

ENCOUNTERING GOD SERVICE - MIKE BICKLE

Three Areas of Prayer Focus for Our 40 Day Fast in 2021

Rev. 3, Ps. 2, and Isa. 19

3/5/21

Mike Bickle

I am going to share for a few minutes and give a recap of what I shared last week because I am jealous for the family conversation, for all of us to be in the same family conversations. And so, I am going to give this recap probably four or five more times in the next two months. I will give it briefly and cover the same material. After I am done sharing, then Isaac is going to come up and share a dream that we feel is relevant for this hour. Then we are going to have two or three come up and share some of the things that they shared Wednesday where about five thousand of our body here participated in the Wednesday Zoom Call. There was a tremendous response, and so we are going to recap some of that because I want us to hear it as well, and then we will have a little ministry time after that.

First of all, I want to remind you clearly that the main thing we are praying for is: we are contending for a historic outpouring of the Holy Spirit across our nation and, of course, the nations of the earth. That is the big theme. As a matter of fact, for every fasting and prayer time that is the actual big theme. I do not know if anything would ever be more important than that because a historic outpouring of the Holy Spirit will energize all the other facets of the kingdom. We are believing God with thousands in our nation for a third great awakening: a historic outpouring of the Spirit and a third great awakening.

The gospel has been preached in America for four hundred years, but there has only been two times that are considered as great awakenings. One of them was in the middle of the 1700s, called the First Great Awakening, and you will know some of the names: Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, George Whitfield. The First Great Awakening swept across the east coast in an incredibly powerful and historic way. Then about a hundred years later in the middle of the 1800s, there was what is called the Second Great Awakening. Guys like Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, those would be some names that some of you would be familiar with. Since then, there have been seasons of revival in geographic areas. There were temporary, important, seasons of renewal and revival temporary and mostly local, sometimes touching several hundred thousand people like in Toronto and in Pensacola, several million actually. It would not be of the same stature of a third great awakening, and so we are still believing for that in terms of impact.

So we are praying for a historic outpouring of the Spirit from Joel 2. Now the key word in Joel 2—I mean there is the fasting and prayer earlier in the chapter, but—he says, “And afterwards God will pour out His Spirit.” We pray this prayer all the time from Joel 2 or Acts 2 because Acts 2:17 quotes Joel 2. Here is the key word, “that all of your sons and daughters will prophesy” and we can just run over that and miss it. Beloved, a day is coming when every single born again believer will operate in the Spirit with dreams and visions, every single born-again believer: male, female, young, old, Jew, Gentile, all of the sons and daughters who call on the name of the Lord. I am talking about a billion. The closer we get to that day which will culminate with the coming of the Lord, the closer we get to that day, the larger the number and the greater the scope of dreams and visions being released.

Every time we have a corporate prayer and fasting, we are always leaning into that because we are getting closer to the Day, and so there are more and more who are getting touched. We want this spiritual family, all of

us and across America, we want dreams, visions, the power of the Spirit, words of knowledge, and the activity of the Spirit, so that is major theme number one. That is the major theme of every prayer and fasting time, really.

We have three sub-themes. "Sub-themes" is a dumb way to say it because they are very important, but they are under this major one. The verses that we are using which I used last Friday, and Sunday, and we will say them over and over, are Revelation 3, Psalm 2, and Isaiah 19. The point of this recap is for all of us to become familiar with those three passages. I am going to give you a minute on each one of them. Again, I will probably do this every week for a while. Remember the point is we want all of us in the family conversation together, regardless of what measure of fasting or how much you are in the prayer room. We are in this thing together. It is more than us; it is for our city, and it is for our nation with all the others that are joining into these 40-day fasts or whatever number. There is a lot of this going on in America right now, and this is good. This is good.

Let's put Matthew 24 up on the screens. The context and backdrop to all this which is what we are assuming is the passage I looked at in Matthew 24. I am not going to go through it, but I want you to be familiar with it, and most of you get the Matthew 24 reference. It is this list of pressures that are growing, and they are called birth pains. Some translations of Matthew 24:8 call them birth pangs; most translations call them birth pains. The New King James the version I use call them the beginning of sorrows. Here is the point. These birth pains are going to intensify and get stronger and stronger, more intense, and the reprieve between the contractions is going to get shorter. The point being, we are in a time of history that I am calling the most dramatic, transitional decade in human history, the 2020s. I believe this ten-year period, give or take a few years, we will look back over and see the earth transitioned in a very dramatic way in this decade. The birth pangs are in the backdrop; I mean it is in the conversation. There is a list of pressures—I am not going to go through them—but my point is the pressures are going to intensify; they are not going to disappear.

So the analogy that I have used is that we are swimming against a one-mile-an-hour current right now. With the pressures in the culture and persecution, it is a one-mile-an-hour current. The body of Christ is in a strategic training season, not just in Kansas City, not just us; I am talking about the body of Christ in America. I am talking about the Body of Christ in the earth. We are swimming against the one-mile-an-hour current and it takes effort, but we cannot sit out this training season because the next round is going to be two-miles-an-hour. It is not going back to zero. It is going to go to two-miles-an-hour, using the analogy, then three, then four, then five. So this is not a time to sit it out. This is the time to do the spiritual muscle development, the spiritual push-ups. I am not going to go through that again. I mentioned that Friday and Sunday, but I want you to know that there are global birth pangs.

There is a difference between the birth pangs throughout history in local areas where there has been crisis in nations and the global birth pangs or birth pains that affect the conversation in the earth. Everyone in the earth is talking about the Covid and financial issues. The global birth pangs not only affect the global conversation, they change the global economics as well and dramatically affect global legislation, the policies and laws that governments make. They are affected in those birth pangs. They are not just local; they are global, and the whole earth is listening to them, but those birth pangs are going to intensify. That is the context, the backdrop of these three sub-themes we are looking at. The pressures are increasing. We have to go for it together. We have to go for it together.

Pressure number one: I am going to give the three sub-themes or the three under the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. When we say it fast, we say, "Revelation 3." What I mean by Revelation 3 is that it is really about two or

three verses here, though it is the whole chapter of course. We understand the sub-theme to be the Laodicean church. Jesus says in verse 16, He looks at them and says, "You are lukewarm, and here is the crisis. You do not know that you are spiritually wretched." They were content with their spirituality, but Jesus in His kindness says, "You do not know you are spiritually miserable. You are bored with Me. You are bored in the Word, and you do not have a vibrant spirit." He is not actually angry with them, for He says in the passage later, "I am saying this because I love you with tender love."

Here is the glorious news, verse 18, and we are all focused on this. He says, "Buy gold from Me." Now He says more than that, but I want to make this very brief. And so this first sub-theme is that the Lord would rescue the body of Christ—us, and the body of Christ in America—from the Laodicean spirit of compromise and the Laodicean spirit of dullness.

So major theme number one: a historic outpouring of the Spirit. Sub-theme number one is to be rescued from the spirit of compromise and not just rescued from our terrible condition, but we enter into the gold, we begin to get gold. I talked a bit about that last week, and we are going to keep talking about that. I want it in everyone's mind. It is the gold that He is offering that Laodicean generation. That is good news because the Laodicean church, as I said last week, has the worst and most negative description of the seven churches in the book of Revelation. There are seven churches that are identified by Jesus in Revelation 2 and 3. The Laodiceans have the most negative description, but they have the most glorious promises. He says, "I am going to give you gold. If you will rise up, and I will help you rise up, I will give you gold." We will talk more about that later.

The second sub-theme—so the first one is rescue from the Laodicean compromise and dullness—the second one is Psalm 2. We say, "Revelation 3, Psalm 2, and Isaiah 19." Psalm 2 has a lot of dimensions, but here is the part we are talking about, and really it is verses 2 and 3: verse 2 the government, the heads of state and the rulers, the leaders in the culture, the media, economic leaders, academic leaders and the military leaders. The rulers in the culture and the heads of state are working together—verse 3—to drive the Word of God out of the culture. Now, it doesn't say in verse three, the Word of God. However, I want you to get the language. I do not want you to miss Psalm 2, this is a really important passage in the Body of Christ right now. They are describing the Word of God in one of the most horrible ways they could describe the Word of God. They describe the Word of God as "bondage." So the kings of the earth say, "We are going to break God's bondage off of us," which means the Word of God. Those biblical values are old fashioned, archaic, and out-of-date values. Drive it out of the culture, out of the public square, out of the academics. Drive it out of everywhere and penalize the people who want those values.

So the sub-theme number two is that we would be strengthened to stand up in the Psalm 2 crisis. The Psalm 2 crisis is persecution with the legal system backing it up. That is what the heads of state are about, the kings and rulers. They are using the legal system with financial penalties to penalize people who say the Word of God is not bondage but is actually liberty. We have seen in the last ten weeks, and the last two or three years, an escalation of this. It is really going to increase beyond what it is now. So that is the sub-theme number two.

First is to rescue us from the Laodicean compromise, second that we would be strengthened so we do not waver because we know this pressure is going to intensify against us. We are girded, standing together. We are vibrant in our spirit, and the Holy Spirit is able to make us stand. The weakest among us will be able to stand if we do it together.

Then the third and final sub-theme is Isaiah 19. Now this is the most unusual one, and I would understand many would ask, "Isaiah 19? We hear you talking about it, but what is Isaiah 19 about?" Well, in one sentence—which I will not break down right now, though we will in the weeks to come—is Isaiah 19:24. Now, when you read it, you think, "Okay, so?"

Look at it verse 24: "In that day." That is when the Lord returns, in that generation. "Israel will be one of three nations," and the idea is that they will be in profound unity together. You say, "Okay, Israel is going to be in unity," but look who they are in unity with! Their most long-term hostile enemies in the Middle East, with believers who converted out of Islamic nations in the Middle East. Egypt, Israel's most hostile enemy is Egypt. In the great end-time revival Jews are going to get saved, Egyptians are going to get saved powerfully and born again, as will those in Assyria.

Now today there is no Assyria. Assyria was the superpower of that day. It was one of the most known empires in history in terms of the Middle East. This was in Isaiah's day, and everybody knew Assyria. I mean it was the superpower. It represents about ten Middle East nations today; the territory of ancient Assyria is Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, etc. It is those nations, about ten or twelve of them. I do not want to go into that right now.

Here is the point. In the Middle East the epicenter of the glory of God is going to be converted Muslims who love Jesus, and they will be bringing the revelation of the God of Israel to unsaved Jews and standing with them even unto death in a time of intense persecution. What is going to happen in the Middle East is that it will be the "John 17 'one as I and the Father are one.'" The epicenter of that will be right there in the Middle East, right there with those ten or twelve Islamic nations—believers, many of them are not saved yet but a great revival is coming. These believers are going to be so lovesick for Jesus that they are going to stand for Israel when Israel will be in flight with persecution, unsaved Jews fleeing out of Israel into the Middle East. They will be fleeing Israel into the Islamic nations. I mean, that is not good. Amos talked about this in Amos 5, "They will run from the lion and run into the bear."

They will be fleeing from the kings of the earth that are coming to or who are in Jerusalem to destroy them. However, they will be running to Islamic nations! To the shock of their lives, as God told King David, the Lord is going to spread a table in the presence of their enemies. God is going to have a preemptive strike, a massive revival in the Middle East resulting in these ex-Muslims, lovesick for Jesus, revealing the God of Israel to Israel. Israel will be so overwhelmed by it that God will join them together, and that is the epicenter of the John 17, the glory of the unified family.

That unified family is going to be across the whole earth, but that is the global epicenter because the family of Abraham—Abraham and his sons Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau—are all going to be healed in a global setting in front of the whole earth in the Middle East. They are going to bring the revelation of the God of Israel to Israel. Abraham's family is going to be healed and become, it says, "a blessing in the midst of the land." In most translations the Hebrew word in the Old Testament for "land" is interchangeable with "earth." The Hebrew word is used many, many times, and they translate it a blessing in the earth or in the land. Every translator picks one or the other, but most translations say, "a blessing in the earth."

What I believe that is going to be is that the restoration of the original Garden of Eden is going to take place in the midst of those Middle East nations, in Israel, big storyline. Why do we care about this? This will be far more

hostile than even the Psalm-2 persecution. Let's look at Joel 3. You have heard this verse before, but maybe you have not understood its context. Joel 3:14 says, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord—the second coming of Jesus—"is near in the valley of decision." Then it goes on: "The sun and the moon grow dark;" it is clearly an end-time, Jesus-returning passage. Here is the point: "The multitudes" are not just the Middle East; it will be the entire globe in "the valley of decision." The way globalization, the economics, the mark of the Beast, and the Antichrist systems will become, they will be hostile. The Antichrist Empire, the Global Empire, against Israel. The Antichrist and Satan's desire is to exterminate the Jewish people, but God's answer is that the Body of Christ will rise up and stand with Israel even like Corrie Ten Boom and her family did in the Nazi occupation and attack in the 1940s. Gentiles across the whole earth who love Jesus are going to stand up for Israel and for God's purpose for Israel. This is going to be the valley of decision for the earth.

Today that passage is not bothering us, but this decision to stand up for Israel is going to find its way into every single little village and 7-eleven store out in the islands because nobody will be able to buy, purchase, and use economics. They will not be able to engage with any of the systems in the world of globalization if they stand for Israel. So there will be huge persecution of the Gentiles who stand for Israel, and God is going to cause Israel to be provoked to jealousy because hundreds of millions of Gentiles are not going to forsake Israel like so many did in the Holocaust. They are going to stand with Israel because the One they love is Jesus, and He is the resurrection. They will say, "We are fearless of death! We love Him, and we love you because He loves you!"

Israel is going to say, "What are you talking about?"

This valley of decision will affect every neighborhood on the planet. Multitudes, multitudes will have to decide. Right now it is not that intense, but that is the five-mile-an-hour current coming down the road. This will be the most intense issue of all. Lou Engle and the 40-Day Fast are locking into that one right now. So we are standing for Israel and praying for Israel's salvation. A lot of Gentiles in America and the West are saying, "We do not really get the Israel thing," but there is much in the Bible about it. We will unpack it little by little in the days to come. This Israel thing is really important, and it will affect your children and your grandchildren in a very dramatic and personal way. Therefore, this is not an issue to think that it will take care of itself, because if we do not have instruction in the Word of God and our spirits are not bolstered and strong in this, we will cave in. Many will fall away from the Lord on this issue of standing with Israel.

So, the big theme is an historic outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a Third Great Awakening, all the sons and daughters prophesying! That is what we are going for, our sons and daughters and our families being touched. The context is the beginning of sorrows. The birth pangs are increasing. The one-mile-an-hour current is going to go to two, and then it is going to go to three. It is not going back to zero, as it is going the other way. We are in a transitional decade. The earth is going to be radically different in this decade and after it.

Sub-theme number **one**: rescue us from the spirit of compromise, the Laodicean compromise. Number **two**: strengthen us to stand bold with a vibrant spirit before the persecution of our government standing against people who stand for Jesus. Number **three** is not such a big deal yet in America, but it is growing, and it is going to be growing fast: antisemitism. The Body of Christ's mandate from the Scripture is to stand with Israel because God is going to reveal the God of Israel to Israel through the Gentiles who will love them even unto death. The unsaved Jews will be saying, "Why are you doing this?" It is because your Messiah Jesus of Nazareth is the resurrection, and He is filled with love and life, and He loves you. He is coming after you

because He loves you. Israel will get saved in that context. Moreover, it is going to be a global drama. Many believers are not aware of this, so they do not think much about it. However, we will not stand if we are not strongly rooted and grounded in the Word with a vibrant spirit.

The final point: I have John 14 as “the gold” when Jesus says “Get gold from Me” I am calling the gold: the five chapters of John 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. It is five chapters of the deepest and the most powerful truths and promises that Jesus ever taught. It is called the “Upper Room Discourse” because they were in the Upper Room having the Last Supper. You all know the Last Supper and the Upper Room. That is why they call it the Upper Room Discourse, those five chapters.

It starts off here in John 14. Look at this: He said, “Do not be troubled; do not let fear and offense overtake your heart.” And the exhortation He gives—I am not going to develop this but just wanted to point it out because we are going to develop this a lot in the days to come—He said, “You believe in God; believe also in Me.” Now if you read the very first verse of those four chapters of teaching—because John 13 is the meal and then John 14, 15, 16 and 17 are the teaching—He starts off with, “Believe in Me.” He is not telling the apostles they need to be born again. That is not what He is saying, like “Hey, consider inviting Me into your heart.” That is not what He is saying. When He says, “Believe in Me,” He is saying “Believe in My narrative. Believe in the storyline that I am the Author of that which the prophets have given for that generation and believe in My leadership.”

For the next four chapters He tells us how we can interact with Him in a way so that we can have a vibrant spirit and that we can believe in His narrative and in His leadership, that we understand it and we are going to interact with God. Here is the most amazing thing in these five chapters: Jesus gives insight into how God relates to God! What? How the Father, the Son and the Spirit interact with each other? However, He goes beyond that and says, “And the way that the Father, the Spirit and I interact, we are going to invite you into that interaction with Us.” That is going to give you the power to overcome in the face of pressure, martyrdom, temptation, and betrayal. That is how you will overcome fear because you—the global Body of Christ—are going to enter into that interaction. These five chapters are the gold, and we are going to be focused on these five chapters until the end. I mean, within the Body of Christ everybody likes those chapters, but almost no one does anything with them. You know, almost. However, those five chapters are going to be mainstream in the global conversation more and more as we get closer to the coming of the Lord.

*So that is it in a nutshell of what we are looking at, and this is a recap. One major purpose is the historic outpouring of the Spirit, the Third Great Awakening. The context is that birth pangs are getting worse, stronger, and stronger; the currents are getting more intense. **Revelation 3**, we have to overcome, but must be rescued from the spirit of compromise first. **Psalms 2**, we have to be bolstered in strength to stand before the government persecution. Then number three, **Isaiah 19**. We are going to be a part of that story, though the intensity of it will be in the Middle East, yet it will be a global story where we are standing for Israel with a vibrant spirit fearless even unto death. So that is the three sub-themes under the big theme of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Amen! Now I said all of that last week and I am going to say all of it again next week just so you know.*