

DISTRACTIONS

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It is such a wonderful privilege for us to have this liberty of meeting together like this. We should thank God and be grateful in our hearts for this privilege and we should not take it for granted. We should thank God for this marvelous, wonderful place! One does not really appreciate America until one gets to know other parts of the world. Praise be to God. It amazes me when I hear some people curse my America. I understand that the people who are not here might curse America, because that's what they are told by their media. The devils are against us, anyhow, and they will curse America. I went to Jamaica and I heard people cursing America. I go to Europe and I hear people cursing America and my response to them is, "You don't know what you're talking about. You have never been there, you don't live there." This privilege we have as Americans is unique, it is not given to every country. The privilege of coming together in the name of the Lord, having this freedom and it is not just the freedom – for some people have the freedom but they don't have the financial means to be free. Amen. They don't have the availability that is given to us to generate income. They have to work so hard to gain a little to eat and to wear that it becomes the only effort of their lives.

God has been speaking a word to me this morning and this word pertains to our ability to be focused upon God. Everything around us is designed to distract us, to turn us aside, to get interested in this, to get interested in that. Some people have a hobby and that hobby becomes more important to them than God. This morning, some people are pursuing their hobbies instead of seeking God. One of the great tools in Satan's arsenal is distraction. I want to talk to you a little bit about this distraction. Let us turn to I Kings 19. This portion of scripture comes just after the great victory that Elijah had over the priests of Baal but it also reveals that this was a low point in Elijah's life, when he, after his great victory, was still afraid of Jezebel. It's difficult to understand, but I think that we will be able to relate, being as we have some of that problem, also. I Kings 19:5-8, *And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.* ⁶ *And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.* ⁷ *And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.* ⁸ *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.* You will notice here that there is a type of food that we can eat, there is meat available, that can last us for forty days. We haven't yet discovered it, our science has not yet discovered that, but it was natural food that God gave him. I would love to know what he did eat. I would like to get some of that to eat so that I don't have to go to the dining table three times a day.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? In other words, what are you doing here? 10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. This attitude is not peculiar to Elijah only. Many of us feel that we are the only thing that God has here. What a poor God it would be if we were all that God had! Amen. The fact that you feel that you are a true Christian, the fact that you feel that you are 100% for God, should indeed be proof to you that there are others like you. Amen. That should be the proof that there are others. What I am saying is that if you believe that you hear God, that in itself should indeed be proof to you that others are hearing God, also.

I was listening to a preacher yesterday. I was a little bit disappointed with him and Mavis said, "Oh, you shouldn't be." I said, "The man said, 'There is no proof of God. There is no proof of God. You cannot go into a lab and prove God.'" We do not have to go to a lab to prove God. The proof of God is that I am standing before you! The proof of God is this flesh that I call body. Who else could make this? I don't know of any man or any science that could make one of us. The fact that we are gathered here in the name of the Lord is the proof of God. So, preachers, brothers, when you're preaching, just preach that there is laboratory truth of God. You can take God to the lab and prove it! Amen. Every microbe that you could find is tangible proof of God. Every atom is a proof of God. Who could have made that? No scientist could make one of these bodies sitting here before me. He can't even see the whole of it, much less make it. He just suspects that there are certain other parts apart from what he can see, because we have no instruments that can discover even the handiwork of God.

The other day I was sitting down thinking about hurricanes and storms. Why don't they just stop these horrible storms? Why don't we stop the hurricanes? They are there and we are so helpless. We guess it's going to turn into Cuba, it's going to turn into Florida, it's going to turn into this place. We cannot stop it, although sometimes we turn it away. Oh yes, we were praying the other day and said, "Oh God, turn that thing," and the thing made a right-angle turn, hallelujah! Amen. We cannot make a storm. We cannot stop one. We are wretched creatures and we need to be able to recognize the magnitude of God, the glory of God just in walking down the street. I mean, I say to God, "Well, You must be alive because I am walking around and have no problem at 83 years of age." Praise God. God is alive! We need to understand that.

Of course, we are reading about a man who did not know Jesus. Elijah knew God, but he didn't know Jesus. Isn't that something? Look at that again with me. Elijah did not have what we have. The living God moving through and through our being, Elijah did not have it. I sat down there, I heard the singing and I could see God just seeping into us. We open our mouths to sing and the breath of God is breathed into our very beings. Hallelujah. This is proof of God. Hallelujah. So, here is Elijah talking to God saying, "I've been jealous, Oh God, and I have been a wonderful fellow and You lost everybody else besides me." What a wretched thought. What an awful thought. "Everybody else is gone, everybody else is dead, nobody else is serving God, nobody else has the message. I alone, Oh God, am the only one that's left and all You have to

depend on is me.” You see how preposterous it is for us to think that way? God is providing, preparing an army. We are just a little speck of it. Amen! We must realize that without the rest of this army, we are nothing, we are finished! Don’t you understand? God is preparing a first-fruits company, an Elijah company, I could call it thirty other names company, to save the rest of the church. Our duty is to be servants to the rest of the church! Amen. It’s like you have a mouth, and the mouth takes in some honey, and the mouth says, “I love this honey, this honey is so sweet, I’m going to keep it for myself,” and the mouth decides to hold on to it, “I am not swallowing it, I’m not giving it to any other part of the body, I am just keeping it for myself!” That mouth would soon be useless. We must realize that without the rest of the Body, we are nothing. We should be grateful, thankful to God that we are privileged to be a part of this magnificent thing that God is doing in the earth today. Amen.

So here is poor brother, Elijah, in a very low, low part of his life. He says, *I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* ¹¹ *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by...* I would like for you to hear this part of the message. Verse 11, *And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind:* What happened? In the midst of the manifestation of God, the devil was right there. Because if God was not in the wind, who was in the wind? Have you noticed it? I mean, if you weren’t keen, you would not notice that passage, that God did pass by. But then, before God, rushed the devil breaking up rocks and carrying on. I’m telling you, without the discernment of God, you and I would say, “God did it. It was God that did that. It was God.” God wasn’t there.

Now, let’s read a little more. *And after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake:* We’re talking about manifestations now. Manifestations. Some of the manifestations that we see are not God. God did come, God did do something, God did speak, but that one wasn’t God. ¹² *And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.* Who must recognize it? Who must discern it? Do you see the problem we have? The onus, the responsibility, is on you to discern who is doing what and when. If you do not know who is doing it, you are in trouble, but why did God put such an awful responsibility upon us as Christians? I can tell you why. It is because inside of you, you have God. The Spirit of the living God in you must make contact with the spirit of whatever is doing that. You must be able to say, “This is God, but that is not God.” Right in our meetings! Right in the middle of your meetings you see God working and you see another spirit working. The other spirit is always trying to distract. Yes! I want to tell you of a situation where God touched this brother. We’d been praying for the brother for years. He had backslidden and turned from God. The morning that the Word of God took him and he came back to God, he came to the altar trembling and crying for his sin and a woman jumped right up there and gave him a whollop right under his chin. Amen. The devil wanted to bring a distraction. Amen.

You look into some meetings and you see some things going on. I was in a meeting and the Spirit of God really came down and was blessing us, and a woman screamed, jumped up, started rolling on the floor and carrying on. What happened? Everybody’s attention was attracted by the gymnastics that she was performing. I said to

the pastor, "That's the devil." He said, "Oh no, no, no, no. That woman is the greatest prophet that we have in here. She's prophesying, it's her prophetic gift that's working." The whole church was taken away by the devil, because of distraction! Satan always brings in a distraction. For those of you who were in Jamaica, you will remember when the Spirit began to move very heavily, one sister was struck. I saw her face, she was just like some kind of a cramp came on her, and she just went down to the floor. Satan came in to distract us. In your lives, you have to look out for that. But then the still, small voice. You know, that voice, you've got it inside here. For Elijah, it was out there. He was hearing with his ears. You don't have to hear God with your ears any more for the God in you will give you that strong, still, small voice that quickens you inside. When the life of God comes in you, "Earthquake, you are not of God. I rebuke you."

13 *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?* I want you to know that the voice of God is in the midst of the congregation of God. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of what you hear inside that is God. When it is God, you should know, and when it is not God, you should know. I remember listening to the devil, and thinking it was God. How does that happen? How could you listen to the devil and think that it is God? Has that ever happened to you? Have you ever heard the devil and thought that it was God speaking to you? Well, God showed me that what happens is that when you have something wrong inside of you, wrong concepts, wrong desires, wrong thoughts, the devil can speak to you and you will accept it. You have got to be wrong. Let me show you a scripture where God says He'll protect you from that. Turn with me to John, the gospel according to our brother, John. Chapter 7, and verse 17. *If any man will...* The King James says "will" but it means "desires." *If any man [desires to] do his (God's) will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* Look at that verse again. If you have a godly desire, if you have a heart-felt desire, if you have a heavenly desire to know anything and question in your heart, "God, is this You, or is this something else?" the Bible says that God's responsibility is to make you know. God has a responsibility to you, and when He says "you," He doesn't care who you are. He doesn't care how many sins you have fallen into. He doesn't care what your condition is. If you'll cry out to God, "I want to know, Lord," and the reason that you are wanting to know is that you might serve God, this desire of yours throws the responsibility back on God. Do you understand that?

Let me show you another verse where God must move toward you in righteousness. Turn to Matthew 5:6, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: Notice the last clause, ...for they shall be filled.* Meaning to say there's no doubt, there's no maybe, it didn't say may be filled, it didn't say it might happen. It says it SHALL happen. Hallelujah. It says, *for they shall be filled.* So, if you want to be filled, what do you do? You get hungry. I want you to notice it very carefully, that there are certain things that God must do according to His Word and that there are certain conditions under which God will do these things. One of these conditions is the condition of hunger. God MUST fill you if you hunger and thirst after righteousness. There are some people who say, "Well, I've been calling to God, I've been praying to God, I've been crying to God for such a long time and God does not answer me." It

couldn't be true. Something's wrong about your calling, something's wrong about your praying, something is wrong about your hunger. You probably wanted to make yourself great or whatever. Examine yourself! If you ask for something and you don't get it, examine yourself. Don't examine God, for God has already laid down the condition. He said, "If you're hungry." This is one place where hunger becomes a blessing. He said, "Blessed are the hungry for they shall be filled." For God will fill them. It is God's desire, God's plan to fill them. So, you do not have to fear as far as that is concerned.

Let us go back to Elijah. Elijah had a man named Elisha. It is peculiar that both names are so close. But I'll tell you why the names are so close. Because one is a type of Christ, and the other is the type of the church with Christ. If you notice, the two names have some relationship. Eli. Elisha. Elijah. Amen. If you take the Hebrew, Elisha: "sh" means "shin," the character "shin" coming where the other character comes in. Elisha is the one that pertains to Christ, because the "sh" or the "shin" is for Jesus. "Shin" for El Shaddai and it pertains to Jesus. The other one is Eli- well, in our language it says "jah," but it is "Yah," and means God. Eliyah. So it means that it ends in God, and the other one ends in Christ. So one is a type of Christ [Elijah], and the other one is a type of Christ in the church [Elisha]. God in Christ, and Christ in the church. Now, Elisha asked for a double portion of what Elijah had. Whereas Elijah ran from Jezebel to hide, Elisha took a room in the palace! Amen. He took a room in the palace. His power was so great that when the king wanted to kill him, he said, "That old fox who wants to kill me, one of you guys go bar the door" (II Kings 6:32). He did not even use any spiritual power to turn the man back, he sent a man to bar the door.

Let us look at this story where they came to the place called Carmel, a point now where Elijah is going to give over his power to Elisha. But Elisha must prove himself worthy to receive this power. So Elijah said to him, "What do you want? Why are you following me like this?" Elisha said, "I want a double portion of your power" (II Kings 2:9). I never heard of anybody asking for a thing like that. Elijah said, "That's a hard thing you are asking, but I tell you what, if you see me when I am being taken up from God, you will be worthy to have that double portion" (II Kings 2:10). Here is the great test. They come to this point and there's a disruption, a distraction, a distraction of great proportion. Out of nowhere appears a chariot with horses of fire (II Kings 2:11). Can you imagine it now? Fire. I mean horses like fire with fire blazing from them, maybe fire coming out of their nostrils, charging down upon the two men standing together. Remember now, the idea is, "If you can see me when I am taken up, then you can receive the double portion of the Spirit." What happened? I mean, that's the natural. But Elisha decided not to submit to the natural. If he had submitted to the natural, he would have been a goner, he would not have received the double portion. But while this thing was coming down on him, he was keeping his eye on Elijah.

I'm talking about focus. I'm talking about focus, brethren. We are being bombarded with everything that the devil can conceive, a bombardment that is greater than any generation, any nation, any people has ever had to go through. We are being bombarded with distractions. We are even being distracted by our education, by our desire to be something in the world. **God is calling to a people at this time, and saying to this people, "Drop everything that you are doing, because you are at a point of time where you MUST keep your eyes on Jesus, stayed on heaven!"** He gave us

certain words. It is not my business to know whether the words are right or wrong or true or not. What is my business, is to know that if it is God that really gave it and God said, "If you genuinely believe in your heart that I gave you a word, and it is not Me, I will correct it." Amen? I don't care how wrong I could be. It doesn't matter to me. Because all I am concerned with is being a faithful servant, hearing God, delivering what I hear, not thinking of the consequences, not planning what is going to happen if I say so and so. I will deliver the word as I get it. Let the chips fall where they may. I believe God.

So, the distraction that comes upon this nation, upon this generation, upon your children, is something greater, much greater than we have ever seen before. I never suffered the kind of distraction that these kids suffer. Even some of you parents, you never suffered what they suffer, what they are under. Therefore, it is our duty to protect them, to help them to be concentrated upon God. Elijah knew that there was going to be a distraction. And Elijah did not warn Elisha, "Watch out now, remember now, there's going to be a chariot of fire, you must keep your eyes on me." Nothing of the kind. The man had to pass the test upon his own merits. He had to pass the test according to the godly calling that he had, for he was not worthy to receive a double portion of Elijah if he could not pass that test of distraction. **Brethren, I am talking to you about the distraction that we are undergoing and how you must keep your eyes on Jesus, for everything in this world at this time is designed to take your eyes off Jesus!** Hallelujah. Your poverty is a distraction. Your affluence is a distraction. Whether you have money or you have it not is a distraction. You cannot get away from it; anywhere you turn it's a distraction. Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Elisha heard the chariot of fire. The scriptures tell us that it was a chariot, horses of fire, chariot of fire. Who saw it? It had to be Elisha that saw it. It had to be Elisha that told the story. So, he had to see it, and quickly take his mind off it, take his heart off it, and pinpoint Elijah. And then, he saw him taken up. You know, I always said, I always preached, I might have preached it to you, too, your tapes might tell it, that I preached that Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire. All those who believe that Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire, raise your hand. Well, all right. Correct yourself. He was taken up in a whirlwind. You see what I'm saying? So on top of the chariot of fire, there was a whirlwind. He was taken up by the whirlwind, not the chariot of fire! So, you can see how much distraction that there was. I don't think it was all silent. It must have been an uproar, everything that was necessary to get the man's mind off the concentration on Elijah. The truth is, I don't see Elijah taking off the coat and waiting for the wind and then throwing the coat to him. I see him shedding the coat when he put on his heavenly garment. He put on a heavenly garment as he shed off the earthly one. I think he caught it. I don't think it dropped on the ground. The man was on the ball. He caught it. Hallelujah. Do you remember the scripture which says that He will keep him in perfect peace? Isaiah 26:2-3, *Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.* God wants us to be concentrated, to be focused on Him at this time.

I told you that some years ago I used to build houses. We were traveling, you know, and when we got back home we'd stay a month or so and in that month I would work on building a house or something like that. One morning, God came to me and

said, “You don’t have to build any more houses. Don’t build any more houses.” I didn’t ask Him why. He said, “Don’t build any more houses because you’re not going to have the time to do what you have to do and to build houses at the same time.” I mean, that was very simple. I don’t know if I have the right to say it to you, but I’m saying it, anyhow. The time is now so short that you are going to have to drop off all the unnecessary things. **Drop all the unnecessary things and look towards God. In other words, we are on the home stretch, brethren.** We are on the home stretch. God is saying to divest yourself of every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run, strip down to a minimum, because God wants you to run the race and to win at this time (Hebrews 12:1). It’s a short time that we have. I believe that we should lay down everything that we have and concentrate absolutely upon God and upon the things of God. It is not everybody who’s doing that. It’s not every Christian who can do that. If God gives us the privilege and the ability, let us use it! ***Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us*** (Hebrews 12:1), because I tell you something: the sin that easily besets you is one of the heaviest weights that you carry! When the Bible talks about your besetting sin, it’s talking about ancestral sin. I know some people who cannot get away from it. Every time you talk to them they say, “I am so and so and I have to do so and so because I am so and so.” Well, I would like to see you get to be nothing. I don’t want any German, any Jamaican, any American, any whatever you are! I just want to see people say, “I am a son of God, therefore I cannot bow to this. No matter how my grandfather used to do it, I cannot bow to it! No matter how much I have of them in my veins, I cannot bow to it! I can only do what God wants me to do, because I am a son of God.” God bless you. I didn’t promise you that I wasn’t going to be long, but God bless you. Thank you.