

The Holy and the Profane

For the Archive Part 2

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A profane spirit continues from injury to insult. In fact, **insult is the most characteristic mark of a profane spirit.** Verse 12: “Neither shouldst thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldst thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress.” Those words, “spoken proudly,” literally mean “made the mouth large with laughter.”

Go back in memory with me to the days of Samson’s demise and the great sport that the Philistines made of him, gathering together in that great arena. “Bring in Samson; we have nothing better to do.” Samson was brought in with blind eyes, made to stagger around aimlessly in front of the crowd, as the jeering laughter pierced his guilty soul. He had sold his birthright. “He is the man of God! Will you take a look at him now? Ha-ha! Look at the power! Hey, Samson, do something mighty!”

Not until that day when Samson’s heart was again rightly related to God, did the strength of the Lord return unto him. Amidst the taunting laughter and piercing probes of the enemy, Samson, *with enough faith to die but not enough to live*, put his hand on the pillars of the arena and said, “O God, grant me strength to bring death to them – and me.”

I’m absolutely convinced that had Samson prayed, “God, I want to live to be the praise of Your Glory, grant me strength to bring this building down on every enemy of God,” he would have walked away from those ruins. How often we have strength to die but no to live.

He pulled that temple down on the laughing, jeering mob. Our day will come. Do you think I’m not laughed at? You think *you’re* not laughed at? No matter how unspiritual you feel, you’re more spiritual than someone else, and that means, to them, you’re a fanatic.

In the day of our dilemma, we hear the voices of the friends of Job, “What is the sin in your life? Obviously you would not be going through this if there wasn’t sin. God is a just God. I know that we can’t see it, but you can tell me.” Search as we will, through introspection and self-condemnation, we cannot find the thing that God is dealing with because **what God is looking for** at that moment is a **foundation of firmness** that is **built on the Lordship of Jesus Christ**. He’s not looking at the sin in our lives.

The enemy stands back, waiting. Who’s the enemy? Not the one pursuing you! That enemy, the devil you can deal with him. That’s no problem. “*Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.*” No. This enemy is our brother. He says, “I knew it. I’ve known all along. I just felt something about that individual. There’s always been that... hmmm.” And we have a blow on a blow. Jeering laughter – Ha-ha!

We see it today. Read your newspapers. Do you remember Anita Bryant, the laughingstock of the media? [In 1977 – Bryant led the position against gay rights legislation in FL; a position that later was formed into the Moral Majority, a politically righteous movement of fundamental and evangelical Christians].

Anita was interviewed by a news commentator who, later, when she was “pinned to the wall,” embarrassedly had to admit to the question: “Having spent two days with Anita Bryant, what would your description of her be?” And the commentator’s response was: “Aside from her views, she’s a lovely lady.” Do you hear it? Oh, there were guffaws: “She thought she’d make hash out of this situation, but ha-ha!”

There's unity in the world. If that worldly unity existed in the church today, the Kingdom of God would be established!

We cannot establish the Kingdom by regimenting order, but by declaring: "All hail, King Jesus! Thy purposes, Thy precepts, Thy testimonies are our foundation. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord, and we are one in the power of unity for one purpose, one nation, undivided." Only the Spirit of God can give birth to such a cry. So here we see how insult is a mark of the *profane spirit*.

What is the price of profanity? Number one, the price is the demand for ultimate retribution. Sin demands payment: "*the wages of sin is death*" (Rom.6:23). My friend, it demands it. We are serving a holy, righteous God who is just and true. We aren't playing games with Him. In this portion of Scripture, in Obadiah, He says, "*That which you brought on them shall be brought on you.*"

Do you see what happened? After the Edomites stood back in laughter, calling for the complete destruction of Israel, they went even further. Some of the Israelites, seeing they couldn't protect Jerusalem, began to retreat. They would have escaped, but the Edomites marched across the way out and blockaded their path. Let's see how we do that and then pray we will never be a part of it.

Never put a person in a corner with their own statements and refuse to let them retract. It doesn't matter what stand a person has made. This is good psychology, and it's a child-rearing method and can be appropriated in every area of relationships. So many times I've said, "If only I could call back the tapes of my ministry from twenty-five years ago." I wish they weren't still floating around because I don't believe everything the same way I did twenty-five years ago. (I'd better not, for that would mean I'm not growing!).

There are people who would push me into a corner and say, "You said..." "But that was twenty-five years ago!" "I don't care! You took that stand!" May God help us to leave a passage clear for anyone with whom the Spirit of the Lord has dealt in redemption and reconciliation – that they may turn around, without crawling, and that we all may move on in God – together.

Had the Edomites received the prisoners of war, saying, "Come, we will show you the way to freedom," God would have blessed them and forgiven the entire nation. Instead, they determined evil for the children of Israel, anxious to get even for the past. God said, "*This demands ultimate retribution.*"

Secondly, the price of profanity is a demand for present deterioration. A *profane spirit* dulls sensitivity to anyone but self. This is illustrated by a person receiving counsel and afterward declaring: "I was never told that," inferring we're a liar. But the truth is, though it was said he didn't hear it. It is not just verbiage in the Word, or idle chatter in the Bible that says, "*He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.*"

It wasn't religious double-talk when Jesus said, "*I speak in parables so that hearing, they will not understand.*" He was saying, "I don't allow them the sensitivity of spirit to perceive and understand the lessons of My heart because they have a *profane spirit* and are dulled. They would be accountable if they could see."

Lastly, the price of profanity renders fellowship with God impossible. Psalm 24 asks, "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or Who shall stand in His holy place?*" Answering his own question, the psalmist continues: "*He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*" This is the one that shall abide.

"Friendship with Jesus, fellowship divine; oh, what blessed sweet communion; Jesus is a friend of mine." That's an old song reminding us that once we have tasted the honey in the rock, the sweetness of the

fellowship that there is when we come into the Holy of Holies, standing in His presence, bathing in His presence, rejoicing in His presence; once we have tasted that, nothing short will ever satisfy us. Even if we look upon thousands and thousands of others who do not have it and yet seem to be satisfied, it won't be true of us.

The question is: Where do you stand? We're not talking about evil or hell versus heaven. We're talking about *religion* versus true *Christianity*. Where are you in this? Have you, as I have, seen areas where you can say, "That portion of my spirit is holy." Have you also seen areas where you must say, "That portion of my spirit is profane"?

God is going to have a holy nation. He is working within His people today. As yet, we cannot see the perfection, but God is presently healing the lives of men and women, calling things to light which have been hidden, that He might "*perfect that which concerneth you*" (Ps.138:8).

Chapter 3 – the Holy

We have seen that Edom rejoiced in the downfall of Israel. Rejoiced, because although they themselves could not cause it, they didn't ever want to join and become a part of the force of God. It is strange, but true, that there are Christians who do not want to grow in the Lord. They believe their maturity is automatic, that if they can make it into heaven by the "skin of their teeth," by virtue of the fact that they simply have arrived, they will suddenly mature and be just like Jesus.

There's only one thing wrong with such concepts – they're not scripturally founded. The Bible declares it is in a period of time, which we call life, that God gives opportunity to grow. We get about "three score and ten," some get a few more, but we have about seventy years in which we can mature, or, in biblical terms, for God to "*perfect that which concerns you.*"

It is my personal belief that when we graduate to heaven, we shall go on being changed from glory to glory. I see heaven as progressive. It is now, on this earth, in the midst of trials and problems and perplexities and in the presence of sin and Satan, that rapid growth takes place. How many of us, were we to be totally honest, would have to admit that our most spiritual times with God come as a result of problems?

It is the way we seem to be made. We are self-centered by nature. It appears that only when mankind comes to a position of dire need or devastation that we reach beyond ourselves to discover something greater.

We're seeing that complex situation in our society today. We particularly see it among our college-age young people, as they're gathering together in groups, not of hundreds, but of thousands, chanting and endeavoring to put their minds into a position to receive from a vague supreme great power somewhere, a kind of direction that they're not able to discover in life. The eastern religions have found their places in the United States of America, something none of us twenty years ago believed would happen.

Witchcraft no longer has a negative connotation. It is well-received. People are looking for direction and think they're finding it in those circles. Now we have different colors for it. We have white and black. White witches are very proud of being involved in their practices, because their whole projection is to do good deeds under the influence of the "supreme force."

Why do I bring up these negatives? Because, my friend, we are only on the brink of confusion, we are not yet in the middle of it. I believe the reason we're so shaken by the confusing teachings that are

coming into the Body of Christ is because for many years these ideas were not prevalent at all. We only differed on certain points of doctrine.

For example, some believed you had to be immersed, others sprinkled, but both called it baptism. We've had fun with that for years, haven't we? We separated ourselves: Lutheran... Baptist... wine... grape juice... and other such things. Suddenly, the Lord said, "You've had your little games. You've played your little tic-tac-toe. Let Me show you what real questioning is."

He has begun to allow diverse statements from people whose walk we have come to trust. Things that are not just anti-concepts but are anti-God's Word have come forth. We wonder who we can believe. We have seen a slow infiltration, a changing, almost a mockery of the concerns of God. We have seen the people of the Lord as they focus on everything but the Lord of the people. We are standing on the edge of this situation saying, "Oh, my God, what's going to happen?" If we could hear His answer, He might say this: "It's going to get worse."

What shall we do? So many just in the past few months have honestly admitted they wanted to run away. We are beginning to understand David's cry when he said, "*If I make my bed in Hell, You'd show up*" (Ps.139:8). I say, "Lord, there must be someplace I can go, just for a while, where You would leave me alone." And He says, "Try it." ☺ God is with us – no matter what...

My description: "We have passed the point of no return." We are divinely spoiled. Isn't that good? Well, it's good news and bad news. It's good news to realize we're going to go on in Him. "*Ye have not chosen Me, I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit and your fruit should remain, that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you.*" John 15:16 is being declared anew and afresh today. That's good news.

The bad news is, the waters are trembling, not with the movement of the power of God's presence, but with the movement of confusion, every wind of doctrine has hit the water. Anything wind hits is stirred.

One of the types of the Holy Spirit is wind. The Holy Spirit breathed upon us and began to blow and stir everything that could be uprooted. The only thing wind doesn't uproot is a firmly rooted, grounded, fresh, un-dried-out plant. The kind of plant the Bible says we shall become – the planting of the Lord (Isa.61:3).

Obadiah shows us there were those who were in the family, but who didn't want to be involved with those who were moving in God and receiving their directions from the Lord. That was for one reason only – they couldn't forgive. A while back, someone handed me a poem:

"The Jesus in him draws the Jesus in me
It strikes a responsive chord.
We're one in reality only in Thee,
Help us abide, oh, Lord.

Help me remember the fight in his breast;
The old man and new man contend.
Move me to prayer that he beat the test
And reach a victorious end.

Help me abide that the old man in me
Strike not at the old man in him,
The conflict within my own life I can see;
Understanding of others is dim.

Oh, give us overcoming power

And union strong with Thee,
That every moment of each hour
We live in victory.

Then love will flow and in its glow
We'll be united all and uphold one another
Lest we ourselves should fall.”

Esau encountered the life of his brother, that shrinking little man, who had many lessons to learn from the time they split up as brothers in the home. Esau felt Jacob had cheated him of something he rightly deserved, when, in reality, looking back in the Scripture, we discover that he made the choice for himself.

May the Holy Spirit continually remind us this year that **we are consistently making choices for right or wrong.** We are not God's puppets on a string. We are not angels without a will for making decisions. We are created in the likeness and image of God and day by day, even hour by hour, we are making decisions. Will we follow Him?

It's not by chance that of two individuals birthed into the family of God at exactly the same time, having the benefits of the same teachers, the same living Word of God, that one grows into the Lord in a very beautiful way and produces fruit in his life, but the other barely survives as though he needed to be in an incubator. One made the choice for “now” – what seems best for today. The other made the choice for **what God says** is ultimately going to be the best decision.

There are so many times when God gives us opportunities for growth and maturity and beauty in our lives but we weigh that cost and say, “God, I cannot pay the cost because today I need to satisfy myself.” Therefore, we treat the holy things of God lightly, which, as we have learned, is **what profanity really is: not giving heed to that which is holy.**

Remember how Jacob was sent to Uncle Laban? And Uncle Laban was a bigger cheat than Jacob? One of the ways God has of dealing with us in an *area of weakness* is to send us to someone who has a bigger problem of the same kind. And Jacob *was* cheated. He went through a lot of negative things, but he comes back because God spoke to him. God said, “Jacob, I want you to return now; I want you to come out to the land that I have promised you.”

Do you know what I see in the beginnings of Jacob? The same things I see in the beginnings of Iverna. The same things I hope and trust you are seeing in the beginnings of you. Mixture.

Who of us, honestly, and unequivocally, could say, “All I am driven by and motivated by and possessed totally of is a holy nature”? How much I can look into my life and see that Jacob-spirit conniving and playing life like a chess game – thinking five plays ahead? “If I say this, he'll say that, and then I'll say that and he'll say that and then I'll say that and then he'll get mad and I'll leave.” We do have that ability. We have a tendency to meet Jacob's need and *connive and make it happen before it's time to happen.*

The contrast to this, of course, would be the life of David. Anointed king many years before he ever sat on the throne, and given the opportunity to seize that throne many times, David continually said to colleagues and to those who encouraged him to usurp the authority that God vested upon him through the anointing of Samuel, “It's not up to me to *get it.*” He had every right. He had already been anointed by God through Samuel – to be king. So did Jacob have “the right” – he just took it too soon.

God didn't call us to demand and go out to plow a way to get our right for this and our right for that. He just said, “*Let Me place within you a divine enabling, a capacity that will be ever increasing and I will possess you and you will possess Me and thy gift will make room for itself*” (Pr.18:16).

David believed that. He was anointed to the position long before he ever had it, but by the time he received it, he was enthroned without regret. Not so with Jacob. He had much to learn and he had, as we described, the *profane spirit*: “I want what I want when I want it – and I want it now.” God said, “That’s fine. But you’re going to learn some lessons in it.” And he did.

So God says, “Come on back, I want to have a little encounter with you” (Gen.31). As Jacob is making his way back from that great wilderness experience, word comes to him: “Your brother, with much riches and power and a very skilled hunter (therefore a very skilled shot, loaded with bows and arrows) is coming your way and you shall encounter him.”

There is a threat which persists today in the Body of Christ, the threat that someday we might have a face-to-face encounter with Esau. And if we do, what will we say? We usually begin to run from one another instead of recognizing what is, is.

After many years of running from what I knew was God’s call burning within me, I was in the pulpit ministering, and became aware that there were people, who, during a two-year period of my life, knew me as a non-Christian. I was not an immoral person, and by the world’s standards I suppose I was extremely average. But by the church’s standards, I was very much a backslider and a partaker of things I wasn’t proud of before I surrendered to the Lord anew and afresh. I used to live in panic of being in the pulpit some place ministering the Word of the Lord, and having one of my worldly ex-friends come in, ones with whom I played poker.

The Bible promises He’ll not permit us to be tested beyond that we’re able to bear (1Cor.10:13). So, for about the first seven years of my ministry, that didn’t happen. It was just a beautiful and Godly protection. I gleaned a great deal of confidence. “Hallelujah! I’ve been set free; I am what I am.” About the eighth year, I was standing in a church in northern California ministering from the Word. The door opened as I was preaching and in walked a man to the back of the church.

As nearly as I can recall, the usher went to him and I could tell he was being asked if he could be seated, but he shook his head with a sneer. He stood back with his arms folded and just looked at me. You know how the mind is. The Word of the Lord was coming out of my mouth, but my mind was back there saying, “Hit me” as I used to when we played black jack together. My mind was working, and in the pause of that moment, a decision was mine to make.

I could either succumb to the pressure of the memory of the past, or I could recognize the *absolute change* that had taken place in my life. I’m sure it was just seconds although it seemed like twenty minutes to me at the time. I mentally shifted, like a car into second gear, and looked directly at him. I don’t know where I was in my message, but it went right to him. He dropped his folded arms and stood in amazement, turned around and walked out of the building, and I’ve never seen him since.

Now, what I’m saying is this: whether it is someone from the past, or someone in the Body of Christ with whom we have had extreme disagreement, **God wants to bring wholeness to us**, to such a degree that we are not threatened by any encounter. He says, “Don’t take any thought of what you will say in that hour, for in the hour of your accusation, the Holy Spirit will speak through you” (Mt.10:19; Mk.13:11, Lk.12:11).

The meeting between brothers took place (Gen.33). Jacob was nervous. He even positioned his wives by favoritism: he put Rachel behind in the safer place and shoved Leah to the front lines. When it came time for the face-to-face encounter, Jacob sent many animals and presents to his brother who said, “I don’t need these.” Jacob said, “Please take them; I need to give them to you.”

It seemed from that meeting that all was forgiven. It **seemed** that way. But as we saw in the previous chapter, it never really was. For Esau went off and talked of his own hatred of Jacob until, as time went on, it literally became an antagonistic feeling between two nations. One “anti” the other.

We looked at the *profane spirit* and the bitter devastation and ending of Edom. Well then, if Jacob was such a scheming, lying, cheating, “I-want-what-I-want” person, how come the blessing of God rested on him?

Let’s see some of the things that happened to Jacob. He barely got away from his Uncle Laban’s house, after having worked many years to glean one wife he didn’t want (Leah) and one he did want (Rachel, whom he loved). He had children by each, Leah ending up having more than Rachel. (That’s God’s way of making things even.) Jacob had many herds of cattle, all of which he paid for twice. In fact, for everything he possessed, he had to work double – all for Uncle Laban.

Then his favorite wife cheated on her own father (Uncle Laban). They had scarcely gotten out of town when her father pursued Jacob and his troupes and said, “You took with you some of my riches, some of my idols; you didn’t have a right to do that.”

Now Rachel knew and was sitting on them, saying, “Ha-ha, they trust me.” Parents, did you ever see your cheating selves in your children? Why does God let that happen? Is it to punish you? NO. I don’t believe that. He does it to show you how the view of you is to His eyes.

Jacob not only has *that* problem, but he has an unhappy wife, Leah, who desperately loves him, wants his love, lives for his love, bargains for his love, prays for his love, all the time saying, “Oh, is this my night?” The man has conflict in his family. And God says to take a look at it.

Now, a temporary restoration and forgiveness takes place with Esau. But just as quickly as he left his brother, Jacob camped at Shechem and his daughter is raped by a foreigner (Gen.33:18ff; 34). His own sons became so infuriated that they plotted and schemed until they murdered the rapist. But that wasn’t enough. They were still mad, so they besieged a whole city, taking what wasn’t theirs.

Then his favorite wife Rachel died (Gen.35). As time goes on, his favorite son, Joseph, was sold by his older brothers, but Jacob is deceived into believing that Joseph is dead (Gen.37).

Isn’t that an incredible life? Are there any positives in it? “*This promise shall be unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*” The coveted relationship with Almighty God is carried through Abraham, Isaac – and Jacob. Jacob? “God, could You honor Jacob? Why, Lord? Let me tell You about his life.” If we could hear Him, I believe God would say back, “Oh, but you missed something.”

“There were four divine encounters in Jacob’s life. First, I met him in the desert and spoke with him. Then he did his own thing. I met with him again – he recognized and wrestled with Me and some changes took place. In the four times that I’ve met with that man, I’ve begun to show him the error of his own ways and the beauty of My nature. In My presence he is being changed and delivered from his own ways.”

Verse 17 of our text in Obadiah says, “*But upon Mount Zion shall be – DELIVERANCE! Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness.*”

I believe we’re going to hear more about **holiness** than we’ve heard for many years. Some of us have church backgrounds where we were taught that holiness was all external, the way we dressed or didn’t dress, and the way we did this and that and the other thing. When we really found the freedom in the Holy Spirit we were so set free that we said, “Glory to God, we no longer equate ugliness with holiness.”

That was true, wasn't it? The only problem was, we didn't learn much about what people today who declare themselves holy, putting a spiritual tattoo on themselves saying, "I am holy and if you wish to be holy, you must do as I do, say as I say, learn to speak as I speak, say exactly the same things as I and that will be holiness."

What is holiness? **It is a life of reverence for that which is important to God.** A life, not an act. A LIFE. **Worship and holiness are going to be so knit together, that we'll be unable to separate the two.**

There are Christians who are disturbed with those who smoke because they don't (or they quit!). It makes them mad if you can and they can't. I could have picked anything such as fashions, wealth, theater attendance, etc. But **holiness begins on the interior** and it is **an absolute work of God!**

How do we come into holiness? The very **first step** that brings us into it is **divine possession**. God said it like this: "*Be ye holy, for I am holy*" (Lev.20:7; Heb.12:14). He's saying, "Are you My kids or not?"

I was almost twenty years old before I questioned a saying my mother had, and it was: "Now, remember, you're a Cornwall." She meant it. I understood what she meant. "We're going to a convention now and don't forget you're a Cornwall." "Yes, Mother." "We're going to church now; don't forget you're a Cornwall." "Yes, Mother." Then one day, I thought, what's a Cornwall? My mother was imparting an awareness in us: "Don't forget the *standard* of this family."

And God said, "Don't forget, you're Mine: Be ye holy for I am holy. Don't forget you're My kid; you're called by My name. Others will look at you – whatever you are comes back to reflect on Me."

"*Ye are My witnesses*" (Ac.1:8). Did you ever apologize to God for that? "Ye are My witnesses." He didn't say, "You shall be..." He said "You are." "What they see of Me is what they see in you." Not in this great state of restoration, "*On Mount Zion shall be deliverance*" (Joel 2:32). Study the Word and discover that Zion is a very beautiful positioning and type of the Church. On Mount Zion, in the Church, shall be deliverance.

I'm so glad that **deliverance precedes holiness**. Otherwise I would be stricken dead immediately in the presence of a righteous, holy God. But He says, "Don't you worry about it. I've called you unto Myself, and Iverna, I'm going to deliver you from every unholy thing in you, every unholy desire, everything which is enmity against Me, if you will remember that I am a holy God."

We've almost lost sight of that truth. There's been such a cry in our spirits to make everyone understand the Word of God. I'm so grateful that the Word of God is being brought in levels of comprehension for all states of maturity. But in our endeavor to do this, we have come to some extremes. For example, calling God the "Big Man in the Sky" or the "Great Force" that rules this universe.

I heard someone make a statement from a pulpit, supposedly speaking as a man of God, that if you just believe in something greater than you, and you believe with all your heart, God will honor that. Everything in me began to grieve. That's not what the Bible teaches us!

This is what I'm saying when I talk about Ezekiel 44, about that watering down, compromising position that says, "We'll make it easy." God says, "*There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye may be saved, save the name of Jesus*" (Ac.4:12).

You say, "Well, I don't think it's that hard." Let me tell you something: Everlasting Father "*so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish but have*

everlasting life” (Jn.3:16). Dare we infer that a God who gave His Son, not only to take our sin, but literally to become our sin, would suddenly make an allowance for those who say, “I can’t believe He is the only begotten of the Father. I believe He was a good man, a teacher, as was Mohammed, as was... as was...” Church! These are the positions in which **we dare not compromise**.

“Jacob, you’re going to learn some things, among them, you’re going to learn **development of holiness**. I am perfecting that which concerns you.”

By the deliverance that comes from praying, “Lord Jesus, I receive You into my life; I thank You that You have set me free from all which is enmity against You,” we begin to possess our souls in holiness. First, the deliverance, then the holiness. But holiness progressed. We read Scripture verses like 2 Corinthians 7:1: “*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us...*” Do you see the balancing factor? “*Let us...*” **We’re going to be involved in this process.** “*Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*”

How can we fear a “big force” somewhere? How can we fear the “big cowboy in the sky”? How can we fear “good ole J.C.”? That’s the kind of talk we hear these days. But when we have a God-awareness, we will literally know what it is to “*Be still and know that I am God*” (Ps.46:10).

I spoke one time in a place where the presence of God was so obviously present that without invitation people began to respond – total silence gripped us all. I didn’t know what to do or say; but one thing I was certain of – it wasn’t a time to sing a chorus. People stood and raised their hands. Others turned and knelt. One lady prostrated herself in the sense of the presence of holiness.

Why does the Bible say, “Be still and know?” Because **three things happen when we’re still**. First, we sort out all of the millions of voices we constantly hear. Everybody saying, “It’s this...” or, “it’s that...” In stillness there’s a sorting out of that. Second, we become aware there’s a still small voice within us. I have often said that it seems, in my own experience, that the greater the thing the Lord has to say to me, the softer He speaks.

So, first we sift the voices; next, we become aware of that still small voice saying, “What I’ve been wanting to say to you is...” Third, we learn how to *be* in His presence. We know very little about that. We’re uncomfortable with silence. We get upset if something isn’t happening. We are activated people. We want to keep moving. “What are they going to do next? Why are they just standing there? Why doesn’t somebody lead in prayer? Maybe I should stir the gift of prophecy and prophesy.”

Did you know that Moses was so in love with the Lord that he spent forty days *just being* in His presence? (Ex.24:12). That was his whole commission. The Lord said, “Moses, come up into the mountain and be there.” Can you hear *us* in response to that? “What did I do? I’ve been good. ☺ What do You want? I know what – I’ll teach a new chorus.”

All we have to do is record our own prayers. We babble the first hour. Then, if we stay on our knees the second hour, we pray. Prayer is a two-way street. Most of us run in, hand God our want list, and “I’ll see You tomorrow. Oh yes! In Jesus’ name, amen.”

There’s a balance when we acknowledge His Lordship. Then we are more interested in learning what He wants from us than in demanding what we want from Him.

The Bible says that the promises in the Word are the “breasts of consolation” (Isa.66:11). We need to learn how to draw from the breasts of God’s Word when we get into what we call our “lows” or those times of doubting and questioning.

The Bible is filled with divine milk that will flow upon our drawing from the promises of God. It says by these promises, by them, by having them, because they are ours, “*Let us cleanse ourselves*” (2Cor.7:1). From what? Cigarette smoking? I don’t even deal with people about their behaviors until they come to me and say, “God has spoken to me and I need to get rid of... whatever.” Then, we pray. Not until God has shown them. Then it’s no big deal. Well, what then?

He continues in that verse: “...*from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.*” God wants a people who have *unmixed motives and manners* – not endeavoring to please self one moment and God the next. Not striving to have my way, to play life like a chess game, but saying, “I’m not my own, I’m Yours; ‘bought’ with the Blood of Jesus (1Cor.6:20; 7:23), that I might please Him who has ‘*brought me out of darkness into His marvelous light*’ (1Pet.2:9). Oh, God, today, what would You have me do?” **That’s holiness.**

Like the mother of Jesus, I would say, “*Whatsoever He saith unto you, that’s what you’re supposed to do*” (Jn.2:5, paraphrased). We don’t want that. We want people to direct us.

As the slang expression goes, “I wouldn’t mind having a nickel for every time someone comes to me and says, ‘Here is my dilemma; here is my situation...’ and ends it with this question: ‘What do you feel I ought to do?’” Do you know what’s frightening about that? Not that I couldn’t come up with a good answer. What’s frightening to me is that if I did give an answer, they’d do it. Think about that. If I could so easily persuade them to do certain things, so could anyone else.

If we’re going to know holiness, the people of God have got to develop an ear to the Spirit to hear what He is saying. “*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do that.*” He’ll lead you one way and me another and that person over there yet another way, and if we compare with each other, we shall fall. That isn’t holiness.

Holiness is not uniformity. Holiness is conformity – to the will of God, and to the God of the will, not to one another. Be ye conformed, not to each other, but to Jesus (Rom.8:29). Do you see it? It’s to be like Jesus. “All I ask, all through life’s journey from earth to glory is to be like Jesus.” **To be like Jesus – that, my friend, is the pattern of holiness.** The Bible says, “*Ye shall be holy...*”

Obadiah, verse 18: “*And the house of Jacob...*” Which house are you in? Not Edomite. Not at this point. I can’t believe an Edomite would read through this message!

“*And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for the stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it.*”

What does this mean? One can only glean a full understanding from a statement made by Jeremiah in chapter 5, verse 14, that *God’s word in the mouth of God’s ministers is like a devouring fire.*

It is my personal opinion that the day of the pulpit-centered ministry is diminishing; and that in this generation, **God is developing a Kingdom of priests.** The Word of the Lord declares that He will have a Kingdom of Priests (Ex.19:6; 1Pet.2:5,9; Rev.1:6; 5:10). I believe that God intends priesthood for all, each of His people, especially those who have been endued with power from on high (Ac.1:8) those who have received the well of the Holy Spirit. Notice, He is a Spirit that is holy.

Why must I have the Spirit? Because there’s nothing holy in me which will permit me fellowship with God. So, He must come in holiness and become in me that which enables me to fellowship with Him, because God is lonesome for His family.

The Holy Spirit of God did not come into your life to enable you to speak in tongues. The Holy Spirit of God did not come into your life so you could run around and herald it as a “gift.” **The Holy Spirit has**

come unto your life in a new dimension of power and understanding that your level of fellowship with God might be heightened.

I believe that it is the responsibility of every Spirit-filled believer to recognize that God is returning the power of the Word to our lives **that He might bring restoration**. Restoring goes back to the days of His original plan for mankind and His own nation, that when we come forth with the words of life that are within our lives, they will come as flames of fire.

It will not be my actions that devour Esau. It will not be my taking out the sword and doing things my way to shut the mouths of those who would devour and seek to destroy me or those who would laugh at my stumbling, but it will be the effect of **God's Word perfecting holiness** in the sight and fear of Almighty God first in this life, and then the Holy Spirit making that logos (the written word) the rhema (the living word) as it comes forth from these lips. So you know that it is not a woman speaking, but the voice of God like flames of fire, shooting out, taking the word and piercing it into you and burning the stubble from the lives of God's people (see Ps.29).

A devouring flame of God's fire. What is it all about? The only thing that the fire of God destroys is that which it can't refine. Hallelujah! Instead of standing in ultimate fear saying, "Oh, God, I'm so afraid to read Your Word or hear Your Word, it just pricks me," we can come in confidence that He is purifying and refining us – for our own good. One lady after hearing the contents of chapter one said, "I was awake almost all night last night. I was repenting. And He was forgiving! I'm free! It's all right. Things are right!"

Oh, Church, we don't need to be afraid of the Word of God. We don't need to hide from God. We need to hide IN Him. We need to understand **God is trying to do something in us**.

The reason for the work and the fire that we feel, and the flame, is that everything of an *Esau nature* in us is stubble. And God says it's necessary that the *Jacob part* come forth and burn out the dross (Pr.25:4; Is.1:25; Mal.3:3). That which remains can stand tall and straight and pure and blameless before God. We the people of God, can lift our heads and walk unashamedly, not in fear of whom we might meet lest we be confounded with some great intellectual approach, or some memory that haunts us when the enemy brings it to our minds, but we can stand and say, "I'm free! By the grace and mercy of Almighty God."

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the Blood of Jesus, but a new and living way, which He hath consecrated by us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb.10:19-20). The veil is the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him, let us come into the holiest place and there with boldness, before the throne of grace we can receive from Him, obtain mercy and find grace to help in the hour of need (*Heb.4:16*). This is our hour of need.

"And the house of Jacob will be a fire, and Joseph a flame. Esau will be stubble. They'll kindle in them, they'll devour them, there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau" (Obed.18). Can we grasp this? There shall not be in us any remaining bits and pieces of the nature of the conniving nature, of the anti-God nature, of the *profane*. I tell you, on the authority of God's Word, there shall not be any stubble remaining in us.

We are going to be a holy nation unto God. *"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless"* (Jude24). Faultless – holy – me? Yes, my friend. Everyone of us who will not sit in rebellion and stubbornness, but who will say, "Even so, Lord, let the fire of Your Word be a flame unto me, and the Esau bit of my life be burned and purged, that there not be any of it left," shall become holy.