

How Long will you Waver?

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[0 : 00] But obviously the church is made up of people like you and me. So he speaks to us individually this morning.! Somebody went to church and their partner wasn't able to go to church.

and they went back home and their partner said, what was the topic this morning? And the person said, sin. Oh, what did the preacher say?

Oh, they were against it. So we have a message for the nation. King Ahab wasn't very nice, okay? And his wife wasn't very nice, Jezebel. If I was watching the Muppets, you know those two old characters who comment from the side of the stage?

No, he... What are they? There we go. Whatever she said. No, Bulldog and Sadler. That's a terrible king. No, I've seen worse. No, he was the worst.

[1 : 03] No, Ahab was the worst. He really was. Ahab's son of Omri did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than any of those before him.

1 Kings 16.30. And his wife was worse than that. So he is a bad king. Goes through Chronicles, he got bad king, did evil, bad king.

He wasn't quite so bad. Bad king, bad king. And of course, the leaders lead the people astray. And this Baal figure sounds quite nice, doesn't it really?

No, we're talking nature, God. Fertility, sex. Anything that's going to be successful in these days in charge of the weather.

Hmm. It's sunny today. And the deal with the God is, well, if we do the right things, you bless us.

[2 : 00] You give us prosperity. So the people of God were not worshipping Yahweh. They were worshipping that which got them prosperity and success.

Money, sex, and power. I don't know if you've been watching the news this week. The Prince of Darkness.

Something like 55,000 references to President Trump are allegedly to be contained in the so-called Epstein files.

And it was the FBI who were given the task of getting rid of those. Some reports say money, sex, power.

How can a nation be changed? Are journalists modern-day prophets? But we are called to pray for our leaders.

[3 : 13] I remember back in the day, Harriet Harman lived just opposite the church. With her husband, Jack Dromey. Both political leaders. Dromey in the trade union movement passed away not long ago.

And obviously Harriet Harman within the Labour Party. So that was a local MP. And we've prayed and been aware of the community. But how can a nation be changed?

Who are the Elijah figures who go to the king, the president, the prime minister, and say, you troubler of Israel?

No, and I'm going to speak the truth to you. Speaking truth to power. But we can pray.

For some, there is a call to be involved in what's known as this mucky business. That's politics. And some Christians locally and nationally are called to serve Christ in our nation.

[4 : 28] I was hearing somebody speak from Spurgeon's childcare again. Inheritors of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's social passion.

And they were saying that something changed in government. That ministers are being told and telling their civil servants to engage more with the church.

Because they're delivering locally. In a way, government can't. But can a nation be changed?

In 2022, Sajid Javid resigned from the Conservative government as health secretary after attending a prayer breakfast. And he was challenged by the words of the Reverend Les Isaac, if you don't

know that name.

Founder of street pastors, a good man. And in his talk, he was emphasizing integrity in leadership. Maybe Elijah's spirit was on Les.

[5 : 42] And can a nation be changed? Well, that politician went back to his office and resigned. Because he couldn't stay what he believed was within a little c, a corrupt government.

Government. Can a nation be changed? I had the opportunity several years ago now to speak briefly with the Prime Minister of Canada.

He wasn't Prime Minister then. He was the head of the Bank of England, Mark Carney. And one of his monetary committee partners had died.

And I was asked to take the funeral. And after the funeral, Carney was there. And people gathered around him because he was famous. And I didn't know how I was going to say anything to him. But then there was an opportunity. And I realized I got about five seconds to say something. And what would I say? What about the interest rates, Mark?

[6 : 54] Could you give me a quick, you know, give me some information so I can invest somewhere? You know? Come on. Come on. So all I said was, excuse me, Mr. Carney, you are prayed for.

And he paused and then he said, thank you very much. We need it. Now, I subsequently have learned that Mark Carney is a practicing Catholic.

I don't know the state of his heart, but his recent speech in Davos was well worth reading. But it's spoken.

I'm not a politician. It's not my job to tell you your politics. But it is to say about our nation, what does the Lord require of you, Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Prime Minister, Miss Prime Minister?

But to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Test that against a president or a prime minister.

[8 : 13] Write to your MP. Pray for them. A prophetic challenge to the nation of Elijah's day actually turns into a prophetic challenge to God's people.

And the Old Testament says quite clearly, God's people are to be a light to the nations. Why did God choose Israel and Judah together?

Why? How odd of God to choose the Jews. He chose them so this little nation might be an example of righteousness and prosperity and blessing.

The other nations would say, we want what you've got. Your God must be amazing. Because you're nothing. And yet, look how God is a just God and a faithful God and a kind God and a generous God.

We're frightened of our gods. They don't always bring rain. But your God, they have to be a light to the nations. And when the king goes rotten and the queen goes rotten, the nation goes rotten.

[9 : 38] And the light is in danger of being extinguished. So Elijah challenges his people, God's people. And so the message isn't just to the nation, but it's to God's people.

And for us, the church. How can a nation be changed? Tomorrow morning, I'll be with my friends on a course.

We've each got a handicap. Yeah, I'm old and I'm middle class male and I'm going to play golf. I guarantee they're going to ask me.

Because they always do. When the Pope died, they wanted to know why I couldn't be elected.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury resigned, they wanted to know why I'm a candidate for that.

What do I think about a lady Archbishop? A lady. What do I think about this? What do I think about that? If I preach like jelly roll, I'd have nobody to play with.

[10 : 56] So I have to be as wise as I can. But it's difficult.

Because John Smythe abused young men and beat them. Because it said in the Bible, you've not endured yet to the shedding of your blood.

So as a kind father, I need to beat you. A flagship of the Anglican Reformed Church. The Ewan camp that Titus trusts.

Protect the ministry. Don't think about the survivors until really pushed. The Catholic Church. Again, the Anglican Church with mud being thrown at the present.

Soon to be fully installed. Archbishop of Canterbury. Because she didn't do the right thing. And then the Archbishop of York. Again, did he do the right thing about that?

[12:00] The Leicestershire kids camp. Just so sickening. That a former vet who loved the Lord would drug his wife and then do stuff.

St. Andrew's Chorley Wood, which is the mother church of what we call New Wine. And then was sole survivor, Mike Pilevacci. And teenagers having their view of God. Just question. And the Baptist Church isn't immune. And how do we copy the surrounding culture? Bethel, if you've followed anything. Fantastic songs come out of this renewed, charismatic church. And yet, at its heart was deception with one so-called prophet. But mining Facebook when he knew who was in the room. So he could deliver prophetic words. Using Facebook.

[13:03] There. Accountability. Test all things. Hold on to that which is good. So it's going to be interesting tomorrow.

Not just my high handicap on our muddy course. But Peter, what do you... What about the... The Bible says it's time for judgment to begin with Donald Trump.

Time for judgment to begin with Peter Mandelson. Time for judgment to begin with Keir Starmer.

No, the Bible says time for judgment to begin with family of God.

And is God shaky? The family that... We think if we're trendy. If we fit in. If our music is like the Grammys.

That's the same as holiness. But before I point the finger there.

[14:11] I realize three fingers come back to me. That was quoted in the House of the Lord. House of the Lord. The House of Lords.

I'll tell you why I know that. Because a member here. Lord McCall. Lord Ian McCall. Professor. Surgeon anyway. I used that in a sermon over 30 years ago. And he said, that's good. And he told me later he used it.

In the House of Lords. If you go like that. Three fingers come back at you. And it's not original. I got it from somebody else. Probably Steve Chalk to be honest.

He was brilliant. Still is. But the thing is. The church is made of individuals. What kind of church would this church be. If every church member.

[15:11] Were just like me. I stepped aside. From. Leadership. In.

The Baptist Church. Because my inner life. Was disintegrating. And. I'm saying that.

Not to make you think. I'm a nice person. Because I'm telling you. How weak I am. But. Because I couldn't sustain. Leading God's people.

With. An inner disintegration. And. Relationships. Not as they should have been. I say that. With shame. But that. Shame is covered.

By the cross. So. I took all my theological books. To Oxfam. Gave them all away. I didn't think I would ever preach again. But.

[16:07] But gradually. God. With some professional help. Helped me to begin again. But when I come.

As the. Preacher at Hearn Hill Baptist Church. I do so. A. With feet of clay. But also. Under the leadership. Of Hearn Hill Baptist Church.

And I. Ask you to weigh. What I say. Be a Berean Christian. But I'm. I'm not your. Your leader. I'm an influencer. So there are consequences.

I believe. In leadership. For. For brokenness. And God bless. God bless. Those pastors. Who. Quietly. Are faithful.

And who celebrate their. Golden wedding. And their diamond wedding. God. God bless them. God bless them. But there is.

[17:05] A chance. To start again. And Elijah says. How long. Would you go limping. Between two opinions. And the image is almost. Somebody on two crutches. And how long.

That if. Baal is God. If he's got all the power. In the world. Over rainfall. Follow him. If you want money. Sex. And power. Go with him. If you want prosperity.

Go that way. But if. Yahweh. I am who I am. I was who I was. I will be. Who I will be.

If God is a true God. No. No flippant phrase intended. Come rain or shine. Whether there's loads of animals.

Or very few. Whether my bank account. Is booming. Or whether I'm struggling. Whether I'm driving a Bentley. Or whether I'm driving.

[18 : 03] A Kia. Or whether I'm not driving at all. I will follow Yahweh.

It's a covenant renewal ceremony. We have a chance. For God's people to start again. So if I say it's a nation. It's Trump.

Mandelson. Mandelson. It's a church. Then those three fingers point back to me.

It's me. It's me. It's me. Oh Lord. Standing. In the need of prayer. Ain't nobody's fault but mine.

That's an old blue song.

Ain't nobody's fault but mine. There's a way back to God. From the dark paths. Of sin. There's a door that's open.

[18 : 57] And you may go in. At Calvary's cross. Is where you begin. When you come. As a sinner. To Jesus. Elijah's message.

Repent. John the Baptist's message. Repent. Jesus' message. Repent. Change your mind. Turn away from the rubbish.

Turn away from sin. Turn to God. I had another clear out of my library the other day. Somebody called Philip Yancey.

Such a brilliant writer. What's so amazing about grace? Where's God when it hurts? He confessed to adultery.

Over an eight and a half year period. An eight and a half year affair. And he said pray for me and I'll give up ministry.

[20 : 00] And in the threads on social media. You know people are getting rid of their books. And saying they won't refer to him again. Others are saying. All have sinned.

And fall short of the glory of God. It doesn't invalidate his teaching. But for me. I realise that I'm sometimes over impressed with people on a platform.

Not individuals. But you know the whole atmosphere of stuff. And their latest book that's going to bring success in church. And the latest how to lose weight with God's help.

How to be the best bodybuilder in the world. I have seen that. And I thought I'm getting away.

Getting away from the scriptures.

And so there are three big boxes. Good books. But I just need to go back to God's word. Not to try to copy those who I can't copy them.

[21 : 05] It's up to God and their ministry. I can't have 20,000 people. But I can be faithful. Do you remember that little child song?

Jesus bids us shine. With a pure light. You in your small corner. Not a mega church maybe. And I in mine.

Me on the golf course. You at work. You with your friends. You with all that contact list on your phone. You in your small corner.

I in mine. But I need to repent of those things in my life. In thought and word and deed. That dishonor Jesus.

Not say Donald Trump's disgusting. Peter Mandelson's a traitor. The Catholic Church. The Baptist Church. That leader.

[21 : 59] That leader. That's terrible. Which it is. But what about me? Yes, there should be consequences for sin. When leaders fall.

There need to be consequences. And please God. Restoration. In God's time. But with wisdom. In the local church. But I need to repent.

Billy Graham. Never spoke. Nobody ever spoke to more people face to face. Dr. Billy Graham. And he was a Baptist. One of his children messed up big time.

Her daughter. And her marriage. Went. And then. For a new start. She thought it would be best. And the family thought best.

Move away from the area. She moved away. And found a lovely church. Great pastor. And after a while. The pastor. The pastor. Introduced her.

[23 : 05] To a single. Man. And in her words. Quotes. We dated furiously. Unquote. And.

And Dr. Graham. And his wife. Said. Can we get to know him a bit. Don't rush. Take your time. In her words.

I didn't listen to them. I thought they were wrong. I went ahead. And I married him. Several weeks later. I ran.

From that marriage. In fear. Of. My. Life. So what is she going to do? In her words.

I got in my car. And started a long journey. Back to North Carolina. And. Billy Graham. Had a big house.

[24 : 01] Okay. And a long drive. And she said. As I was driving. Up. Towards the house. I wondered. What sort of welcome. Would I get. Because my dad.

Is Billy Graham. So she. She drove up. Got out of the car. And there was Dr. Graham. And. She walked towards him. He walked towards her. And he opened his arms. Gave her a hug. And said.

Welcome. Hello. That reminds me of a story. What did the older brother do?

We're not told. The end of our passage. Said. The people said nothing. Bob Dylan said.

[24 : 58] You've got to serve somebody. It may be the devil. It may be the Lord. You've got to serve somebody. Who am I serving?

The God who says. Repent. Travel home. Turn away. Turn towards.

Billy Graham isn't God. But I tell you what. His daughter said. He modeled. God's character. To me that day. Welcome. Welcome. Home. Home.

A Calvary's cross. Is where you begin. When you come. As a sinner. To Jesus. Let's pray together. Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling. Father I pray that you would.

[26 : 02] Send revival. But please. Start. With me. It's me. It's me. It's me oh Lord. Standing in the need of prayer.

And I don't believe we should go. Go digging. This morning. But if there is something on. Your mind. Or my mind. That's at the surface. That you know. Is a barrier.

To your friendship. With God. It's something. Which. He doesn't. Approval. He knows. For your sake. It would be better. Without that.

We're wanting to have Jesus. And. Can we make that. Mental journey. Of turning away.

Again. From those things. That. Displeased God. And turn towards. That God. Who says.

[27 : 03] Come to me. All of you. Carrying heavy burdens. And I will give you rest. Welcome. them. Purify.

My heart. Let's remain seated. As we sing. These words. From. Decades ago. But yet. Relevant. This morning. Purify. My heart. The church. That's. Been. Gathered. For worship. Is about to be scattered.

For service. We're the light. Of the world. And now. May the blessing. Of God.

The father. God. The son. And God. The holy. Spirit. Be. With us all. Now. And always.

[28 : 00] Amen. And all. God's people. Said. Amen. This. Tea. And. Coffees. Downstairs. Also.

You'd like. To pray. There are. Those. That you know. Here. Love. To pray. With you. God bless.

You. As we go out. To serve. Him. In the world. Amen. Amen. Amen.