

Keep Seeking God, Don't Turn Back

by Tim Conway

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God diligently and wholeheartedly. It highlights the consequences of forgetting God, not calling upon Him, and not seeking His presence. The message stresses the need to cry out to God, seek His face, and find rest in His presence. It warns of the impending judgment for those who do not seek the Lord and encourages a deep, earnest search for God's salvation and glory.

Duration: 1:00:35

Scripture: Zephaniah 1:6, Jeremiah 29:13, Psalms 40:16, Isaiah 55:6, Hosea 10:12, Psalms 105:4, 1 Chronicles 28:9, Psalms 34:4, Isaiah 55:7, Hebrews 11:6

Topics: "Diligent Seeking", "Consequences of Forgetting God"

Description

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Transcript

Just reading along through my Old Testament, I'm so often impacted when scripture just simply says, the wicked forget God. The wicked don't call upon God. The wicked don't seek God.

It kind of gives you a different definition of wicked, doesn't it? Now, so what's the one that the world likes to carry around, or maybe many of you here? Zephaniah. So just chapter one, verse one, the word of the Lord that came to Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah, the son of Ammon, king of Judah. Now, if that Hezekiah is indeed King Hezekiah, then it would make Zephaniah actually of the royal family.

And actually, it would put him, if you trace the lineage of Josiah, who's mentioned here, because that's when Zephaniah prophesied in the days of Josiah, the son of Ammon, king of Judah. Now, if you trace Josiah back to Hezekiah, you have four generations. If you trace Zephaniah back, you have, maybe it's three generations with Josiah.

I know there's, I haven't done all the genealogical study, but I read somebody that had, and there's one more generation for Zephaniah than there is for Josiah, if they're both actually descended from Hezekiah.

But Hezekiah was a common name, so this may not be King Hezekiah. We don't really know.

Let's just throw that out there. They may have been related. They may have been cousins, actually.

But here's the point. Here's what we do know. Zephaniah is a prophet.

Now, sometimes we just need to stand back and think about that. God, you can't see him. But you know what? God actually spoke.

God actually gave a message, direct revelation from God to Zephaniah that he, you know, these guys, we don't always know exactly how, what they prophesied came to be in writing. Sometimes we're told. Sometimes, you know, Jeremiah dictated to Baruch and the thing.

There were times that these guys spoke these things. They may have gone and stood in front of the temple and spoke this and then wrote it down. But this is basically the Word of God.

God is speaking. God has a message, and he prophesied. He spoke God's Word in the days of Josiah.

Now, Bible historians tell us, you can track all this out. You can basically, from the genealogies of Scripture, we have a pretty good idea. We can pretty much trace all the way from Adam right down to the days of Christ.

There are some places where it's a little bit more difficult. But Bible historians tell us that Josiah lived from 640 to 609 BC. Well, you just do the math there.

That's more than 2600 years ago. That's more than six centuries before Jesus Christ walked this earth. That's when Zephaniah lived.

That's when Zephaniah prophesied. And what did Zephaniah prophesy? One of the main themes, as is the case with many of these minor prophets, it's a message of judgment. And you know what? We don't like judgment.

If I told you I'm doing a series on judgment, we don't like that. We don't like wrath. Now, we like the good news.

We all like good news. We all like the promise of some good thing out on the horizon. The problem is, this is a huge problem.

How many go in at the straight gate and walk the narrow way? Jesus said, few find it. We don't like judgment. We don't like the bad news.

We like good news. And the thing is, you know what? The fact is, the God of Scripture makes us uncomfortable. The God of Scripture, a God who takes people and casts them into hell, an eternal hell.

You say, you know, that's not nice. That's not a nice thing to think about. But you know, the real issue that we have to think about is what's true.

I mean, if we're honest, if we're actually honest, whether preachers preach about the bad news or not, the Bible certainly speaks to it. I mean, if we're honest, and I know it makes people uneasy. I know it makes people even angry.

We desperately want a God of love. And the fact is, God is love. The fact is, God shows his love.

The fact is that God so loved the world that he did give his only begotten son. That's a reality. But God gave his son, why? God gave his son as a sacrifice for sin.

God crushed Christ. That's what Isaiah 53 said. He crushed him.

So this is the thing, a sacrifice for sin. God crushed him. God vented his wrath in an expression of love.

Yes, God is real. Sin is real. Hell is real.

Judgment is real. God's wrath is real. The Bible is real.

The truth of the Bible is real. And the truth of the Bible is, few there be that find life. So just listen, Zephaniah 3.8. I'm just reaching in.

I've read this book over and over and over and over. And I'm just basically reaching in and pulling out one of any number of verses that I could have laid hold of. In fact, in the beginning, I had a list of verses here, and I just narrowed it down to this one because I think this describes, therefore, wait for me, declares the Lord.

Interesting. Wait for me. Oftentimes, when we think about waiting for the Lord, we think about waiting for him to do something that we're expecting of, something good.

Wait for me. Wait for what? For the day when I rise up to seize the prey. Wow.

What a way to put it, to seize the prey. For my decision is to gather nations. And you know what? That's no different than we see in the New Testament when it says that Jesus Christ, he's going to come in all of his glory and he's going to gather the nations.

It's the same picture. This is judgment. To assemble kingdoms.

You see why they're being gathered? To pour out upon them my indignation. Man hardly can even process this. Why? I mean, the wind's nicely blowing.

What a beautiful Sunday afternoon. People are walking around, people are probably going out, they're eating, they're barbecuing in their backyard. They can't even hardly process this.

You see what God says, wait for me. Wait. Something's coming.

I'm going to pour out my indignation, all my burning anger, for in the fire of my jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed. And this is what Peter tells us. We're waiting, we're waiting for this whole heaven and earth to be consumed by fire.

It's waiting for that. Even in Jude, even in 2 Peter, we get this idea of what Sodom and Gomorrah fire, fire brimstone came down and consumed them. That is an example, Peter tells us, of what is going to happen to all the ungodly.

We just walk around. And you know what? Man gets very confident. And you'll understand why God or why man gets confident because of the way God operates.

And we see it in scripture because man isn't immediately punished for a sin. Man doesn't sin and immediately lightning strikes him. Because man sinned and he thinks he gets away with it.

And then he's bold to sin again and again and again. And then finally, he just believes nothing's going to happen. Maybe God isn't up there at all.

Maybe God doesn't know. You see what Zephaniah is telling us. And folks, this isn't just the Old Testament.

I've often been gripped. Now don't turn here, but just listen to this. I have often been gripped by this text.

And I'm going to tell you how I'm gripped by it after I read it to you. But you know what happens? You get to the end of the Bible, you get to the book of Revelation, you begin reading Revelation. And Revelation, you talk about symbolic language and hard to understand.

You're crinkling your eyebrows and you're trying to figure out all the symbolism of it you're going through. I'll tell you what, you don't have to speculate too far and hard. Right in the very first chapter when it says this, Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him, even so.

Amen. And what's that saying? I'll tell you what it's saying. It's saying the same as Zephaniah is saying.

And all the nations, all the tribes, all the kingdoms, they're all being gathered together and they wail. You know what? Wail. That means they greatly mourn.

But you can understand that. You can understand. People up there, they're walking up and down the sidewalks, they're in shorts today, glorious.

It's a summer day. It's Sunday. Can you imagine if suddenly the sky split open and life is done? No more days hanging out with your family.

No more time grilling steaks on the grill in your backyard with friends. No more laying your head on a pillow to rest. Your life is over.

This world is over, and you're not ready. The thing you were planning to do this Friday, all your plans are done. They wail.

And I just asked, you know the question I asked of this verse, all these different times, I know this isn't Zephaniah, this is Revelation. It's the same God speaking about the same event. And you know what I would ask myself? Where are all the rejoicing Christians? Because that is not the picture when Christ comes.

And you know what the feel is? That Christians are in such a minority when Christ comes that it's just eclipsed by a massive wail from the nations. I mean, listen, there are people, I don't want to bog you down with this, but there are folks out there that call themselves post-millennial. The post-millennial people, I wish it was true.

I could really get on board if I saw biblical evidence, but they believe in a golden age, a millennium, a golden age, a great worldwide revival that gets ushered in. Some of the guys that you might see on the internet today, they say you'll hardly know a lost person. Is that the picture of what things look like when

Christ comes? You see, if that's the way things really were, then you would expect that by and large, what would characterize the second coming of Christ would be celebration.

But that's not it. By and large, the major characteristic of Christ's return is a wail. Wow.

When God paints a picture of the second coming, that is the one overwhelming characteristic. It is people scream, and yet you hear it. Watch what they do.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the commanders, and the mighty men, but not just them. The slave, every free man. This is a picture of all humanity.

What are they doing? Do you know what happens when that sky breaks open? They hide themselves in the caves, in the rocks of the mountains. And they say to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb for the great day of his wrath has come. And who is able to stand? You ought to be able to answer that question.

Who is able to stand? No one. Unless you have Christ for a refuge. Who's able to stand? You know what Jesus said? Jesus made a very interesting observation.

He said, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? And what a foreboding statement that is. You know what the expectation is? You know what that sounds like? I mean, what does that sound like he's saying? If he says to his disciples, if he said it to you, when the Son of Man comes, when I return, am I going to find faith on the earth? That doesn't sound like Jesus anticipates he's going to find a whole lot. That's what it sounds like.

It doesn't sound like a great prediction of worldwide revival to me. I would love to believe the post-mill position, but it just, Scripture just doesn't feel that way. Do you know what Scripture says? And I recognize that when you read different parts of what's prophesied in the New Testament, sometimes people wonder, well, is this talking about when Christ wiped out, or when the Romans wiped out the temple and they wiped out Jerusalem, which I would say was Christ.

Christ was reigning undoubtedly. And, you know, you got these preterist folks that feel like a lot of these things that were talked about in the New Testament, well, they talk about 70 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem, and then other people are torn. Well, they think about it's talking about the second coming.

Well, I'll tell you this. I think it's talking about both, just like I think the minor prophets talk about judgment in their day, and also the end. It happens over and over, that apocalyptic language seems to have a present application and a future application.

But listen, I just, very simply, Christ said, you know what it's going to be like when the Son of Man is revealed? There are two good examples in Scripture just exactly what it's going to be like. First one, Noah. What was it like in Noah's day? Just as it was in the days of Noah, this is what Luke 17 says.

Don't turn there, but just listen. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. What were they doing? Just what they're doing today, eating, drinking.

You know all the pubs are full. The ones that have nice patios, nice exposure to the sun. You know what it's like? What's it going to be like when Christ comes, the day of the Son of Man, when all these nations wail? It's going to be just like the days of Noah.

What was it like in the days of Noah? This is what it was like, Jesus says. They were eating, and they were drinking, and they were marrying, and they were being given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark, the flood came and destroyed them all. Now see, this is one of the reasons why I think that this very, very much lends itself to the second coming of Christ.

As much as we might talk about 70 AD and everything that happened, you know a lot of those people survived, and what it says here is everybody's going to be destroyed. He destroys them all. You better believe the people wail, because they're in trouble.

It's going to be just like the days, and you know what? He goes on to say this, just as it was in the days of Lot. Oh, how was it in the days of Lot? Just like it was in the days of Noah, and just like it's going to be when Christ comes. What's that like? Eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire, sulfur, rain from heaven, and destroyed them all.

He says the same thing in both. That day destroyed them all, and that's true. All but eight souls.

You see, am I going to find faith in the earth? Well, that is very much like what it looked like in Noah's day. If you came there, and you looked, and you said, well, Noah was righteous. You know, we don't even know.

I mean, we have some question about at least one of his sons. How many of them were actually believers? We don't know anything about the faith of the wives, but let's just be charitable and say eight souls were saved, eight souls knew the Lord. Let's just say that.

Eight out of what? Out of the whole human race that was alive at the time. You think it would be proper to say that when that flood came, was there faith in the earth? Not much. What about the days of Lot? How many do you find there? Well, the way I read it, only Lot and his two daughters escaped, and I'm not even certain where his daughters were at as far as the faith went.

His wife, remember Lot's wife, she didn't make it. It's going to be just the same. Folks, people may not like judgment, but you know what the safest thing that you and I can do is face it head on.

I was a mechanical engineer for 15 years. It intersected with my pastoring about three years, and I worked in a company, and it was fairly big. We had a cafeteria seated about 500 people, and they would stagger the lunches so that they could get all the people in the company through this cafeteria, at least in that building.

They had several buildings. I was in there packed full of people eating at a table. There was a guy that was eating next to me, and I just I looked up, and I looked at all those people, and I said, just think a hundred years from now, all these people will be dead, and he just looked at me like I had three heads like, shut up.

Why even talk? He said, I try not to think about that. Well, that's how the world is. Hey, we're eating, drinking, we're buying, we're selling, we're planting, we're building, we're out here doing our thing.

We don't want to hear about that. Don't tell us about judgment. Don't tell us about that.

But then, you know what? You can bury your head in the sand, but brethren, we don't want to be like that. You know what Spurgeon said? I come across this quote over the years, various times, but Spurgeon

said, for my own part, my constant prayer is that I may know the worst of my case, whatever that knowledge may cost me. That is a safe approach to your life.

Tell me the worst. Lord, tell me the worst. Tell me what's true.

Not what I hope to be true, not what I imagine to be true. I want to know what the truth is. I want to know what is real.

That's what, yes, thinking about God's anger towards sinners is a heavy matter. I recognize that. But is it true? I mean, is it true? That's the issue.

What is God going to do to this human race when Christ comes? He's going to do such things to them that it creates a wail from the people. That means extreme mourning. It's they're in trouble, in big trouble.

What's the issue? The issue is this, most men are not ready for Christ to come. And what's the most loving thing we can do? Should we just walk by them and let them go on in their delusion? You know, it may seem great out there today, but let me ask you this, all these people that are out there eating and drinking today, where are they going to be in 100 years? I'll tell you, if we were silent here, you just think with me, if we were silent and suddenly we could make everybody see and feel what they are going to see and feel a hundred years from now. And we were just silent and we just listened and everybody became 100% aware of where they would be and how they would feel.

What do you think we would hear? I'll tell you what you would hear, the same thing we're going to hear when Christ comes. You would hear a wail come up over this city of the most horrific nature. And you know, that's true.

Brethren, we want to know, we need to declare the truth. We want to know the truth. Even if we don't like that truth, even if people don't like that truth, look at Zephaniah 1.17. Listen to what God says.

Zephaniah 1.17, just look there. I will bring distress on mankind so that they shall walk like the blind because they have sinned against the Lord. Their blood shall be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung.

And you just need to capture that. They walk like a blind man. What's that mean? It doesn't mean to walk like a blind man.

Christ breaks forth and it's like a blind man walking on a precipice. What does that look like? He's got no cane. He's got no nothing.

It's just pitch black. It's dark. He's walking towards a cliff.

Like a blind man. What's that? It's just doubt. It's uncertainty.

They're gripped by that. They've got no clue what to do. They've got no clue which way to go, where to turn, no plan for escape.

They're at their wits end. They're utterly bereft of hope. They're just grasping blindly and frantically at anything, but they're able to see no way out.

They're like a blind man. They see no light, no hope, no direction, no way of escape. That's why they're asking the mountains to just come upon them, but who in their right mind? I mean, could you imagine you're walking in front of a cliff? Who wants a rock to fall down or a pile of rocks to fall down on their head? That would be the last thing anybody would want, but that's the first thing everybody wants when Christ has broken through and the sky is opened up and there he is.

Like blind men just going headlong to their own destruction. And why does it say? Because they've sinned against the Lord. You know, man thinks so little of his sin.

They basically, they're pretty good. God obviously does not think little of sin. Now here's something very important.

God, through the prophet Zephaniah, he encapsulates, he kind of summarizes the sin. All these people that are going to be wailing, all these people that are going to be desperate to have the mountains fall on them. You know what? He sums up, he simplifies what their sin is.

And I just want you to see this. This is so helpful. Look at Zephaniah 1.6. Just see how he just kind of wraps it up by saying this, these people that make up the nations that God is going to gather together and pour out his indignation on, here's how he describes them.

Those who have turned back from following the Lord, who do not seek the Lord or inquire of him. You have to love the simplicity of that. Now, I think we need to stop right here and just ask ourselves, what does it mean to turn back from following the Lord? I want to give you a biblical, not a dictionary definition.

I just want to give you a biblical definition. So let's just give you some verses. Listen to this.

You remember the day when God told his people to go up into the promised land and take it. And of course the spies came out, you know what happened. And because they wouldn't go up, now God said, you can't go up.

And you know, everybody that's of a certain age, you're going to die in the wilderness. Well, then they all bemoan the fact they didn't do it. And you remember what they did? Now they decided to go up.

And this is what Moses said to them. Moses said, do not go up for the Lord is not among you, lest you be struck down before your enemies. For there the Amalekites and the Canaanites are facing you and you shall fall by the sword.

Same idea. Because you have turned back from following the Lord. The Lord will not be with you.

So when we think about this, what is going to characterize the people that aren't ready to have Christ come? They've turned back from following the Lord. What does turn back from following the Lord mean? Well, in that example, what it means is God told them to do something. God wanted them to trust him.

Just like Caleb and Joshua did. They said, you know, there may be giants in that land, but we're well able to take care of that because God is with us and God's removed their protection from them. So let's go up.

We can surely take this. And you see where their trust was. Their trust was in the Lord, and they were going to obey what the Lord wanted them to do.

And what did the Lord want them to do? Go into the promised land and take it. God is telling us to do all sorts of things. You see what happened when they turned from following the Lord? It means they didn't obey his voice.

They didn't trust him. Or there's this. You remember how God said to Samuel, I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has, here it is again, turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments.

And you remember what he did. He was supposed to go up and take out these Amalekites. And what happened? He spared Agag and he spared the animals.

He said he didn't keep God's commandments. That's the same thing that was said of the Hebrew children out there in that wilderness where they wouldn't go into the promised land. You see what it means to turn from following the Lord? It means you don't heed his voice.

Or there's this. God warned Solomon and first Kings, if you or your sons at all turn from following me, there it is right there, and do not keep my commandments and my statutes which I've set before you. So you get this idea.

What does it mean? What does it mean? What is going to really characterize the people who God destroys on judgment day? Well, you remember what Jesus said, not everybody that says to me, Lord, Lord, is going to inherit the kingdom, but those who do the will of my father. And he said, many are going to say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, we did this and that. And the other thing, I never knew you, you workers of lawlessness.

You see, they didn't keep the law. They didn't keep his commandments. They didn't heed his voice.

Somebody that can just hear God says things and then disregard that, that is going to make up the people that are going to wail in that day. Listen to how Isaiah puts it. Our transgressions are multiplied before you.

Our sins testify against us. Our transgressions, there's that word again, transgress, transgress. The idea is you've got a line and you step over it.

God has put down a standard and we step past that. We transgress. That is the word that's being used over.

Our transgressions are multiplied. Our transgressions are with us. We know our iniquities, transgressing and denying the Lord and turning back from following our God.

There it is again, turning back. What would scripture have us to believe is characteristic of turning back? And this is important. Why? Because this is what characterized the people among all these nations that are going to let out this wail in that day.

What characterized their life? And we know it. First John, if you say that you know him, but you don't keep his commandments, you're liars and the truth isn't in you. This is everywhere in scripture folks, everywhere.

Because saving faith, you know, this faith without works is dead. That's what scripture teaches us. And so there's also this, these people not only turn from following the Lord, but they do not seek the Lord or inquire of him.

Now let's just talk about those two words, seek and inquire. Very interesting. I did an extensive, exhaustive actually study on those two Hebrew words.

I looked at every place that they're found. They are absolutely synonyms. They are used so interchangeably in the old Testament and translated in all the same ways that you hardly can distinguish between the two words as far as meaning.

But you see, seek the Lord, inquire of the Lord. To inquire would be to ask, but they're synonyms. So what does, I asked this, what does the scripture have to say about seeking the Lord and about inquiring of the Lord? What is that? Because whatever it is, those who don't do it are in an extremely dangerous place.

So seek, we got an idea about seek just in an English way. It means to strive after, to search for. I'm looking for something.

Okay. First, if I'm just, if I'm just doing an honest study of these words in the old Testament, the first thing is this, the searching, the seeking is never approved of by God, unless it is done with your whole heart. Now listen to this, Deuteronomy 4, 29, you will seek the Lord, your God, and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

And then Jeremiah 29, you will seek me and find me when you seek for me with all your heart. Now, somebody could look at that and say, what, who can do anything with their whole heart? Well, I would just say this, it's not impossible. This is never set forth in scripture as an impossibility.

In fact, it's very much set forth, not only as in the realm of possibility, but something that you need to do. Not wait for God to zap you or do any other thing, but you have a responsibility to do this. Listen to this, 2 Chronicles 22, Jehoshaphat sought the Lord with all his heart.

You see, it's not just theoretical. There's actually examples of scripture where it's being done. The heart, what's the heart? The heart is the seat of emotion, feeling.

The heart is a vast word that is used to mean lots of things. It can talk about the will, the mind, the intention, determination. I would just say this, if you're going to seek something with your whole heart, I would say this, seek the Lord as though your life depended on it.

You know, that's a good way to put it. You think people actually seek something that they know their life depends on it. They're actually fully aware of it.

They're confronted by the very reality that if I don't get this thing, I'm going to die. That's a good way to think about it. And that ought to put some intensity in your emotion and your feeling behind this.

By faith, we need to be people that recognize that if, listen, in this world, if you have any hope, it is only going to be a valid hope if you seek and find this God. There's only salvation in seeking this God. You have to think about all the things that are a reality, all forgiveness, all deliverance, all help, all hope, all good, all safety.

It's found only in this God that you must seek. You remember last week I told you this. I didn't tell you exactly what king it was said of, but it was said of King Amaziah.

It said this, he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not with a whole heart. I mean, I don't want to jump out at you. You know what? Is that the banner you want written above what you do? I mean, think

about this.

Think about this. And Tim, Tim gets up in the morning and he studies his Bible, yet not with his whole heart. He communicates with people, corresponds with people by way of, you know, whatever ways people are contacting me, but not with his whole heart.

He talks to his wife, not with his whole heart. Loves his wife, not with his whole heart. He comes to the church.

He tries to minister the church, yet not with his whole heart. He leads the meeting, yet not with his whole heart. Leads the singing, not with his whole heart.

He preaches, not with his whole heart. He tries to stir up the brethren to love and good works. He seeks to equip the brethren for the work of the, yet not with his whole heart.

Is that what you want written over your life? That's how, that's how a lot of people are when it comes to the things of God, yet not with, is that the banner you want written across your effort to find this God? Yet not with your whole heart. That's, oh brethren, think with me. Every work that Hezekiah undertook in the service of the house of God, and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did it with all his heart.

And he prospered. That's the banner you want written above your life. Or how about David? David says, with my whole heart, I seek you.

Let me not wander from your commandments. Over the years, as I've read through the Bible, again and again and again, I've been struck oftentimes with just the simplicity with which God often describes the wicked. Here's the thing, when we think of wicked, or we think of evil, I know what you think of.

We think of somebody especially horrible. I mean, somebody like a devil worshiper, a child killer, a serial killer, somebody like that. Listen, I am so often struck, just reading along through my Old Testament, I'm so often impacted when Scripture just simply says, the wicked forget God, the wicked don't call upon God, the wicked don't seek God.

Kind of gives you a different definition of wicked, doesn't it? Now, so what's the one that the world likes to carry around, or maybe many of you here, brethren, listen to this. The wicked shall return to Sheol, all the nations that forget God. Forget God.

That's very similar to not seeking Him or inquiring of Him. Just forget Him. Doesn't forgetfulness seem like a small sin? The result of this forgetting is damnation.

Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers, who do not call upon the Lord. Again, call, another similar expression to not seeking, not inquiring. They don't call.

You say, that guy is evil. What does he do? Does he beat his wife? He doesn't call upon the Lord. That is how Scripture speaks.

That's how Zephaniah is speaking to us. He doesn't call upon the Lord. Do you ever watch something, maybe you watch something on TV or you watch something on the internet, and you're watching a lost person.

Maybe you're just dialoguing. Maybe it's your neighbor. You're just talking to them.

And they begin to rejoice about something, but you notice right away, they don't regard the Lord. Or they're in desperation, but there's no cry to the Lord. You ever been there where you just, you almost fill in the blank.

It's like, well, you're almost anticipating they're going to praise the Lord for that thing, or they're going to ask God to help in the midst of that thing. But I just say this, what loneliness the lost man has to not have the God of Scripture to seek. Scripture says, pour out your anger on the nations that do not know you, on the kingdoms that do not call upon your name.

Pour out your anger. Do you realize what a sin it is when people don't call upon his name? Mark this then you who forget God, lest I tear you apart and there be none to deliver. I just say this, God has no soft words when he speaks of those who just simply forget him and refuse to call upon him.

And I'll tell you this, you may reject this God who saves, you may spurn his mercy, spurn his son, the only savior today, but I guarantee the day of judgment, you'll sorely need a savior in that day of wrath. Jeremiah says, pour out your wrath on the peoples that call not on your name. This is so often in Scripture.

It just, and I love how Scripture goes the other way. It identifies the people of God. Have you ever noticed this? That when you get into the introduction right there, the opening salutation of first Corinthians, how it says this, to the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints together with all those who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't you love that? Christians are those who call upon the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how they're described. And we're going to get to this, but listen to this, Zechariah, it says this, they will call upon my name and I will answer them.

And I will say, they are my people. They will say, the Lord is my God. Who are the people that God looks at with delight and just says, they are my people.

Scripture is very plain. It's the people who call upon him. It's the people that seek him and seeking.

So let's just, what does Scripture say about this seeking? How do we seek? Well, it says, seek the Lord while he may be found. You know that verse, call upon him while he's near. What does that suggest? It suggests to me that not every day is a good day to call on the Lord.

Today is the day you want to call on the Lord because you don't know if you have tomorrow. You know, there are people that wait for a more convenient day. We have such a man in Scripture.

He thought he was going to wait for a more convenient day, but that convenient day doesn't come. The fact is you want to call upon him while he's near. Why? Because he's not always near.

That is what is definitely implied right there. You know what? And I say this to you, young people, you young people, you sit under the word of God and you may, you may feel, any of you, you feel that your conscience is troubled. You feel something.

If you're going to just sit there and say, well, I can't do anything. Why? I'm dead in trespasses and sins. And I'm just, you can't expect me to do anything.

That's not what Scripture says. Scripture says, you need to seek this God while he may be found. You need to call upon him while he's near.

And the idea is that there's a day coming when he's not going to be so near and he's not going to be found. And I'll tell you, one of those days is going to be after you die. And another one of those days is going to be after Christ comes.

And the fact is, you don't know when that day is. You don't know how much time you've got left. You don't know if there are many more days.

You don't know if there's not many more days. You don't know what's ahead of you. Nobody, nobody knows the future.

Well, we can say, do you think, do you think Christ is going to come back this evening? No, I don't think so. You know what Jesus said? In a time when you think not. Isn't that what Scripture says? You think he's going to come tonight? No, I don't think so.

I mean, I don't think so. But he said, it's in a time you think not. Now we've gone through lots of other days and he hasn't come.

So is there likelihood that he's not going to come this day? Well, we can imagine he's not going to come, but you know what? Even if he doesn't come, a lot of people end up dying. You know, Job had 10 sons, seven sons and three daughters, and they all died in a day. You say, oh, that can't happen.

The whole Christian family had all their children in a van. I believe it was in Wisconsin. Semi truck in front of them, a piece of metal came off, hit their gas tank, set that van on fire.

Mom and dad were able to get out. All of their children burned alive. You don't think that can happen.

You want to seek him while he may be found because the time has come. And you know what? There can be a time that comes when God just doesn't give you softness of conscience anymore. Like you hear the Bible and it does nothing to you.

You're just insensitive. Your conscience is dead. Your heart is hard.

And God, you think God can't give you over that? God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. You say, don't think, listen, he knows when people are exposed to the truth and yet they just go on with their life, not calling on him, not seeking him. Scripture says this in Daniel, I turned my face to the Lord God seeking him by prayer, please for mercy with fasting.

You remember how it was? David sought God when the child of Bathsheba lay sick, David fasted, went in and lay all night on the ground. Second Chronicles, you know this, very famous. If my people who are called by my name, humble themselves, pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways that I will hear.

Pray and seek my face. What I'm getting at, prayer, fasting. These are ways, I mean, it's crying out.

You don't have to be in some formal place. You can do it within. God is close to all.

God knows our thoughts, our innermost thoughts. He knows the thoughts of the heart. He knows the intents.

He can read them all. We can speak to him in any place. We can cry out to him.

How do we seek? We seek that way. You seek by prayer. You seek by please for mercy.

You can seek with fasting. The attitude, well, you saw it. If my people who are called by my name, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways.

Hosea gives us an idea about what this humbling looks like. He says, I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face. How do we want to approach him? Confessing our sin, our need for Christ, our need for that shed blood.

Not as though we've got our act together, not as though we've got a righteousness fight. No, no, no. You humble yourself.

You come, you take the low position. And you know what? You should come expectantly. You should come expecting to find what you seek when you seek it with all your heart.

Why? Because the Bible says so. You can trust God. Doesn't God say in Matthew 7, the Sermon on the Mount, the one who seeks, finds.

Brethren, listen to scripture. Ezra said, the hand of our God is for good on all who seek him. I mean, what a promise.

What a promise. What you don't want to do is just sit there and say, well, I'm waiting for God to save me. No, no, don't do that.

He says, seek him. And what scripture says is that if you seek him, the hand of God is going to be on you for good. The power of his wrath is against all who forsake him.

That's the opposite. Psalm 34, we read this on Wednesday. I sought the Lord and he answered me.

Barham says this, thus says the Lord, seek me and live. Don't seek him. You die.

Hosea, it is the time to seek the Lord that he may come and reign righteousness upon you. Or there's lamentations. The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him.

I love this. Let this grip you. God says through the prophet Isaiah, I did not say to the seed of Jacob, seek me in vain.

I love that. God says this, I'm not telling any of you to seek me in vain. When I tell you to seek me, it's not in vain.

First Chronicles, if you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever. And I'll tell you this, this is no dry exercise.

Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually. His presence.

You see what this is all about? We want to seek God. We want to find God. We want to know God.

We want to come close to God. We want salvation, but we want more than that. His presence.

You know, if we say somebody has a real presence, it's like you know when they're around. I mean, sometimes in a bad way, somebody will say, I feel a presence in that house. We know what that means.

You have an idea that somebody's there. But see, this is in a good way. You want to smell the fragrance.

You want to hear the voice. You want to behold. You want a sensation.

You want some awareness of his presence, because that's what he said. He will make himself manifest. Manifest.

That's what John 14 says. John 14 promises that. He'll make his abode with us.

It promises that he'll dwell with us. It promises he'll commune with us. It promises fellowship.

It promises manifestation. You see, God says this, if you draw close to me, that's seeking him. He says, I will draw close to you.

What does that mean? How can I tell this God who's everywhere, this God who's omnipresent according to Psalm 139, the God that knows my thoughts from afar, the God who I can't escape from, what does it mean that he draws close? It means he is going to make his presence felt. Oh, I want that. There's no dry exercise.

Psalm 40 says, May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. You see, there's a joy to be had. There's a gladness to be had.

Didn't we not read this? In that day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal for all the peoples of him shall the nations inquire. That's our word. That's our word.

The people that end up under the destruction and damnation, they don't inquire of the Lord. It says here, the nations inquire the root of Jesse and his resting place shall be glorious. You want a glorious rest and you want to seek him.

And scripture says, woe to those who don't. Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, rely on horses, trust in chariots because there are many, in horsemen because they're very strong, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel or consult the Lord. Consult.

That's our word right there. Inquire of him, consult him, ask of him, seek him. Oh, brethren, it is so common.

This is commonplace. This is why it's so commonplace that the wail of the nations is going to go up on judgment day because men don't put their confidence there. Where's your confidence? God is saying, look to me.

I can be trusted. Put your confidence there. Seek me.

If you seek me with your whole heart, you'll find me. You know, give, give no rest. Give him no rest.

He says to give him no rest. Don't give him any rest. You just keep crying.

I was telling Jill on the way in and she was telling me about just the funeral she was at and I mentioned my dad. My dad got cancer. Foxhole religion.

Yeah, it's always questionable. Many preachers, pastors over the centuries, they've recognized that when people were sick and thought they were dying, they were calling out to the Lord and then they got well again. Very few of them were ever legit.

And so when people are calling upon the Lord and then they die, we don't really know. My dad was calling on the Lord. My brother said right up to the end, my dad was emaciated, just had pancreatic cancer, just ate him up.

He had no strength left. He couldn't even talk. My brother would come in the room and he was clearly crying out to the Lord with his arms.

I mean, imagine you don't have strength left. You don't even have the ability to speak. He was moaning.

It was garbled. My brother was very affected by this. My dad had his arms raised up to heaven, calling upon the Lord right to the end.

And when my dad got cancer, he called me. He said, Tim, I'm in trouble. You know the kind of life I've lived? I said, Dad, God used this book in my life, the Gospel According to Jesus by John MacArthur.

And I shot him a copy. After he died, I went through his stuff and I found that book. It was obvious, my dog-eared pages.

My dad had read through that book probably more than once. He called me part way through. He said, Tim, I don't think God wants anything to do with me.

I'm calling upon him and nothing is happening. I said, Dad, you read that book. You know what MacArthur covered in there? He covered the parable of the prodigal son.

I said, Dad, which son was it that God saved? Was it the one who did everything right, supposedly? The one that was righteous, supposedly? Or the one that had squandered everything and gone off into that far country? I said, which one, Dad? It was like a light went on with him. And I don't know what hope it gave him, but he cried out. He cried out.

As long as he had breath, he was crying out. And whether he got saved or not, I don't know. Eternity is going to tell.

I so desire to die and find my dad is there worshipping Christ. Seek. Brethren, this is a message on judgment and it is coming.

And God says to sinful mankind, I'm your hope. If you cry out to me, if you seek me, you do that with your whole heart, you'll find me. I will be found of you.

You seek my presence. Oh, you seek me. My rest is glorious.

You will find such rest for your soul. You will find, brethren, if we find God, we find the treasure, the treasure. We find it all.

You do want to search for this. This is like the man that was seeking for the pearl of good price. He just kept looking for it until he found that thing.

You keep looking. You keep looking. There's only one thing that is worth finding in this life.

And if you don't find it, if you don't seek, that is the epitome of what wicked evil people are like. What? They just forget God. They don't call upon him.

They don't seek him. They don't seek Christ. Not that they're devil worshipers and child rapists.

No, you just don't call upon the Lord. That, that is the great insult. You see, we've got to believe that God is, and that he's a rewarder of them who seek him diligently.

Seek him with all your heart. Seek him as though your life depends on it. And God, I pray, help us, convict us, stir us.

But we don't want to be among the multitudes of the kingdoms and the tribes and the nations that are damned in the end, wanting the stones to fall. Give an earnestness in this nation once again. Give an earnestness in this nation among the young people once again.

Just feel the desperate situation that they're in. Put a longing, put an earnestness, put a fear, put the fear of God in people once again. We ask you, please be merciful.

In the name of Christ, we ask you. Amen.

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