

Passage: The Dangerous Church (Which One do You Attend)

Title: Hebrews 9:5

Summary: We have been studying how the Old Testament Tabernacle (then thereafter the Temple) was the center of the people of God. We have seen that it was where the very presence of God was among the people. However, as we look at the Tabernacle/Temple through the scriptures we see it was at times wonderfully drawing people to the Lord, and at other times leading people away by leaders misrepresenting God. Today we have the Church, a place the presence of God desires to be among His people, but some churches dangerously misrepresent Him and lead people away, while others are "dangerous" to the gates of hell because they draw people to the Lord.... Which church do you attend? Today our passage lays out God's model for His Church.

Outline: The Dangerous Church (Hebrews 9:5):

1. The Dangerous Church Leaders are Sanctified Before God
2. The Dangerous Church is Led by the Word of God Alone
3. The Dangerous Church Worships in the Beauty of Holiness.

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need

As we have studied in times past in our prophecy update, we see that one of the signs of the last days will be the weakening of the church. We read in Second Timothy chapter four, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom preach the word. Be ready in season, out of season, convince, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires. Because they have itching ears, they'll heap up for themselves teachers and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things. Endure affliction. Do the work in evangelist. Fulfill your ministry."

2 Timothy 4:1-5 (NKJV) ¹ I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

The passage speaks of the church. What looks like the church, what people will call the church, where people will go to church, so called. And so we see it will look like something, but nobody will know that it's not what it appears to be, what it should be, because such are the signs of the times of the last days.

But likewise, a sign of the last days will be the witness of the church. That there will be a power, that there will be a people who truly are tired of itching ears. They're tired of emptiness. They're tired of smoke and mirrors, things that flash for a moment then fade and they wake up again, empty, lonely questioning, wondering, especially as the world starts pinching into its last flow of its last days of the things we always discuss in our prophecy update that are available online.

And I believe there's the great witness for every one of us. And some will take it as a defeat right now and depressing, but I see it as one of the glories, because one of the things we've seen through this pandemic is such a picture that people are tired of fluff and they want something of substance. They want something of the weightiness. And that brings us to our passage today, as we talk of the glory of God that rested over that Ark of the Covenant there in the tabernacle, the Holy of Holies. That word glory in the Hebrew meant weighty things, things of substance. And the only thing that carries the weight in substance that never fades, never fails is the word of God. It's God himself as we've been studying through this book of Hebrews.

I'm reminded of days such as this close to 1,700 years ago, the story of 40 brave soldiers for Christ. And the story speaks that a world watches and there's a world who wants more, knows there's more. And then when the church, it's people stand up and show that there's something more, then there's a world. And there's a people that says, that's what I want. There's what's real. And there's what's full of substance.

- The following devotion is from the best-selling book *Extreme Devotion: Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire in A.D. 320. However, Licinius, who controlled the Eastern half of the empire, broke allegiance with the West and continued to suppress Christianity.*

When Licinius demanded that every soldier under his command sacrifice to the Roman gods, the forty Christian men of the "Thundering Legion" refused. Their general, Lysias, had them whipped, torn with hooks, and then imprisoned in chains. When they still refused to bow down and give up their worship of God, he ordered them stripped of their clothing and left in the middle of a frozen lake until they relented.

A warm bath was poured for any who would give up their convictions. The men prayed together that their number would not be broken. However, as it grew dark, one could not bear the cold any longer and ran to the warm bath.

One of the guards who had watched the forty brave soldiers sing to Christ became angry that one would give in to Lysias's orders. His anger turned to conviction, and then his conviction turned to faith. He tore off his clothes and ran out on the icy lake, fulfilling their promise to be "forty brave soldiers for Christ!"

The forty died together that day. The one who gave up his faith for a warm bath also died.

We ended in verse five, as we went through that tabernacle that Moses was told to build exactly according to how God said it was to be built. Moses was also told exactly how it was to be transported when they moved. Moses was told exactly how the priesthood was to be. From the priest to the gates to the priest offering sacrifice to the priest serving inside the holy place. And to the high priest, our picture of Jesus entering into the holy holies as we'll study more next week.

But as we went behind the veil and came to the Ark of the Covenant, we ended verse five with the cherubim overshadowing the Ark. We saw inside the Ark,

- the jar of manna to remind God provides.
- We saw Aaron's staff to be reminded that the priesthood was established by God and meant to be and carried forth in the duty as prescribed by God, the staff of Aaron.
- And then lastly, we saw the two tablets of the 10 commandments that were written against us. And we saw the glory that the mercy seat covered the law that was written against us, that condemned us and sentenced us to death by the mercy of God.

We saw the sprinkling of blood that covers and sprinkled upon the mercy seat picture of the coming sacrifice of not just the lamb of God, who would be the sacrifice, but Jesus, the lamb of God who would be the high priest and make the same offer. Amazing. But as we see and walk through the Old Testament, I'm reminded of First Chronicles 13. As we're told in verse six, it says to, "Bring up from there, the Ark of God, the Lord who dwells between the cherubim where his name is proclaimed. And we see and we've studied the Ark of the Covenant, represented the presence of God among the people. We saw over the tabernacle, the fire by night and the cloud by day. We studied through the temple that David would build exactly according to the model that was given to him. And he built and gave the blueprints to his son, Solomon, to build exactly in accordance to how God prescribed it to him. That it was the very presence of the Shikemah glory of God, where he dwelt."

1 Chronicles 13:6 (NKJV) ⁶ And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells *between* the cherubim, where *His* name is proclaimed.

And so, I see an amazing parallel for us of when David wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant up to Jerusalem and the high failing that happened as we'll see in our story today. But then we'll see the glory because of the grace of God who's always calling us even after failings to come back to him, to do it his way. Our failings always come through the same methods, the same processes of our way, and the way we think it should be. The way we want it to be. The way our emotions lead us to be. But when they go against the word of God, they become failings. And we see this ultimate failing in our study today. But when we see doing exactly as God prescribed, called, displayed, we see that life and that more abundance. We see the victory, we see the glory, the weighty things of God.

And so we see the difference and we'll see a parallelism of how God prescribed the church to be through this illustration of the Ark of the Covenant. And we'll see the parallel, the dangerous way, the dangerous church doing it their way, not in accordance to the word of God. And the dangerous church is a threat to Satan's gates of hell that shall not prevail when the church does it the way God has prescribed.

Matthew 16:18-19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

And the question has to be for those here today, for those who will read this, those who will hear it on the radio or through the podcast, wherever it may be, which church do you belong to? Because what God wants to show you, there's only one church to belong to. And he shows us three things of how that church should be and three things that we see are under tremendous and incredible attack before our very eyes that all lead up, all prepare the way and water the way for this, Second Timothy chapter four, "These dangerous churches with itching ears, heaping up for themselves men who will speak what the people want to hear, but not what the word of God speaks that they should hear."

1.) The Dangerous Church Leaders are Sanctified Before God

Verses 1-8, we see David, right motive in his heart, strong desire, presence of God, not far away out and the remoteness. He wanted to bring it in to the heart of the city, Jerusalem, a place that people would come, know, and see the presence of God. We see this seeming so well, seeming so right, who can question it? David didn't want the ark away from the people. He wanted the ark with the people. The remembrance of the presence of God and all of His past promises, all that He's done, all that He will do as we've studied last week. Reestablishing a tabernacle, reestablishing the ark, reestablishing the presence of God in the midst of the people. Who can argue such a sweet and passionate desire.

1 Chronicles 13:1-8 (NKJV) ¹ Then David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. ² And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere who are left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites who are in their cities and their commonlands, that they may gather together to us; ³ and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul." ⁴ Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. ⁵ So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim. ⁶ And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, who dwells between the cherubim, where His name is proclaimed. ⁷ So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. ⁸ Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might, with singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.

But then in verse nine, we see things changing. As we read versus 1-8, we see celebration, we see glory, we see music. Parallel passage there in 2 Samuel, we see wondrous excitement. The people are filled with emotion and excitement. But then in verse nine, we see one of the priests put their hand out and touched the ark and God would strike him dead and die right there. And the celebration, and the joy, and the excitement quenched in a moment. David crushed incredibly, but yet David still questions God, why he would do such a thing, and all the excitement and all of his zeal, and all of his wanting to bring the glory of God to Jerusalem. Why would God do such a thing? And it even says that David was angry with God.

1 Chronicles 13:9-12 (NKJV) ⁹ And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. ¹⁰ Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God. ¹¹ And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza to this day. ¹² David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?"

One of the words the Lord says, do not touch my glory. And that's what these men did. They inappropriately touched the glory of God that wasn't theirs to touch. They misrepresented it. *Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV)* ⁸ *I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.*

And then verse 13, 14, the ark is put on pause. The ark is put in a hold. It seems like we move on in the story, but we don't. Chapter 14 comes and brings us something wonderful and glorious from the very heart of God. That is, even in the midst of David's failure, as we'll see that it was. God still is blessing. In chapter 13, the house of Obed-Edom is blessed for the ark. So we can see that it wasn't the ark that was the problem. We see that there was something more about why, the problem. But as we see in chapter 14, David is still blessed. Victories are still being won, Philistines and enemies being defeated, even after such a horrific failing of this moving of the ark.

1 Chronicles 13:13-14 (NKJV) ¹³ *So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. ¹⁴ The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had.*

To which I want to say to anyone, "Look at God's grace." You know the story but here we are. As if you would, we're in the midst of the story. We know how this story ends in the glory. The ark will make it, chapter 15, to Jerusalem. It will be glorious. But chapter 13, we see horrific events. Yet chapter 14, David doesn't know chapter 15's coming. But in his chapter 14 of life, God's bringing him victories. God's defeating enemies. God's showing such grace and love to David, to which I just want to say to anyone today, "This is who He is. This is who our God is." He's going to speak to David's heart of what he did wrong and David's going to repent.

1 Chronicles 14:1-17 (NKJV) ¹ *Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house. ² So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel. ³ Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. ⁴ And these are the names of his children whom he had in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ⁵ Ibhaz, Elishua, Elpelet, ⁶ Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁷ Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet. ⁸ Now when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard of it and went out against them. ⁹ Then the Philistines went and made a raid on the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁰ And David inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?" The LORD said to him, "Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand." ¹¹ So they went up to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there. Then David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand like a breakthrough of water." Therefore they called the name of that place Baal Perazim. ¹² And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire. ¹³ Then the Philistines once again made a raid on the valley. ¹⁴ Therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. ¹⁵ And it shall be, when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." ¹⁶ So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from Gibeon as far as Gezer. ¹⁷ Then the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.*

But he doesn't crush David. He doesn't walk away from David. He doesn't leave David to be devoured by his enemies. Even though at this time, David has greatly wronged and offended his God, his Lord, and so too it is with your God and Lord. He's so patient, He's so gracious. He gives time for you to think and ponder, and He doesn't crush you. He doesn't leave you. He doesn't abandon you. And He keeps doing wonderful things in your life. And I want you to know that today and that's who He is and that you can come back to Him. Because we've been studying for weeks past now, the calling for you prodigals to come home. Maybe you mishandled the way of the Lord. Maybe you disobeyed the things of God and you've made a mess, but He still says, "Come," and He still welcomes you back. He still wants to bring you into the place of the presence of God, the Lord Most High. And I say high so that you can see Him lifted up and His glory and His heart for you.

But let the word be spoken. David's chapter 14 was because a chapter 15 was to follow and I don't ever want anyone to think that unrepented habitual sin before the holy God, is something that He winks at and something that He just glosses over. And so we have one of the beginnings of our pieces today of the dangerous churches that will teach such things, that will say such things to appease man, because they don't want to offend man with speaking the words of holiness, God's holiness and God's righteousness, and God's demand. The man comes before God robed in righteousness.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 (NKJV) ⁹ *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*

So chapter 15, we see David. His heart is moved. He has confidence now to move the ark again, because what we're going to see is David's going to go back and seek the Lord on how God prescribed it to be moved, and prescribed it to be touched, the way it was to be handled. Let's read versus 1-13, and there in verse 13, he says, "For, because you did not do it the first time the Lord our God broke out against us because we did not consult Him about the proper order." There's a way that God has established for His church, His presence, that's the church. It's the presence of the living God to be handled, to be ministered, to be represented.

1 Chronicles 15:1-13 (NKJV) ¹ David built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it. ² Then David said, "No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites, for the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before Him forever." ³ And David gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. ⁴ Then David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites: ⁵ of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and one hundred and twenty of his brethren; ⁶ of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and two hundred and twenty of his brethren; ⁷ of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and one hundred and thirty of his brethren; ⁸ of the sons of Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and two hundred of his brethren; ⁹ of the sons of Hebron, Eliel the chief, and eighty of his brethren; ¹⁰ of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and one hundred and twelve of his brethren. ¹¹ And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. ¹² He said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it." ¹³ For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order."

And first, foremost we start with, look at verses 12-14 and see the requirement that God has for His church where His presence will dwell. And that He calls leaders to be sanctified. That's from the senior pastor to the associate pastors, to the elders, to all people that handle the things of God, The Ark of the Covenant if you would, a thing of God. And anyone who is to touch the things of God, to bring before the people whether it's to children's church, the door greeters, the ushers, any ministry that touches on the glory of God, this is how they're to be handled by people who sanctify and set themselves apart for God. And David says to the priest, "You did not sanctify yourself. You did not set yourself apart. You were first layer of issue and problem because you were not sanctified. You didn't do it the way God called it to be done."

1 Chronicles 15:12-14 (NKJV) ¹² He said to them, "You are the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the place I have prepared for it." ¹³ For because you did not do it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him about the proper order." ¹⁴ So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

And there is that place as they were called the priesthood, how they were to bathe, what they were supposed to wear. When certain things in life happen, touching dead bodies and transmissions of bodily fluids, whatever it may be that Moses was told they were not sanctified. They had to cleanse themselves and set themselves apart. And that's what we studied last week. When we came into the tabernacle, came into the courtyard, there was the bronze laver filled with water. And it was for the priest to cleanse themselves, to wash themselves, which we saw with the Word, before they went in and served inside the holy place. These priests did not sanctify themselves, nor did they follow the proper order of who was to handle the things of God. And so the first thing we see, God has a calling for the sanctification. The setting apart is what it means of those who touch the things of God and represent Him.

Boy, what a day, what a time. And it doesn't matter when anyone hears this message. If you're listening to it here in 2022, or if you listen to it in 2023 or 24, 25, you don't need to know exactly what happened this week because I will tell you. What happened this week will continually be happening because it's a continual happening of moral failure by men who represent or to be the leaders who handle the things of God to lead people into the presence of God, who fall and fail miserably because of greed, of lust, of personal sin that they wink at. They think they can get away with. The only hope I have for them is that they were busted and that they will know God will not be mocked and He will not let people who represent Him continue to misrepresent Him, that He will out them and reveal them.

This week in the news, the bomb shell explosive reporting of men in high leadership under not just tens, not just hundreds, under leadership of tens of thousands, yet all the while living a lie of sexual misconduct, spiritual abuse of people. Thinking they would get away with it, twisting the scriptures, turning the victim into the guilty, abusing them and making it worse, even more so the abuse, making them have to live in their shame and their pain.

I've seen it. One of the largest church denominations, associations, it's week, after week, after week it seems, their leaders being called out and proven out of a misconduct, mishandling of funds, sexual abuse, adultery, fornication, drunkenness. Yet God was not mocked. As He says, "Be sure your sin will find you out." And I pray that they were truly born again. And this is God's busting moment on them that they'll have a chapter 15 moment and come back to the Word. But if not that they'll see that there's a danger of an unrepentant habitual lifestyle. Do not be deceived. God says will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

But first and foremost, we see first layer and that is the dangerous church is the church where the leaders are not sanctified and set apart. As they mislead people saying, "It's okay, follow me. Do what I do. Let us live in our Christian liberties. We can do all these things because God forgives. It's not legalism. It's freedom." All the while, misrepresenting people. I think of all those on watchers as David and this priest who had brought this ark the first time in properly according to the Word of God, and then not by sanctified men. And when God struck His judgment, the people had to sit and wonder, "Is God angry at us? Who can come before God? Our leaders can't bring us to God and who shall?" What kind of fear did they live in? What type of worry and torment. Who would come and find that they could come to the priesthood and ask, "How do I find God? How do I come into His presence?" When they saw that the leaders themselves were shunned and rejected by God. And so we see that today in so many churches.

But all the dangerous church, that storms, the gates of hell, are the ones where the sanctified leadership, living, set apart for God, for His glory, washed in the Word, cleansed, repentant, robed in righteousness who comes humbly before the throne of grace, who speaks God's Word because they've experienced, they believe it. Not a hypocrisy, but a demonstration of the power of God and life. And it's a twofold place, God's call and man's response. God's not going to force holiness, but the wise man, the wise woman here today is the one who seeks it. The sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled." You bring the hunger, God will bring the table, the buffet, the banquet. That He'll fill you. The hunger, the thirst, He'll fill you with His righteousness, right standing with God and right ways. Right working, right dealing, right doing, of all that God calls.

[Matthew 5:6 \(NKJV\)](#) ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

2.) The Dangerous Church is Led by the Word of God Alone

And then verse 15, the dangerous church that's led by sanctified leaders and led by the sanctified, set apart, Word of God, that's uncommon to anything this world has beyond the wisdom of the world. As David went back and searched the scriptures and found out the way he did it was just filled with emotion. And the way he did it was just filled with contrast to the way God said it was to be, that the Levites would carry the ark on poles, on their shoulders, and not on carts, not on big wheels, but humbly, lowly, simply carrying.

[1 Chronicles 15:15 \(NKJV\)](#) ¹⁵ And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

I think we see that as one of the problems of churches today. I like what one pastor, I remember saying about this passage. He goes, "What are some of the church boards today? Nothing but a bunch of boards on big wheels or big wheels on boards." As he speaks so many churches, they go and they find men, women, people, successful in the world. Madison Avenue marketing experts, those with big pockets and influence because of the position they hold in the workplace or the community. They become board members because they're good with business. And so begins the problem that everything's run like a business, everything's moved in a way that, "How do we get people to do what we want them to do, buy what we want them to buy, apply what we want them to apply?"

[1 Chronicles 13:7 \(NKJV\)](#) ⁷ So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart.

And all the while, not humility, humbly seeking the Word of God, His way, His Word, according to what He has prescribed. Instead, it becomes a business model, a marketing venture, and those things work. But there's something that has to be done to keep them moving. And that is you can't go deep in the Word of God, because the Word of God at some point will reveal itself and show what's been done wrong and then they have to face, "What do we do now?"

I'm reminded of the story of two mountain climbers who spent hours climbing a mountain. When they reached the top, they realized they climbed a different mountain than the one they had intended to climb. Somehow, they had gotten mixed up and realized too late they were standing on top of the wrong mountain.

It makes me think, it reminds me, are we climbing the right mountain? Will we be very disappointed, at the end of our lives or the end of our ministries when we reach the summit, that all the way we had gone the wrong way, and then all the way we thought we were progressing, all the way we thought we were accomplishing and achieving something?

I'm reminded of the story speaking of the word of God. I had come back from Bible college. God had given me specific directions to head east, young man, and go tell your family on the East Coast where I'm from, what great things the Lord has done. Speaking to me, there was enough ministers of the gospel in the West Coast. Time to start planning and plowing, preparing for the move of God on the East Coast, through the teaching of God's word chapter by chapter, verse by verse, the light of the word illuminating the heart of God, where there is no shadows. There is no variances.

So as I was in my season of brokenness, as God would break me of a story for another time that I've told before, that there's a place that I knew that I would go often. It was on the water's edge of a little backwood stream there in the tropics of Florida, to which I went simply with my Bible and water. And I was just going to sit and read my word, ask the Lord to speak to me his heart, give me leading and guiding, time set apart of just fasting and prayer and the word and worship.

So shortly into my time, as I'm sitting somewhat under a tree for shade right there, along the waterway, I felt this a feeling upon me that I was being watched and stared at. And you know that feeling when you know that feeling. And so as I sat there and the feeling came upon me, I turned my head ever so slightly to my right. And literally six inches from my face was a six foot snake, black snake that was hanging itself out of the tree limb, almost suspended like only the last foot or so of its tail, holding it to the branch. And it was like the snake came alongside me and was looking down at the very same word that I was reading. It was almost to me surreal. Is this really happening right now?

And although not part of the application of the story, I want to let you know that Peter, the apostle Peter was not the only person, man that ever walked on water. As I lifted out of that chair and walked on water and we'll leave out the part with the little shriek, like a girl.

But it was as if the devil was saying to me, like he said to Eve in the garden, you don't really believe that word, do you? To which I would say, "I do, every last piece of the word and it will be the lamp unto my feet. It will guide me on the paths of righteousness. It will lead me in the ways of the Lord. It will lead me to the Lord and it will lead me with the Lord as he so desires to take me and use me for whatever his purposes may be, so that he may bring the glory from heaven down to earth to give people something of weight and substance."

And this little side note has nothing to do with anything other than the testimony of I hate snakes. When I was in college, I needed a place to stay in between semesters and I stayed with a couple guys I had met in class and the one guy had a little snake called Monty. Yeah, Monty Python. Thing had to be six inches thick and 10 feet long, but it was in an aquarium. At least, it was supposed to be in an aquarium. Until one night, I was sleeping in my bed in a hot Florida summer and we couldn't afford air conditioning as college students. So I had the window open and Monty got out of his aquarium, sniffed fresh air through that window and was making his break to be free, little did I know.

But as I woke up and I reached to the back of my head with both my hands to grab my pillow, to adjust it for better comfort, instead of grabbing a handful of pillow, I grabbed two hand full of six inch Monty Python, to which I just want to share with you that Enoch wasn't the only one who was lifted up from the earth, nor was Elijah, as I elevated off of that bed. And somehow in one leap, I made 10 feet across the

room to the other side, to hit the lights to see what I thought I had felt, six inches of 10 foot of Monty Python.

So back to our point, we have to know what mountain we're climbing. And we have to know who's leading us. We have to go the way He calls us to go. And in these last days, it's going to get harder and harder, because a lot of people, they're going to want to go along with the world. They're not going to want to stand up against the cultural hot topics. They're not going to want to go up against what the government is saying. They'll go along just to comply, because they want to just stay comfortable.

And here's why I fault these priests. I can't say, "Well, you guys were just following what David said to do." He was the king, he was the political governing authority. But these priests, it was their responsibility to know what the Word of God said on how to handle this Ark and how to carry this Ark. And they didn't go seek it. They went and they just did what David, their king, the governing authority told them to do. So, the place for us, yes, obey the governing authority when it comes in terms of paying taxes. It is what it is. Sometimes you get what you voted for.

Obedying the laws of fire exits and speed limits, because sometimes those things are just good for the safety and wellbeing of all of the people. But when it comes to the things of the Lord, when it comes to the things of the spirit, there's a Word of God that is not to yield to any governing authority, and not to be told how to run the church and how to handle the things of God. The things of God and how they're to be handled are done by one way and one way only by sanctified men and leaders, men and women, who then lead by accordance to the Word of God. If this is how God says to do it and this is how we're going to do it. And no man is going to quench that.

3.) The Dangerous Church Worship in the Beauty of Holiness.

And our third point, as we see when the leaders led, sanctified, set apart, according to being led by the Word of God and what it said and how it was to be, we see success. We see the movement of the things of God, and we see the Ark making its way to Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 15:16-28 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy. ¹⁷ So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of their brethren, the sons of Merari, Ethan the son of Kushaiah; ¹⁸ and with them their brethren of the second *rank*: Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers; ¹⁹ the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were* to sound the cymbals of bronze; ²⁰ Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with strings according to Alamoth; ²¹ Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to direct with harps on the Sheminith; ²² Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor *in charge of* the music, because he was skillful; ²³ Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark; ²⁴ Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, *were* to blow the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-Edom and Jehiah, doorkeepers for the ark. ²⁵ So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom with joy. ²⁶ And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. ²⁷ David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master *with* the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. ²⁸ Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.

But my third point is, and as we see the worship was worshiping the Lord, the worship was giving God glory, the worship was in a reverence to God, the worship was in response to the Word of God. And all that we saw ... Verse 29, "Give to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

1 Chronicles 16:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name; Bring an offering, and come before Him. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!

And we see in this passage that the first worship service, and this is so relevant and pertinent for today, the first worship service that they did, did it look any different than this one? No. But what I want to say to you, it was a light show, and it was emotional, and everybody was just doing what was filled with emotion. But the difference with this worship service is the people had come apart, set apart. They came for the glory of God, to bring God glory. It wasn't about their emotions. It was about bringing the glory in honor due Him.

They worshiped in the beauty of holiness set apart. And we can never, as a church, worship in the beauty of holiness, apart from being set apart in holiness. A life that's set apart, saying, "It's not gonna be about my emotions, it's not gonna be about my desire. I'm gonna feel good, I'm gonna leave and I'm gonna go out and drink some beers and do some shooters, and sleep around," and whatever else may be. Overlooked for hurting the poor, walk past the widows and the orphans."

No. This worship service was different because the people came with a different heart this time, and that's what God calls for the worship in the church. Leaders that are set apart and sanctified, led by the Word, according to God's calling, and a worship service that's based on hearts that are set apart wholly onto the Lord.

Lights and music, pure emotion. And as we have said, Jesus and worldliness does not equal holiness. But what we know is holiness, reverence of the holy God, releases the spirit of God. And in his presence, his fullness of joy as we come into his presence and the spirit is released, John chapter four, Jesus said there will come a time when man will not worship on this mountain, which wasn't the place to worship, but they will worship God in spirit. And in truth worship should be spiritual, not emotional. And when it's spiritual down in the beauty of holiness, it will release the presence. It will move the presence of God amongst us.

John 4:19–24 (NKJV) ¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. ²⁰ Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." ²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. ²² You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. ²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Conclusion

How can I summarize all of this? It's how we summarize our church and its foundation, which we blade when we stay stuck to Acts 2:42 and Zachariah 4:6. We don't move off of those things.

Acts 2:42 (NKJV) ⁴² And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Zachariah 4:6 (NKJV) ⁶ So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

But let me give you a calling. Hebrews 10:25. That's why we do our prophecy update. That's why we do communion, to remind us that He's coming back. And He says, "And while we wait, don't forsake the assembling of the brethren." But where do you assemble as brethren? Where leaders are sanctified, where the church is led by the Word, and that they worship in the beauty of holiness, not emotions and light shows.

Hebrews 10:24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

In verse 29, we read of David's wife and she despised him because he was dancing before the Lord. And you know what? Just accept that people, there will always be despisers when you come in and worship the Lord in spirit and truth.

1 Chronicles 15:29 (NKJV) ²⁹ And it happened, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.

Remember, even though we know 2 Timothy 4 will be fulfilled. So too will be fulfilled that, "If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men to Myself." In any church that will lift up Jesus in spirit and truth, We'll draw men in the last days, and will be a church that is the church that's taken up in the glory and hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," because there's a people, they're tired of fluff, they're tired of emptiness, they want to see the glory of God, but they don't know that it exists, because so much that they've seen has been so misrepresented. But when you live it, they'll see it. And when they walk into a church that is those that are hunger and thirst for righteousness, they shall be filled. Regardless of what the world throws at them, they'll join that song, 40 Brave Soldiers for Christ.

John 12:32 (NKJV) ³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."

2 Timothy 4:1–5 (NKJV) ¹ I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ² Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. ⁵ But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Outline: The Dangerous Church (Hebrews 9:5):

1. The Dangerous Church Leaders are Sanctified Before God
2. The Dangerous Church is Led by the Word of God Alone
3. The Dangerous Church Worships in the Beauty of Holiness.

Prayer

The Word of God is Living and Powerful, and is ready, and will do a mighty work in our lives.

Hebrews 4:12 (NKJV) ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

In Every Study

- Who Is God? (How Great is He?)
- What Does He Think of Me? (How Wonderful Are His Thoughts Towards Me?)
- What Does He Want Me to Do?
- What Can I Boldly Request of Him?
- What Do I Need to Be on Guard of When I Leave Here Today?

Boldly come to the throne of grace, ask God to reveal Himself in a mighty way to you, and to do I might work in you, and through you.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need