nor did Eve.

They sinned together, and so even sin is a communal experience, and in Acts 2, Jesus calls the disciples to come together, to hang together for the coming of the Holy Spirit. We need community. We need experience.

What is our obligation beyond ourselves to Christ and to others, to a group? We are social beings, and we worship a trinity, and inside that trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, there is a fellowship and a dynamic of love that goes back and forth between them, and they empty themselves one into another, and so fill one another up in ways that I can't understand. God himself is a social construct that works against the cultural norm of hyper-individualism. So I want us to pray right now.

God, if you're calling the church to do something we've never done before, if you're calling us to deeper, more communal relationships for the purpose of mission and cultural impact, and I think that is what God is calling us to, not that church is a place of entertainment, but the place of genuine community for missional impact and cultural change. God, help us with this transformation of the church from our just going and picking a few grapes and bananas and the things that we like out of the service. Help us to become a community of people tethered together to accomplish your purposes.

Father, you are wanting to change the church, and in Acts 2, you gave birth to the church. In Acts 2, you forged people together, and suddenly they were no longer just individuals who were looking out for themselves because of the crucifixion. They were not running and hiding.

They were all together, standing together. Peter stood up at 11 with him, and then 120 began to testify all together. Would you give us that kind of solidarity? Would you give us that kind of unity, God, in Jesus' name? Here's the second thing I would say to you.

There is a community emphasis in Scripture, a corporate emphasis in Scripture, that we're missing, and we're missing it in a number of respects, not only with regard to the church and our obligation to the church and our partnership with the church and our being a part of that missional community, but we're missing in another sense. God doesn't just judge individuals. There is a sense in which we will stand before God and give an account and even do now, but there's another sense in which nations will stand before God, and I think we miss this all together.

In Genesis 10, there's a listing of some 70 nations or ethnicities. There are about 200 geopolitical nations around the face of the earth, and there are 17,000 or so ethnolinguistic groups on the face of the earth. Gutenberg's project has identified 20 nations in the Bible, but Wikipedia identifies about 38.

God is concerned about nations, and God is concerned about this nation, America. I can't go through the list, but today when I'm studying, I began to look at all the nations that the prophets speak to. I mean, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Amos and Isaiah and Joel and Nahum and Jonah.

Over and over, these prophets are speaking to nations. Zechariah, and not only to nations, they're speaking to cities. So have you even considered what is the prophetic voice of God to the nation? What's the prophetic voice of God to your city? Because you see, what happens in Acts 2 is that they not only become a priestly community, they become a prophetic community.

Normal Christianity is three things. It's being a kingdom of priests, it's being a kingdom of prophets, and it's being a caring people who, because of God's love for them, love other people. And it's these wounded healers who are priestly and prophetic that we are to become.

It's not just living a good life so we can go to Disneyland when we die. That misses the point, and that's why we're so apostate. That's why we're in the mess that we're in.

And God is calling us to a new normal, where a new kind of community emerges that's filled with the Spirit of God. That's how we're priests. We operate under the power of the Holy Spirit, and we're filled with the Word of God, and that's how we're prophets.

Because filled with the Spirit of God, quickened by the Spirit, the Word quickened by the Spirit of God, we speak the words of life to a culture, and dead people live, and sick people are healed. And we do this emitting the compassion and the care of God. The Bible said that Jesus had compassion.

The Bible says He was moved with compassion. And that's what God wants to happen to me and you, that there is this priestly thing where I stand in the middle between God and hurting people, and I'm moved with compassion, and God quickens me with spiritual power. Jesus said He felt the power go out of Him.

And not only does God quicken me with spiritual power, but God quickens me with a word of life to give to others. This is normal Christianity. And this is not what's happening in the church, but this is what the Acts 2 watershed moment is meant to do in the church.

And this is why every church needs a prayer meeting. This is why every church needs to gather to God. This is why every church needs to come together and cry out for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon every member individually, but simultaneously upon the church.

So Jesus, what does Jesus say about this? Well, Jesus talks about cities that will experience the judgment of God. He talks about Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and Tyre, Sidon, and Capernaum be more tolerable for Sodom than it is for you because of the mighty works of God that had been done. But here's what Jesus is saying.

He's saying, He's saying, why have these cities not repented? Jesus expected cities to repent. We expect a few people to repent. Jesus expected cities to repent.

He expected, He expected that the disciples would go out and engage cities with the gospel, not buy a building and offer music and an encouraging talk every week. He expected the disciples would engage cities, and the power of the Holy Spirit would work with them. And with the power of the Holy Spirit worked with them, one of the things the Spirit would do was call sinners to repent.

And when that didn't happen, and when Jesus didn't see that, He's talking about judgment on cities. Judgment on cities. Is your city under judgment? Has your city experienced a profound move of God that has called it to repentance? Has there been an evident manifestation of God in your city that has awakened the city so much so that it has called it to repentance? Let me tell you, this is exactly where I

think God wants to take us.

I think we've gotten this vision of the church as a building, as a place that we go for a pleasant little service. And what God is saying is, that is not my vision for you. I want you as a missional people to engage cities and engage nations.

Indeed, indeed, in Matthew 25, Jesus talks about sheep and goat nations. And by the way, by the way, in Revelation 2 and 3, out of the seven churches, five are rebuked. Five are called to repentance.

And though there may be a handful of righteous people in each one of them, the churches themselves are under judgment. Is your church under judgment? You see, God judges churches, and God judges cities, and God judges nations. And this was the whole idea of solemn assembly, that some corporate identity had sinned so egregiously that they were worthy of the judgment of God.

And a solemn assembly was called to negotiate with heaven and say, please, don't sin what we deserve. Send mercy. Send grace.

But we are not doing that because we so individuate our lives. We so isolate our life. If something's not going on like we like at that church, we just withdraw.

If we can't find a church that we like, we withdraw completely. And see, that is not the biblical norm. The biblical norm is to find a healthy remnant somewhere that is seeking God and full of the Spirit of God and full of the Word of God and full of the love of God and own mission with God to call their city to repentance and help that city understand.

You can't ignore God. You have to reckon with God. Here's the fourth thing I would ask you to consider.

We have no regular means of dealing with this kind of thing. We have no regular means of dealing with sin. 95% of all churches don't even have a prayer meeting.

And those that do spend their time praying for themselves, God, would you touch this, move in, heal me, change this, give me a million dollars, give me a better car. It's not about sin. It's not about holiness.

It's not about the glory of God. It's not about His presence coming in a way that not only satiates the church but spreads out in the community. We don't have a means of seeking God and asking Him and inviting Him to come Sunday morning.

A five-minute prayer, one-minute prayer on Sunday morning simply will not do it. The congregation is not so much to be gathered to the preacher to hear from Him. The congregation is to be gathered to God to hear from Him.

That's what a church is all about. Preaching is fine. Teaching is wonderful.

But what you want to do is hear not from a preacher or a teacher. You want to hear from God. And you want to discern together.

This is what God is saying to us. This is what the Holy Spirit is saying to us. Because a church is driven by mission if they hear from God and discern together what God might be saying to them.

They're emboldened when the Spirit comes upon the church together. They're emboldened in a way that no preacher can inspire that kind or level of boldness. God wants our churches to impact cities, to impact nations.

But we ignore the macro. And we focus on our narrow slice of piety. And so when the church fails or the city is set on fire or the nation is teetering, we have some vague sense that something must be wrong.

That we've forgotten God, haven't we? Wow. We should pray. But we don't know how to go about a solemn assembly in which we genuinely reckon with God and we repent of our sins.

What we have to learn to do is read the spiritual climate in which we live, in which we work, in which we shop. We have a vague sense that we feel safe. A vague sense that we're concerned about how our neighborhood presents.

But we don't discern the spiritual dynamics that are going on behind that. We don't discern or contemplate about that very much. We only see the natural.

Here's what Jude the brother of Jesus said. When you have a situation where apostasy dominates and you have a problem with Christology and you have a problem with basic theology and you have a problem with eschatology and you have a problem with the morality of the church. If you look at the book of Jude, it is the most concise catalog of apostasy anywhere in the New Testament.

And here's what Jude said. Here's what the brother Jesus said, but you beloved, plural. When the church itself has gone too far, book of Jude, you beloved, there's got to be a remnant.

There's got to be two or three. There's got to be five or ten. There's got to be 10 or 20.

But you beloved, you build yourself up on your most holy faith. A faith that makes you holy and a faith that is by nature holy. You keep yourself in the love of God, guard the love of God, center yourself in the love of God.

You pray by the enabling of the Holy Spirit. You look for his mercy. And what he's talking about here is he's talking about the strengthening and the edification and the fortification of the remnant in the church in prayer.

And then he says, you start pulling them out of the fire, spotted with the flesh. And you look out for that one and you and you give that one more time and you realize that one will probably never be converted. But one by one, you began.

You began to draw other people into this fire that you started, this remnant, until it begins to take over the church, until it purifies the church again, until the church overflows into the city, until the city becomes an impact on the nation. You can't capitulate. You can't say my church has gone too far.

God is calling us to be transformational agents of change. And so, Father, we just stop and pray. To the extent that we've withdrawn, to the extent that we've looked for somebody else, to the extent that we've tried to elect a president or a congressman or somebody else who would go to Washington and fix everything.

And see, this is really what I'm concerned about, is that we pass this off to something else. If that could only change, then this would happen when the real deal is we have to call a solemn assembly. We have to

humble ourselves.

If my people, we have to, it has to be a ground movement up from the bottom, from the bottom up. Here's the fifth thing I would have you consider, is that we are not considering the accumulating effect or residue of our corporate decisions, of sin. We see sin as kind of invisible and immaterial, and we don't realize that it piles up.

It piles up. It piles up. God has a record, and there's page after page after page after page after page.

And as this sin piles up, we don't realize its effect on us. We're going to a church. We're living in a house that has not been purged, that has not been purified.

We're going to churches where there's been no real deep repentance for a decade or maybe more. And so we're worshiping in the piles of rubble just like, just like, just like Ezra and Nehemiah in that day. They're, they're, they're worshiping in the, in the face of the piles of rubble.

And the rubble is the debris of judgment because of previous sins, and they've never really dealt with that. We can't see our piles of rubble, but they're there. And we're asking for the blessing of God, and here's the pile of rubble.

And we're asking for the grace of God, and here's the adultery, and here's the moral failure, and here's the leadership failure, and, and, and here's the anger, and here's the unforgiveness, and here's this side that won't talk to that side. All this rubble. And we want the blessing of God, and we think we're going to get a blessing in a church like that.

It's not going to happen. And you see, because of this incremental accumulation of sin and the disfavor of God because of that sin, that, that, that, that if it affects us in ways that we don't realize, and this is why the church is so apostate today, because imperceptibly, our own values are shifted. Imperceptibly, our own love languishes.

Imperceptibly, we no longer witness, we no longer share our faith. One to two percent of Americans share their faith. We're no longer passionate.

We don't weep over the loss. We don't cry because there is a hell, and we have a brother or sister or uncle or aunt that may be going there. Our heart is not broken before God.

We come to accept the subnormal as, as, as, as, as normal. And we, and we, and we drift into a kind of idolatry, and we don't even realize that behind these idols, the idols are only masks, only masks for the demonic powers that are now beginning to influence, to influence our life. Underneath it all is a loss of our love for God.

Not only our love for God, but a realized love for God, an experience of healthy love with God. And, and finally, we end up seeing people around us that we never thought would do it abandon their faith and turn to alternative religious symbols and, and, and, and, and apathy turns to, turns to inquisitiveness about this or, or, or that. Shortcuts to, to, to power.

And then we adopt a kind of eclectic pluralism, and that turns to paganism, and that turns to nihilism. And that's exactly where the nation has gone. That's exactly what's happened.

Whole denominations have drifted away like this. And maybe, maybe you're in a movement or church that you're beginning to see, you're beginning to see that, that shift take place. Here's what I think Acts 2 is all about.

It's a parallel to Exodus 19. In Exodus 19 is when the law is given. And in Acts 2, the law is given again, except it's the law of the Spirit.

And it's written upon our heart. We'll no longer be led by external do's and don'ts. We will be led by an internal do this, do that, and the check of the Holy Spirit.

The reins will not be on the outside of us. They will be on the inside of us. Here's what, here's what Peter said.

You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood. You are a holy nation. You are a people of his own possession, and your purpose is to proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Here's what was happening in Acts 2. Oh, it's mind-blowing. God was creating a new race. So what race are you? What ethnicity are you? Well, if you're a Christian, that's the race you are now.

You are a new race. In fact, the word is *genos*. It means family or offspring, and from it we get the very word *genes*.

I've got new genes. They may not be manifest in the natural, but they are in the spiritual. I've got a new spiritual DNA.

I am a part of a new race. I'm neither Jew nor Gentile. I'm neither male nor female.

I'm neither black nor white or brown or red or yellow. I am stained by the blood of Jesus Christ and wrapped in his glory, and I'm a child of the king, and I've been declared righteous. So I'm red and white and blue and purple.

Those are the colors of the tabernacle, by the way. This is all I am because this is the purpose of God. He has made me a royal priesthood.

He has made me a holy nation, and what he wants is to tell him he wants to possess me. He wants to possess you. He wants me to be filled with the Holy Spirit until the Holy Spirit reigns in my life and reigns in your life that I might know his excellencies, and he would call me out of darkness into his marvelous or stupendous light, his glorious light, the light that causes awe.

You know the one thing that kills viruses and bacteria? It is ultraviolet light in its magnificence, and you have to close all the doors and make the room lightproof or it will blind you in five seconds. But if you get into the light of God, it kills the sin. If you get into the light of God, it kills all the works of the flesh, and this is what God is calling us to do.

He's calling us to get into his light so that we can be possessed by him and become a new race of people, a new priesthood for the whole world, a nation, a holy nation doing his work. Let me just say two more things and then we'll find a home stretch here. The two things that God is watching, he's watching the brim of iniquity, and when that brim of iniquity where the sins are collecting for a family or for a church or for a city, when that brim of iniquity reaches a certain point, judgment comes, and God is watching the brim of

iniquity.

Why don't we just stop? Father, if there's any sin in heaven on my record that's accumulated, I ask humbly and based on your grace that you would forgive me of that sin and help me turn from that sin, help me be loose from the grip of that sin. Pray this prayer with me. Father, if there's any sin on the record in heaven, on the ledger of my family, I pray that you will forgive me and my family of that sin and may we be reconciled and may we love one another and may there not be lines and divisions and unforgiveness and harsh words.

Bind us together, God. Bring us together for your glory. I pray this in Jesus' name.

Pray this with me. Father, I pray for my church. I pray for any division in my church.

I pray for any hidden sin in my church. I pray for greed and avarice. I pray for lukewarmness in my church.

I pray for the works of the flesh that might be lurking underneath. I pray for the lack of passion for lost souls. I pray for any racial prejudice that might exist in our church that might cause us not to be accepting of this person with this color of skin or that person with that color of skin.

I pray for any social prejudice that might cause us to be resistant to the rich that might come to our church or to the poor that might come to our church. I pray against classes of God, and I just ask in the name of Jesus that you would break our hearts and help us to realize that the church is not ours. It belongs to you.

It is your church, and you can invite anybody to your house that you want to. And so God, help us to take our hands off of it and let it be what you want it to be for your glory in Jesus' name. Pray this with me.

God, I pray for my city. I don't often pray for my city. Maybe this is you, maybe this is not.

I've never taken a ride through my city at night when the demographic of the city changes. And if I did, I wouldn't go there, and I wouldn't drive down that street, and I wouldn't cross the railroad track and go into that neighborhood. I don't have a burden for my city.

I've never sat in a bar parking lot and watched men go in and two hours later come out, hardly be able to stand up, and think about what it's like when they go home to their family. I've never been willing to go on a tour of the underground of our city to see the people who might be living in sewers or down at the tent city. I want to stay away from those places.

Forgive me for not weeping over America's broken cities and maybe my city that's broken. Forgive me. Forgive me because what we're seeing is the accumulation of sin, the accumulation of attitudes of sin to almost every degree.

What we're seeing is not an economic problem. It's not a social problem. It's a moral problem.

It's a spiritual problem. So Father, would you break our hearts for our cities? Would you break our hearts for our states and for our nations? We ask this, God, if the brim of iniquity in our city is reaching the point where it's about to overflow into judgment, we ask, God, that you would help the elders of our city to come to the gates of the city, the pastors, the spiritual leaders, the intercessors to come to the gates of our city and pray. We ask this for your glory in Jesus' name.

Here's the other measure that we need to watch and it is the bowls of incense. We want to keep we want to keep the cup of iniquity empty. We want to keep the bowls of incense full and we want to ask, God, we want to flood heaven with prayers until the the 24 elders, the divine counsel in heaven, is holding our bowls and they're full of incense.

The one with our name on it, the one with our family's name on it, the one with our church's name on it, the one with our city's name on it, the one with our nation's name on it, and the one with the nation's name that you you're praying for that you've adopted in prayer. How much are you contributing to the bowls of incense in heaven? How much are you filling those bowls up so that those bowls have to be emptied? And even if they're emptied with fire from off the altar, let me tell you something, sometimes that fire is the fire of Pentecost and sometimes that fire is the fire of Revelation 8. It's the fire of judgment. But we pray, God, whether you have to answer us with the fire of Pentecost or the fire of judgment, we pray, Lord, that you would answer us and that you would move in a mighty way and that you would hear us when we pray and you would pour out your spirit upon us for your glory in Jesus' name.

I don't understand this whole thing of Revelation 8 and 1 and the silence of heaven, the silence of anticipation, or why and how the angels are involved in the administration of our prayers. I do know that the ceiling of the tabernacle of the Miss Cain was loaded with the faces of cherubim and I do believe that when we pray, angels somehow attend our prayer and they are here to work the purposes of God in us, around us. So in and around us are angelic forces, the army of God.

I'm sorry, around us are the forces of God and in us is the power of the Holy Spirit. And these two somehow move together. I've got to move quickly.

The world, Paul said, in which we live is under judgment and it's facing the wrath of God. And so what is our, what do we do in a moment like this? Well again, I'm coming back to Acts 2, I keep dancing away from it and coming back to it. In Acts 2, I'm suggesting that this is a solemn assembly for a remnant people who know that the priestly community will not call a solemn assembly, that the political powers will not call a solemn assembly, and the prophetic community has been bludgeoned by the martyr of the chief prophet, the great prophet, John the Baptist, and then Jesus, and so this remnant, this remnant gathers together and they pray and they cry out to God.

The Bible says it's the poor and humble who believe, the rich and powerful did not. And the great concern of the priestly leaders, according to crucifixion narrative, was the fear of the people because the people believe. So somewhere you've got to know some people who believe.

You've got to know some remnant people like yourself. And even if you do it on Zoom or you do it on some kind of social media or some kind of other connection, based on the book of Jude, the brother of Jesus, I recommend that you and I and others begin to get together and pray. And we do it on a regular basis.

And we build ourself up on our holy faith, a faith that makes us holy. And we pray in the Holy Spirit with the enabling and power of the Holy Spirit. And that we center ourself and keep ourself and guard the love of God in our heart, that we're not full of bitterness or anger, unforgiveness, that we look for mercy, that we expect mercy.

And then one by one, we begin to work on people and pull them out of the fire until the remnant begins to grow, until again the remnant affects and impacts a healthy church and a healthy church impacts the city and a city impacts and a city impacts a nation. Let me take you through the story. It's 9 a.m. It's Pentecost

Sunday.

The ceremony at the temple is in full swing. Seven lambs are offered, one bull is offered, two rams, all for a burnt offering, an offering of consecration. A goat is offered for a sin offering and two male lambs are offered as a peace offering.

So here you have the death of sin, so to speak. It didn't happen, it was only ceremonial. The death of self in consecration, in yieldedness to God, that didn't happen either.

And then the death of division in the peace offering. And that really is the basis for the book of Romans. And those are the sacrifices of Leviticus 1 through 5. That's what God wants us to do at the altar.

Deal with our sin, deal with self, and deal with division so that we become a people of reconciliation. The priest, when the peace offering has been offered, lifts two loaves and he begins to wave them before God. They're leaven loaves.

And he ceremonially offers these leaven loaves. And ultimately they represent Jew and Gentile joined before God. So they represent a coming harvest.

So Pentecost is a feast where the law is given. Pentecost is a feast that looks towards the ultimate consummation of God and his work in Jew and Gentile. Listen very carefully now.

As the ceremony reaches its peak, across the way the fire falls. Not on the altar, not on the sacrifice, not on the priest, the high priest, not on the priest themselves, the company of priests. No, no, no.

It falls on the 120. There's a growing group of scholars who believe that the 12, and perhaps others, were housed in the upper room. But the 120 actually met at the temple.

It's an interesting idea because if they met at the temple, the 120, then they would have been present over to the side. They would have been watching the ceremony. They would have been participating in the ceremony.

They would have been praying and suddenly there is something like a tornado that settles down over the temple. The house where they were sitting, the Bible says, scholars say, could be understood as oikos even as the temple itself. I don't know, but it's an interesting idea.

Suddenly a pillar of fire descends, not on the altar, but upon this group right over there. Suddenly tongues of fire settle upon each of them, not the group over here, the group over there. God is drawing a line.

God is saying, it's on them that I'm going to put my glory. It's on them I'm going to put my power. And suddenly people begin to try to quiet them and mock them and so forth, and they break the language barrier and begin to speak by the Spirit in the languages that are represented at the temple.

The idea is a compelling idea. They broke up the ceremony. They broke up the Pentecost Day ceremony.

The wind, the fire, the cacophony of voices, the confusion, still almost immediately by the lucid voice of Peter and the explanation of all of these disciples. And what was God doing? He was holding court and he was calling them into accountability because they had just sewn up the veil that had been ripped in two and repaired all the damage to the temple. And they were going on with life as if it was normal.

And God was saying to them, you will not, you cannot, I will not let you go on with life as normal. So here's the shift. Here's the shift that I'm talking about.

It's the shift from place to people. It's the shift from the old to the new. It's the shift from the Holy of Holies as a place to the Holy of Holies as a heart, the heart of a people.

It's a shift from the class of priests to the priestly people. It's a shift from Moses, the lawgiver, to Jesus, who gives us the Holy Spirit, who writes the law of God in our heart, the promise of the Father. It's the shift from Sinai and Carmel, Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration to Mount Zion, not in Jerusalem, but in heaven itself, where Jesus Christ is, has been transfigured and transformed and is seated on the right hand of the Father.

Oh my goodness gracious! It's the shift there and the invitation for us to be transformed ourselves. It's the shift from prophets of renown to nobodies who prophesy and declare the mighty works of God. It's the shift from the visible to the invisible.

It's a new group of priests and a new anointing of the Spirit and a new level of prophetic intercession. This is not a solemn assembly for the nation. And that's what you see in the Old Testament, all 12 solemn assemblies for the nation.

This is not a solemn assembly for the nation. This is a solemn assembly in spite of the nation. This is a solemn assembly because the nation has gone another way.

This is a solemn assembly of a remnant who have said, okay, if judgment is inevitable on our nation, and even on the church, because it has not obeyed and been what God wanted it to be. And if that church, visible and so filled with splendid buildings, is going to ultimately be forced underground, then we reckon ourselves to you, we prepare ourselves to you, that we might be your possession and that we might in this interim period declare your mighty works and do what you called us to do. I think that's where we might be.

The three movements in Peter's message, and I got to hurry, verse 14, men and brethren, this is a new era. There's a new prophetic community that's forming. And we've been afraid of that whole idea of prophets.

I don't want to be a prophet. I don't have anything to do with the prophet. No, that's what you're supposed to be if you're a Christian.

You're supposed to be a herald of the gospel. And you're supposed to be capable of receiving insights that come from the Holy Spirit, dreams, visions, angelic visits, other things. I'm not trying to make you weird or encourage you to become weird.

And I don't think it's wise to go around bragging about angelic visions or the three that stay at your house that are, one is striped and one is polka dot. That's not wise. I'm not talking about bragging about dreams and visions.

I'm talking about being, as David Duplessis used to say to me, naturally supernatural and supernaturally natural. I'm talking about being ordinary. I'm talking about experiencing and encountering God in a powerful way because we're in a new eschatological age.

We are in the last days. And what God is wanting to do is pour out without measure His Spirit upon all flesh to create a multi-generational, across gender, across socioeconomic lines, group of people. And He's wanting to decorate their lives with signs and wonders that call attention to Him so that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

I want you to pray this daring prayer with me. Father, I want you to give me the grace, give me the boldness to enter into a new era that was prophesied by Joel, that I would receive upon my life the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, not the giving of the Holy Spirit with measure, but an outpouring, an inundation, a flood of the Holy Spirit upon my life. I give you permission to possess me.

I give you permission to change me. I give you permission to transform me. I give you permission to make me both priest and prophet, to fill me with your love and help me to love people that I could never love by myself.

I want to be a part of your new race of people, your new genus. I want to be a part of your holy priesthood and your new nation, your new government. I want to be a part of that in Jesus' name.

Fill me with your Spirit. Here's the second part of Peter's message and you see it in verse 22. Men of Israel.

First part is men of Judas. Second part is men of Israel. And now he begins to talk with a man.

And this man is Jesus. But it's not just a man. He is God incarnate, attested by God through miracles, signs, and wonders.

So this is not a rational, naturalistic paradigm. There's no room for that kind of thing. If you and I are going to be the people God wants us to be, if we're going to be the church God wants us to be, we've got to get past enlightenment restrictions and open ourselves up to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Because God wants, God wants us to taste his power. Him, this man, that God proved to be extraordinary by signs and wonders. Him.

You delivered up. You crucified the Messiah. You killed the king.

And here's the paradox, and you've got to grab this. You've got to get a hold of this. It was the will of God, though he was taken by lawless hands, and yet that was not the will of God.

Here's mystery and contradiction. It was not God's will. It was God's will that he was received, and that he was celebrated, and he was recognized, and yet it was God's will.

He laid down his life. No, he was brutally assaulted and crucified. He was executed.

No, he freely surrendered his life. Soldiers led him away helplessly. No, he was attended by angels, and in his own strength, in his own power, if he'd exerted himself, he could have thrown off the yoke of the cross and spoken, and every soldier would have collapsed dead.

There's this contradiction that you have to be willing to embrace in scripture that we don't embrace very well. It's a contradiction of mystery where it seems that something is out of control, and yet God has it in control, and it seems like it's not going according to his will, and it could have gone another way, and yet in the end, he will work all in all according to his will, and that's the point at which we have to learn to rest.

Jesus, a man, a man, him, you, him, you crucified, whom, he said, God raised up, and the second message here, the first one is about a new eschatological error.

The second is about the resurrection, and if you believe in resurrection power, there's nothing man can do to you that can cause you to fear, and then the third message, men and brethren, David is dead. He's buried. His son is Jesus.

That's the seat of David, and he is on David's throne. Now, they know where David's tomb is. It's right there in Jerusalem, and what Peter is saying is David is alive, the son of David, and he's sitting on a throne, and he's reigning and ruling in exile.

This is more than resurrection. This is enthronement. We have a new king.

We've got a new era of the Spirit. We've got a new humanity in Christ, and he has modeled for us how we can move and flow in the Holy Spirit without fear of our life being taken away from us, and then finally, we have a new king, and we have a new kingdom, and now we are the nation of God among the nations, and while we might long for a great spiritual awakening to turn America back to God, if that doesn't happen, we will pray to be the remnant that spurs people on, will call our families and our churches and our cities to accountability before God. Here's the outcome.

Let me go through quickly. We are witnesses of the resurrection and ascension. Let's just pray that.

Father, I just pray that you would give me boldness to be a greater witness of your resurrection because I've tasted resurrection power, and I pray for anybody who's watching that has never tasted resurrection power. That really is the new birth. That's where you taste that, that they will taste that now.

I pray for anybody that's never connected with the enthronement of Christ in his ascension and the fullness of the Spirit that they will experience that now. I pray that we would be witnesses, not only of the resurrection of the ascension of Christ, but the witnesses of his poured-out Spirit, and I pray that that people around us would see it and hear it, and it would be evidentiary. Paul would say the same thing, though he didn't see what the disciples did because he experienced the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus, and we should be able to say the same thing because we've experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

We pray, number three, that we would come to know the exalted Christ who is now at the right hand of God, and it would cause us to be absolutely fearful of God and fearless of men. Number four, we pray that we would receive his promise, and by extension, we would have confidence in prayer in all of the promises of God, and so we believe and pray for a new level of faith in our life. Number five, we pray because we are witnesses of his rule from heaven, and we are tasting God on mission because here's what the Lord says, you sit here till I make your enemies your footstool.

Jesus has finished his work. He's resting in heaven, and God the Father is on mission through the Holy Spirit in the church itself, and so Father, I want to be so yielded to you. I want the Spirit to be on mission through me so that I do the will of the Father and finish the work of Jesus Christ.

We're witnesses of the seated Christ. Sit here until I make your enemies your footstool. We're in a new era.

God the Father is acting with the Spirit in the name of Jesus, his Son, and that's why praying in the name of Jesus is so very, very important. We pray this, this action of the Father in the name of the Son by the Spirit that the Son be glorified is now through the church. Lord Jesus, would you be Savior and Lord in me and through me? The crowd was cut to the heart.

What shall we do? Repent and be baptized. Three thousand were baptized, and you too shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We have no reason to believe, though the Scripture doesn't tell us that it wasn't just 120 who received the Holy Spirit on that day, but three thousand repented, were baptized, and received the power of the Holy Spirit and began to turn Jerusalem upside down.

Fifty thousand people normally lived in that city. Later you'll find five thousand men besides women and children had become followers of Jesus Christ. That remnant, listen to me, that remnant with no power, with no priest, with no king, with no prophet, that remnant had sought God until the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, and they shook a city.

Could it happen again? It's time for us to stop waiting for it to happen in Washington or wherever you live. It's time for the church to come together as the church, as the remnant, and begin to pray. Let me close by praying this.

God, we continue to pray for the nation as they did for Judea and Jerusalem, and we continue to pray. First the Jew and then the Gentile. We join our New Testament, this New Testament model, and we pray for the nation of our birth, wherever that nation is, but ultimately we pray for the empowerment of a brand new nation of Jews and Gentiles, of men and women, bond and free, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and used of God.

Number two, Father, we pray to become the nation inside the nations, among the nations, praying for a global spiritual awakening, nation by nation, whether we're under persecution or not. We do believe there are sheep nations, and we hope and pray that our nation will be a sheep nation, but if it is not, we will not withdraw from our obligation to be a witness in this nation. We continue to believe that you monitor nations, and cities, and churches, and families, and we want to speak blessing over our nation, and our city, and our church, and our family, and we want to live a quality life as a witness and influence in that family, and that church, and that city, and that nation, because of the judgment that nation and that church garners for itself.

We pray that you would intervene and you would send a revival. We pray for cities like Jerusalem to be held spellbound by the power of God and rounded over his people, and we pray for our own city to be held spellbound. We remember the days of the early Pentecostal movement when fire rolled across the tents, when the glory of God settled upon places where the people worshiped, and the whole city turned out, and you manifest your glory.

We remember the times for the great holiness revivals when you settled down, and the Spirit of the Lord came in a mighty way, and hundreds were saved and rushed to the altars. We remember the stories of the great camp meetings, the early 1800s, of the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley, and we long to see this again. And so, God, we pray for our cities, not just for narrow personal Christian salvation, but we pray for we pray for cities, and we pray that in every place a movement of unity and revival will emerge, and that the people of God together will become a mighty witness in that place.

We pray. We pray for a spiritual awakening. God bless you, Dan, for doing this.

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