

The Church in Exile (Birmingham Conference)

by Gary Wilkerson

Gary Wilkerson's sermon explores the historical journey of God's revelation and the church's experience of exile, emphasizing the need for a heartfelt relationship with God.

Duration: 39:54

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:2, Matthew 6:33, Acts 3:19-20, Acts 7:2-53, Galatians 1:8-9, Hebrews 13:8, Revelation 22:18-19

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the history of God and the exile that the Old Testament people of God went through. He starts by referencing the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, where God walked and talked with them. The preacher then mentions various biblical figures such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets, highlighting key events in their lives. Finally, he concludes by stating that despite this rich history, the people ultimately killed Jesus. The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding and appreciating the history of God and its impact on the future of the world.

Transcript

Will you join yourself into the blessing? Amen. This is much better, I am having a much better week, it won't take a whole lot to make me happier than last week. I was in bed all last week with pneumonia, and so anything's good this week, but this is actually really, really good to come here and hear this worship and be ministered to in such special ways that we should extend this an extra day, I'm having a blast.

It's okay, you don't have to clap. I'm having more fun than you are, I think. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you in the name of Jesus that you're going to speak to us. Your word is alive, it's sharp, it's going to cut into our hearts and do a powerful work. We thank you for it in Jesus' name, amen.

Before we go to the word of the Lord, again, I want to invite you here tomorrow morning nine o'clock, we start bright and early, sharp, nine o'clock. We have three sessions in the morning and then the evening session you've heard about as well. We hope there's some room for the pastors that'll be staying here.

We're going to try to make every way feasible to get as many people in here so you could be with us. We'd love to be with you as well one more time on Saturday night. Sunday at three o'clock, don't forget, if you're still in town, we'll be here at that.

You can invite kids, you can meet on the streets. If you're a local church pastor, Sunday morning you might want to just get up and tell your church we're going to have a little lunch together, and then get in a van and go down to the auditorium and hear a great, great opportunity to ... God's doing some amazing things to that ministry. You'll want to be part of that on Sunday as well.

Amen. Have you ever noticed how preaching today seems very different from the sermons you read in the scriptures? Let me just give you a few examples. Remember Peter's sermons? Peter's and Stephen's and some of Paul's, they seem to borrow sermons from one another, first of all.

They have this one particular sermon that they really seem to like. It goes something like this. They ask him to say something, make some comments, and they go, you remember Abraham, who was called by God to come out of his land, and his son Isaac, and then Jacob, and then Joseph was brought into bondage, and he was there for 400 years.

After these 400 years, Moses came in, and he spoke to the Pharaoh and said, let my people go. After that, there was the prophets, and they go through this long history, and at the end of the sermon, they go, and it seems like it's really out from left field. They're talking about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, all these guys, and then they say at the end, and you killed Jesus, and I'm like, where did that come from? It's like history, history, history, and you killed Jesus.

But almost all these sermons, Stephen's sermon, if you've read that, so it's a long sermon. It's one of the longest sermons in the scripture, and if you read Stephen's sermon, it's sort of like Abraham did this, and Isaac did that, and Jacob did that, and you're thinking, like, if he were here tonight preaching that sermon, not a lot of you would probably buy the tapes, because you're going, it's just history. But I think they were on to something.

I think they were on to something that might be missing in the New Testament church in our day and age, to report on what God has done, to speak of the wonders of God throughout the ages. The American mindset is so quick. We want things to be done real quickly, and we forget things that were done just a few days ago.

At the airport here, coming to Birmingham, I was at the airport in New York, and I happened to glance at a screen, and it said, breaking news. That'll grab your attention, breaking news. I go up to the screen, and it says something about a basketball player who's in a sex scandal.

The judge has decided to allow cameras, not in the courtroom, but in a side room when they have conferences. That's breaking news. Our understanding of past events and what is really important, what we can really grasp a hold of, is really not in the right frame of mind in our modern day and age.

We've lost sight of this ancient God of history, the God of today, tomorrow, and forever, and ever, and ever, this glorious God who always was, who always is, and who always will be. I love the fact that those who preached, preached with such power and anointing, not just because they had some new interesting word, but because they were connected in a line of history with men and women of God who stood strong through the time, and test, and trials, and tribulations of life. So these guys preached these wonderful sermons.

Very unlike, I went to Bible school, and they taught me how to preach a sermon. Obviously if you're a Bible school teacher, you probably are realizing now I didn't learn a whole lot during that course. But they told

you to, you know, you start off with a good joke.

Whenever I start with a good joke, I forget the punch line, and the whole sermon goes down the drain, so I don't start with jokes. They said have three points in your sermon. I usually end up getting two points, and I can't think of a third one, and I just get frustrated.

You know, they're supposed to have a good sort of conclusion that will really grasp people's attention so that at the end of the sermon, you can have the organist play just as I am, and there'll be a good altar call. And I just didn't seem to be able to catch all that, but I love this kind of preaching. I love this kind of where the word of God obviously is very important to them.

So I want to take a few minutes with you tonight and talk a little bit about history. The history of God, if there's a title in this sermon, I want to talk a little bit about the exile that the church went through, the Old Testament people of God. But I guess if there's a title on it, I might talk a little bit about the history and the future of the world in 30 minutes.

Somebody might have gotten scared, their history and the future of the world sounds like a long sermon, in 30 minutes. In Genesis, it starts off with Adam, and there's this marvelous story of God forming man and breathing into him. And as he breathed this breath into him, he came alive, and then God came in the cool of the evening, and he walked with him.

You see these flowers and these ferns here, picture a beautiful garden, and here's God. It says he walked, and had some kind of bodily form or image, and he walked with them, and he talked with them. Now it's interesting what he told them, because if you see what it is there, it's kind of an interesting thing.

If you were walking through the cool of the garden with God, this is not exactly everything I'd want to hear. It's like, don't eat of this tree, and multiply, and take care of the fish and the birds. It's very instructional.

Do you know what I'm talking about? It's very instructional. It's do this, stay away from that, avoid this, and it's not a whole lot of God revealing who he is. It's very much do this and stay away from that.

So this is the revelation. This is the revelation Adam has. He sees God, and he walks with God, and I'm sure it's a beautiful opportunity, a beautiful joy that he has in his life, but the deep, deep revelation of God, who God is, and what God is like, doesn't appear to be, at least in the pages of Genesis, an active part of what God was revealing.

Now Abraham has a, I keep saying Abraham, Adam has a son, and his son Abel gets something from God. It doesn't tell us how, or why, or what, and how it got to him, but his son gets this revelation from God. And he comes to his dad one day, I guess it's, again, it's not quite in the text, but you've got to understand this, he obviously comes to his dad and says, Dad, God told me that we're supposed to have sacrifice as worship to the Lord, and Adam's thinking, I didn't know that.

I have never heard that in my life, and he is really excited for his son. I mean, I just love it when my dad gets excited for me. When I was a young pastor, I used to come into my dad's office, and I'd, you know, I'd open up something like, you know, Galatians or something like that, did you know that we're justified by faith? And he'd go like, wow, that's so exciting, you're getting revelation, you know, he'd be real proud of me, like, and I thought it was something new that he'd never heard before.

But I do remember a day where I think, honestly, I'd say, I said something and it really caught him off guard. He goes, I never saw that before. And that was really a proud moment in my life.

It wasn't sort of like, I got you finally, but it was like, I'm really, really proud, really blessed. And so, I got to get this idea that Abel has come to his dad, and said, dad, did you know we were supposed to have sacrifice to the Lord like this? And Adam is so blessed, wow, that's a deep revelation. I didn't have that.

But it doesn't stop with Abel. It goes on. The Bible talks about one of his grandsons named Enosh, and it says, and it's the first time this word is described, it says, and Enosh walked with God, wow, going all the way back now to his great, great, great grandfather in the garden.

But this time, it was not just information, multiply, name the animals, do this, don't do that. Now, Enosh is walking with him, and it seems to be the appearance in the scripture now is that he's getting this kind of new insight and revelation. I can picture him going to his father, and his father saying, wow, man, God is so good.

I am so blessed. I am so proud. My sons, my daughters are getting more of God than I've ever had before.

I have three of my children down here in the front row. I pray every day that they surpass me, that they have revelation and insight and wisdom into God. Far be it that me and my dad will sit together one day and go, where did these kids come up with this revelation? I'm so excited about that, and that's what's happening here in the Old Testament.

And then after Enosh, there's another guy with a similar name called Enoch, and it says that this time they began to call on the name of the Lord. I think I got it backwards. Enosh was the one who called on the name of the Lord, and Enoch walked with God.

But it doesn't really matter. It's pretty much history anyway. But the idea is now this next guy gets this, and one guy's got this revelation of we can walk with God.

And now another guy has a revelation that I think goes beyond that. I mean, we're walking with God, and now this guy says, and now they began to call, and it was at this time they began to call on the name of the Lord. Wow.

And all the rest of the generations were saying, praise God, this young generation is getting some powerful revelation. They're hearing from God in spectacular ways. Now we know we can walk with God.

Now we know we can call on the name of the Lord. It's not just animal sacrifice anymore. Now we're actually intimate with God.

But it goes on. One of their great, great grandchildren had a powerful experience with God. His name was Noah.

And you know the story. I won't take a lot of time with Noah, but Noah has an amazing experience with God. God comes to Noah and says to Noah, now picture yourself being in Noah's shoes, and you're just walking along, and God speaks to you one day, Noah, the world is really a mess, and I am so frustrated, I am going to destroy the whole world.

And Noah's thinking to himself, what does that mean, the whole world? And he's really thankful, I think, because he goes on, because the next verse he says, except for you and some of your children. That's a

much better story. He tells him, go and build this ark.

And then for the first time, there's this promise that God gives. Now they heard from God, they were sacrificing, there was worship going on. One man named Jubal invented instruments and they started singing to God, they were walking with God, they were experiencing his presence.

But now, for the very first time, there's some new revelation, brand new revelation. God says, I'm going to give you a promise to you and your children and your children's children, I'm not destroy the world again. And I think that Noah's sons probably had some revelation that one day they came back to Noah and said, here's what God's been speaking to us, this deeper revelation about promise.

Then it goes on, and I'm going to try to go as quickly as I can without missing the important parts, so bear with me. After this, then you come along after Noah, then you have Abraham, who's getting even deeper revelation. He's getting now covenant revelation.

This is something that they've not experienced before. They had the promise with Noah, but now a whole new group of people are coming into covenant relationship with God. God promises, I'm going to bless you and I'm going to be with you.

And now listen to this, for the very first time in all of scripture, this is a long time in history now, we're talking probably well over a thousand years, for the very first time now, Abraham hears God say this, I am. He begins, God does something brand new in history. He begins to describe himself to man.

Not just observe this, not just do this, not just sacrifice this, but he said, Abraham, I am like this. I am a God of loving kindness. I am a God who's like this, and Abraham has revelation that has never been heard of before.

It goes on past Abraham, a guy named Jeremiah, skipping way ahead into the future, Jeremiah has one of the most unique revelations of God in all of history. And it's the most, I think it's the most radical. It's probably one of the most ignored, but one of the most radical revelations of God in history, because what Jeremiah gets is almost unfathomable.

It's almost indescribable. He gets a picture of what's happening in Judah and in Israel, and he says, this is an abomination before God. You guys are living in such, you're going to your worship services.

You're having your sacrifices. You're coming into the temple. You're observing all this revelation that was given to us in the past, but you're doing it with a dead heart.

You've got all the ritual down, everything that God has said, all the revelation up to this time, you understand it and you observe it, but it's not in your heart. So God says something to Jeremiah, tell the people, I'm going to take them out of Judah. I'm going to bring them into captivity in Babylon.

Now God is now revealing dates and times and places and judgments and situations are going to happen in time periods, names of Kings. The revelation is getting so intense that Jeremiah actually tells them who the King is coming, his name, when he's coming, what's going to happen, how long they're going to be in captivity. God is speaking really clearly here.

Do you understand me? And he tells Jeremiah, tell these people they're coming into a time of exile. Now picture what's happening here in this time of exile. This is really incredible.

It's not just like if you hear a prophet today, maybe as my father says, he's not a prophet, but he prophesies and you may have heard some of his prophecies. You may have heard him and other men and watchmen, men and women of God say, times ahead are going to be difficult. There could come an economic collapse.

There could come a thousand fires in New York City. There could come perilous times that aligns with scripture. The Bible makes it so clear that the end times, terrible times will come upon the earth.

And some people, I have heard some people accuse my father of being too gloom and doom. I have gotten personal joy out of, people used to come to me when he first wrote the book called The Vision. And they used to come to me when I was a younger man and say, you know, your dad wrote all these things and here's a long list of things that haven't come true.

And then I'd see the same people about two years later and they'd say, and here's a list of things that haven't come true, but it's a lot smaller. And when I see them now, they're basically saying, you know, there's still one thing. I just say, wait, just hang on, quit, you know, bothering me every year with this stuff.

And some people think, well, that's too gloom and doom. It's, it's, you're too hard on the church. You're talking about judgment.

You're talking, compared to what Jeremiah told his people, that's good news, what we've just heard because really I'm being serious because what Jeremiah told his people is this, everything you've ever heard about God throughout history, sacrifice, the temple, the reading of the word, the fellowship, the, all of that's about to be taken away from you. Everything you've known, you're going out of this land and you're going into captivity. And so, so basically what he's saying to them is no more temple.

And they're, they're thinking to Jeremiah, this is where we worship. We, we can't worship anywhere else, but in the temple. There's no more sacrifice.

Our sins can't be forgiven. There's no more priesthood. They can't go into the holy of holies.

There's no more worship. All the paid instruments that the hundreds of instruments that they paid full-time worship in the temple, no more songs of worship, no more of any of this stuff. Coming out of Jerusalem and you're going to come into a land of bondage.

That would be like a prophet getting up in today and saying, every church building is going to close down. There'll be no more Christian television, no more Christian radio, no more bookstores for you to go to and buy books. Bibles will be outlawed.

You will be called upon to leave your home in the United States, move to Afghanistan, live in a small village and do nothing but love Jesus and share him with other people. It's real quiet in here now. That's pretty much the prophecy that Jeremiah gave the people, but they went into that.

And history tells us that there were some young men who volunteered to go into captivity because Jeremiah was saying, this is what God is saying for us to do. And these young men get into this place, no more temple, no more ritual, no more ceremony, no more worship, no more animal sacrifice. Just nothing that they've always lived their life depended upon.

And God, through the prophets, was saying, you can't exist that way anymore. You can't go through this ritual. You can't just have this ceremony without having a heart after God.

So I'm going to bring you into exile. I'm going to strip away all the excesses. I'm going to strip away all the things you depend upon.

I'm going to see what happens to you in the wilderness. God's plan works because there's a young man there named Beltshazzar. We call him Daniel.

And Beltshazzar gets a vision of the Lord. You remember this? He said, I saw the Lord. I saw him.

There was another young man. His name was Ezekiel. He became a prophet in exile.

And Ezekiel was one of the first men in all of Scripture to get a revelation about God giving us a new heart, not of the old circumcision of the flesh, not of the ritual and the ceremony. But Ezekiel was the first man to begin, along with Jeremiah, to begin to prophesy that God was going to do something new. And it would all be about the heart.

So God had to strip away all that they were dependent upon. Their beautiful temple, their thousand-voice choir, their royal priesthood, and their tremendous garb. And he took them all away.

And there was these young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who get a revelation from God. And God says to them, no matter what this evil king says, do not bow down. And these young men say, we will not bow.

Man, what revelation these guys had. Some of them may have been even teenagers at this time. And yet they are trusting in God, even in the midst of exile.

God reveals himself even in the midst of exile. As a matter of fact, sometimes through wilderness experience, through trials and tribulations, through troubles, God speaks more clearly than ever before. Now, let me skip ahead in history.

That's the end of the... Now, after Jeremiah, there's some more events, minor prophets come along. And then there's this point of time where they call... Have you ever heard this? Some of you may have gone to Bible school or seminary, and they call this the intertestamental period. Have you ever heard that phrase? I think it's one of the worst phrases in the Bible.

No, it's actually not in the Bible. So it's... But it's one of the worst phrases we use. Intertestamental period.

It's almost like these guys were writing this Bible for 2,000 years, and they got tired. Like, oh, we're so tired of writing this Bible. Let's take a 400-year break.

And they wait for something good to happen. So finally, Jesus comes along. Oh, good, we can start writing again, because now we have some good... That's a terrible... Because God did not stop speaking in the intertestamental period.

A matter of fact, the good news is God has never stopped speaking. So during this time, it seems quiet. There's not much record of it.

But God never stopped speaking. As a matter of fact, Christians are a little strange in that they separate the Bible, Old and New Testament. It's really one book.

It's God speaking to us. It's Jewish believers. Don't call it the Old Testament, because it's not old.

It's still alive. It's still God. It's still revelation of God.

There's nowhere in Scripture it says, this is the Old Testament. Now this is the New Testament. Those are phrases we've superimposed upon the Word of the Lord.

It's one book. And the intertestamental period wasn't God on vacation. Wasn't God taking a break from being tired of writing? He was still revealing himself.

Now, let me skip way ahead in the future. Everything we've talked about now has been up to this point in Scripture. Now, you skip ahead into a time period coming.

One of the writers in what we call the New Testament, John, predicts a day that's coming. Where revelation... As a matter of fact, he calls his book what? Revelation. He says there's a day coming where revelation is going to be so spectacular, so phenomenal, that young men are going to be... As a matter of fact, there's two guys that are going to be so powerful.

They're going to be called the two prophets. And they're going to have power where words come out of their mouth. They're going to be able to call fire from heaven.

They're going to be able to shut the windows of heaven. There'll be no rain at the word of their mouth. They're going to be so strong.

They're going to be slain in the street, and then they're going to be resurrected. These are some powerful young men, aren't they? And God's... But one day, you know what's interesting? One day, I don't know when it's going to be, sometime in the future, but somebody's going to be around there and say, Hey, John talked about you guys. You're the two prophets.

See, there's going to be a coming revelation. I believe what John is talking about is an exponential revelation. It's building upon building upon building of this phenomenal insight into who God is and what he's like, and the wisdom and insight and revelation is going to be so phenomenal.

There's going to be some people there, and they're going to understand. They're going to say, These are the two prophets. That's the Antichrist.

This is the mark of the beast. This is Babylon. This is the whore.

And all that's described in the book of Revelation is going to be revealed and opened up. Isn't that amazing? But I'm confused about something. Here's a couple questions for you.

Do we have a theology? Do we have a way of living? Do we have an understanding that says, Here's Adam, and here's the closing of the New Testament. A lot of revelation. God's been speaking.

Amen. He's done a lot of powerful things to us. There's been some powerful revelation, and now skip ahead.

Sometime in the future, God's going to start back up again. He's going to start revealing these amazing things, and people are going to understand things about God in new ways they've never understood before. But my question is this.

But what about now? Are we not in an intertestamental period? Are we in an interrevelational period? Where God has somehow, for some reason, decided, I spoke then, and I'll speak then, but I'm sorry. It's all here now, so you don't get anything else. Now, please don't misunderstand me.

This is going to be a very important part for you to listen very carefully to me. The Bible makes it clear that you cannot add or take away from this book. The Bible makes it very clear, the Scriptures say, if someone comes and teaches something different that's not in this book, even if it's from an angel, disregard the message.

It's from the hand of Christ. Have nothing to do with it. So when I'm talking about new revelation or progressive revelation, God speaking new things into our heart, I'm not talking about new doctrine, okay? Do you understand that? I'm not talking about, have you guys heard what Joseph Smith had to say? Please don't misunderstand me.

I am talking about Orthodox Christian theology. But here's the good news. You see, we understand that this is a closed book.

It's not going to be added to. We're not going to get, you know, Revelation Part Two. It's a closed book.

And God, but here's the good news. God in history, He gave all this revelation throughout history. Adam, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and they got this revelation.

And then all of a sudden it was recorded in this book. And now we are standing on this side of the book, aren't we? But everything that's in that book is being opened up to us. And I believe it's being opened up line upon line and precept upon precept.

And I believe with all my heart that God is speaking to young men and young women in this generation. And they are having powerful revelation from God. They're having insights and wisdom and truth from God that the generations in past are going to say, where did you get a hold of God in such powerful ways? Revelation is for today.

Hallelujah. God wants to speak to you. You see, because we're very concerned about two things.

We're very concerned about making sure we don't add anything or take anything away from the scripture, and rightly so. Secondly, we're very concerned that we don't come up with these weird, and I have to use this term, I hope it's in mercy and love, but charismaniac type stuff. You know what I mean? I mean, some of the strangest stuff.

I heard somebody recently, I overheard them in a prayer room. There was a man visiting from Finland. He was in the prayer room and he talked to this woman.

He said, how can we reach Finland from Christ? Her answer was, find the four most powerful prophets in your nation. Have them move to the four corners of Finland. And every day, wake up and face the center of Finland, prophesying God would come and revival over Finland.

And I just wanted to interrupt. I didn't. I was trying to be merciful and nice, but I didn't interrupt.

But I wanted to come in there and say, that's the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my life. I want to say, here, where did you get that? Just pick anything. Genesis or Revelation, just show me where you get this stuff from.

And I hate the foolishness of people coming up with all kinds of fanciful doctrines to tickle people's ears and try to get people to be motivated to come to church. And there's something new all the time. And it's just... And because we're concerned about these two things, not adding or taking away, and we're concerned about these weird revelations, a lot of us have closed our heart, our mind, and our understanding that God wants to speak to you today.

He didn't stop. This is not an... It's not God said, I spoke then and I'm going to speak now, but sorry, you guys, just read your Bible as much as you can. No, He has recorded it for us, that we could research it and open it up.

Because the Bible says, Paul made it clear that there are unfathomable, the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. With the mystery, the hidden mysteries are being revealed, when? Now, to us. I can prove it to you that God is still bringing revelation.

This book that we say is closed now, and you can't add or take away from it. In the year 400 AD, there was a council. The church fathers got together and said, this book belongs in the Bible.

The gospel of Mark belongs in the Bible, but the gospel of Thomas, you ever heard of the gospel of Thomas? They said, the gospel of Thomas does not belong in the canon of Scripture, because there's heretical teaching in that. How do they know that? God revealed it to them. Our church fathers got wisdom and revelation from God saying, this is canon material, this is Godly, this is the line, but that's not.

And that is a safety net, it's protected us. That's the fact that our church fathers got revelation from God, has given us now the pure word of God. They received revelation.

Aren't you glad that a man named Wycliffe, Wycliffe, one day was scratching his head, he was walking around in his shop, and he started thinking to himself, I think God is saying to me that the people need the Bible in their own language. And everybody else said, heresy, heresy, heresy. You change one word of the Scripture, you're damned.

And Wycliffe got this idea, no, God's speaking to me. And so men began to write the Scripture in English and in German and all kinds of languages. And people began to now open up the word of God and it got people out of the Middle Ages.

Life came into people, the darkness was dispelled and the glory of God came in because a man had a revelation. God said to him, I want the Bible in English and German and French. Man, and he had to trust.

Aren't you thankful that he trusted that God still speaks today? Aren't you glad he didn't say no? They told me that God's not speaking anymore. No, he believed God. Aren't you glad that a place called Azusa Street in 1905 and 1906, some guys got together and said, you know what, this thing here is talking about charismatic gifts and speaking in tongues.

And that's just, at that point, I mean, it just wasn't happening. Do you know that? I mean, there was not charismatic gatherings or Pentecostal gatherings or charismatic conferences or charismatic Catholics. There was just like three people were spirit-filled at that time, you know.

And this guy got a vision from God. They said, God wants us to have these supernatural gifts from the Holy Spirit. And they believed they were hearing from God and began to preach.

And aren't you glad they decided to preach that? Hallelujah. God's still speaking today. He's still speaking.

And I wanna close with these last few words. I wanna challenge, particularly the young men and young women in this place, 35, 40 and under. That age is always changing for me.

I used to say the young pastor's 30, now it's 35 and getting to 40. Pretty soon, I'll be having conferences. I'll be saying, everybody under 50, you young pastors.

But I wanna speak to you young pastors and leaders for just a moment. Because if you'll get this in your heart, that God can speak to you. Some things that myself and my father and Pastor Neil would look at and say, where did you get that? I want what you have.

Where are you getting this revelation? And I think part of the reason why we're getting it is because this is exactly what the apostles prayed. There are seven in the Bible. There are seven, what are called the apostolic prayers.

Peter prayed some of them. Paul prayed some of them. There are prayers for the New Testament church.

And every single one of these seven apostolic prayers include the same thing. God, open the eyes of their hearts. Give them revelation, wisdom, insight.

Open up the mysteries of Christ. God, give them understanding and revelation. Because once somebody gets on fire for God, once somebody gets filled with a fresh word, they're not just dusting off some old book from 1500 and saying, wow, wasn't this amazing what God said to Luther? But they're saying, isn't it amazing? They're including that, yes, but they're saying, isn't it amazing what God's saying to me in this day, in this hour, for my church, for my people, for my nation? And when young people and elders get a hold of this, that it's not some new doctrine or it's not some charismatic maniac type gifts, but it's orthodox, solid Christianity, but it's being revealed and opened up in ways that touch people's hearts in a deep way.

When you get that, oh, I tell you what, the old dry and dusty, the experience of reading three chapters a day and saying, have you ever read the Bible and you get through reading a chapter and you just go to yourself, what did I just read? I have no idea what I just read. And you start trying to read it again. And those days, and there's gonna be those days for the rest of our lives, but there are days coming where God is going to speak to his people in powerful ways.

But the church of Jesus Christ needs a new revelation, first of all, to say, I have faith to believe that God speaks today. He can direct me, he can guide me, he can lead me, he can talk to me, and he can open up insights that the church need. Just as there are unknown, just as Wycliffe understood that God was saying, put the word in different languages, there are things that we're not doing.

Did you know that? Please don't be so proud as to think this is the generation that we finally got it all together. And we don't need any young pastors or teachers or prophets to be raised up and tell us, you know what, church, you're not doing what the Bible tells us to do. Because a generation is coming and they're gonna have new insight, new truth.

Not new truth in the sense of, again, please understand what I'm saying, but they're gonna see things that are written in the scriptures and they're gonna bring it alive to us and it's gonna be such a powerful day and the church of Jesus Christ is gonna be in a prevailing place. I'm gonna close with this. Here's one thing I wanna suggest to you that the Holy Spirit is saying in this day and hour.

That we, and listen to me carefully, this is as close as I'll ever get to prophesying. In this day and this hour, the church of Jesus Christ in America is headed into exile. We are going through the same experience I am here today to tell you, this is the word of the Lord.

That the church, and this is just as much a truth, I believe, as Jeremiah preached to the people in Judah. That for too long, we've depended on our buildings. For too long, we've depended on our choirs.

For too long, we've depended on our budgets. For too long, we've depended on our strategies and our structures and our programs. God's saying to the church of Jesus Christ in America, we're taking you into exile.

And I'm gonna strip away from you all these things you have to depend on to make you think that's how church works. God is going to, don't clap please, hold on. God is going to take the church, and I don't know if it has something to do, there are other prophetic words of men of God that are far deeper into the Lord than I am, and they are saying things like economic collapse.

They are saying things like persecution. They are saying things like a terrible time's coming. They are saying things about terrorism that's coming to America.

These are powerful words, but remember what Jeremiah was telling his people. That's not really the stuff. The stuff really is what these things produce.

They produce a church that has to go into exile. And listen, be stripped away of, don't you think God might be just saying the same thing he said to Amos? I'm tired of your festivals. I'm tired of your feasts.

I'm tired of your sacrifices. I want a heart after me. And God is saying to his church, if I have to take every dollar from your coffer, if I have to close every building down, if I have to shut off all the sound equipment that we put so much value in, if we have to come, if he has to stop us coming to church to be entertained, and we'll only come where there's good entertainment, if he has to stop all of it, he's gonna do it, and it's gonna be the best thing that'll ever happen to the church.

Hold on a second. Now listen, I'm not saying that music and buildings and having budgets are evil things in themselves, but if that's what the church becomes, you might as well just call yourself the Kiwanis Club or start a corporation called IBM and sell computers because it's just a business. If God's not in it, it's a business.

And before God brings you into exile, you might as well close it down anyway because there's no value in it. But here's the good news. Here's something that makes me wanna shout because in the midst of this exile that I foresee coming, in the midst of this exile, there's some young men similar to Daniel who are gonna get down on their knees and they're gonna say, I have no temple, I have no worship team, I have no sound equipment, I have no finances, but I got my knees and I can get down on my knees and I can open up the window and when I open up the window, I can cry out to God day and night.

I can cry out to you, God. And in the midst of this exile in America where the church is no longer popular and they're not being interviewed by superstars and not being visited by dignitaries and politicians any longer and when this church is in exile and facing some difficult times, there's gonna be some young men who are gonna be tempted to give into the worldly system and all of a sudden, they're gonna get up and say, I will not bow before the idols of this world. I will take a stand for Jesus Christ.

I don't care what, I don't care if it's not popular. God forgive us because so many young people today are joining our churches, are getting involved because they like the rock music that we're playing and they like the cool speeches that the youth pastor gives and there's not a heart seeking after God and God says, if I have to, I'll close it down so that I can have some young men and women of God who will start seeking my face, who will start coming after me with all their heart, all their soul, all their strength. There's gonna be some young men like Ezekiel who are gonna be shut in with God and all of a sudden begin to write these powerful words.

Oh, I'll put in you a new heart. Oh, you may not have a building to meet in. You may not have a budget to meet all your, you may not be able to pay for staff to do all this stuff.

Oh, but my spirit's gonna be upon you. I'm gonna put my words on your heart and I tell you what, in times like that, when I read through Jeremiah's prophecies and I read through the exile period, I see I would rather be in exile and have the kind of heart like Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and Ezekiel. I'd rather be in exile and be like them than to be in Judah and have the temple and have the sacrifice and have all the glorious things we can look at, feel, touch and get excited about but not have Jesus in the middle of it all.

Amen. Hallelujah. Amen.

Stand with me if you would, please. I just think that's good news. I think that's, I say, Jesus, that's exciting.

If you have to take us into exile, then let's go, God. Let's do it. You know, if you can save us without it, then save us without it.

But if it takes that, you see, in exile...

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