

What The Spirit Is Saying

AWOL – Martin Luther

“If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Wherever the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that one point.”

Scheming Swindlers – Søren Kierkegaard. Provocations

“The matter is quite simple. The bible is very easy to understand. But we Christians are a bunch of scheming swindlers. We pretend to be unable to understand it because we know very well that the minute we understand, we are obliged to act accordingly. Take any words in the New Testament and forget everything except pledging yourself to act accordingly. My God, you will say, if I do that my whole life will be ruined. How would I ever get on in the world? Herein lies the real place of Christian scholarship. Christian scholarship is the Church’s prodigious invention to defend itself against the Bible, to ensure that we can continue to be good Christians without the Bible coming too close. Oh, priceless scholarship, what would we do without you? Dreadful it is to fall into the hands of the living God. Yes it is even dreadful to be alone with the New Testament.”

The Pulpit is Responsible – Charles G. Finney, December 4, 1873

“Brethren, our preaching will bear its legitimate fruits. If immorality prevails in the land, the fault is ours in a great degree. If there is a decay of conscience, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the public press lacks moral discrimination, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the church is degenerate and worldly, the pulpit is responsible for it. If the world loses its interest in religion, the pulpit is responsible for it. If Satan rules in our halls of legislation, the pulpit is responsible for it. If our politics become so corrupt that the very foundations of our government are ready to fall away, the pulpit is responsible for it. Let us not ignore this fact, my dear brethren; but let us lay it to heart, and be thoroughly awake to our responsibility in respect to the morals of this nation.”

Fail to Fight – Quantum Christianity

“It is one thing to fight and fail but quite another to fail to fight.

The Bible explains that given we are all [telling ourselves a story](#) understanding Scripture takes [spiritual sensitivity](#). All the more so today when [modern life](#) is filled with [pleasant distractions](#) not to mention unprecedented levels of [temptation](#) and [deception](#), [immorality](#) and [sin](#).

For understandable reasons few today are interested in an [honest](#) handling of Habakkuk's major themes, particularly in regards to [God judging](#) and even destroying His own people. As with [Jeremiah's lamentations](#), if visited at all by [modern Christianity](#) it's to cherry pick a favorite verse or two, lifting it out of context and diluting its [fearful](#) warning of all meaning and relevance to a world full of societies literally 1,000 times more culpable than that of ancient Israel ([10 times more wicked](#), [10 times more blessed](#) and [10 times more knowledgeable](#)).

Even the late great [David Wilkerson](#) (emphasis mine) who's sermons such as "[A Call To Anguish](#)" and "[A Time To Wake Up](#)" rank as some of the best ever preached, does a far less adequate job referencing Habakkuk. In what is billed as "[An Amazing End Time Prophecy](#)" his posthumous devotional begins well enough:

- "A violent, wicked army was descending on the land, sent by God himself. When the Lord revealed this terrifying word to Habakkuk, the prophet exclaimed: ***What I heard made me tremble. My lips quivered, and I felt terror in my bones. Now I had to wait patiently for the days of distress to come***" (3:16, my paraphrase). *It was a horror so unthinkable that Habakkuk's entire body quaked when he heard it.*

Yet all too soon, the "terror" plaguing one of the most godly men who ever lived is supposedly replaced with doubt from Satan? And that in regards to Habakkuk's personal plight regarding God's [silence](#) and [distance](#)? Then in letter box type the devotional placates by offering "Today God's People Are Voicing The Very Same Complaints."

Really? I don't think so. Neither did the Mr. Wilkerson millions know and love.

In both Wilkerson's messages mentioned above (and countless others) David makes the completely opposite (and tragically correct) point. "A Time To Wake Up" begins with **"Today you will rarely find a message on repentance."**

["A Call To Anguish"](#) (abridged version) begins with Folks... *I'm tired of hearing about revival. I'm tired of hearing about awakenings... Of last day outpourings of the Holy Spirit... I heard that rhetoric for 50 years... **Just Rhetoric. No meaning whatsoever.** I'm tired of hearing about people in the church who say that they want their unsaved loved ones saved... I'm tired of hearing people say I'm concerned about my troubled marriage when it's just talk... **Rhetoric.** And I look at the whole religious scene today*

and all I see are the inventions and ministries of man and flesh. It's mostly powerless. It has no impact on the world. And I see more of the world coming in and impacting the church rather than the church impacting the world. I see music taking over the house of God. I see entertainment taking over the house of God. An obsession with entertainment in God's house. A hatred of correction and a hatred of reproof. Nobody wants to hear it any more... **Whatever happened to anguish in the house of God?** Whatever happened to anguish in the ministry? It's a word you don't hear in this pampered age. You don't hear it. Anguish means extreme pain and distress. The emotion so stirred that it becomes painful. Acute deeply felt inner pain because of the conditions about you, in you, or around you... **Anguish. Deep Pain. And Sorrow. Agony of God's heart...**

And sprinkled throughout this [fearfully honest](#) sermon David further cries:

- **All true passion is born out of anguish. All true passion for Christ comes out of a baptism of anguish.**
- Hear's what God said, "I've heard the words of this people. They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them. That they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always that it might be well with them, and their children forever!"
- "When I (Nehemiah) heard these words (regarding the ruin of Jerusalem) I set down and wept. And morned certain days and fasted. And prayed before the God of heaven."
- **We face a similar situation except ours is many times worse.**
- **Does it matter to you at all that God's spiritual Jerusalem, the church, is now married to the world?**
- Does it matter about the Jerusalem that's in our own hearts? The sign of ruin that is slowly draining spiritual power and passion? Blind to lukewarmness. Blind to the mixture that's creeping in.
- **You won't fight. You won't labor in prayer anymore. You won't weep before God anymore. You can sit and [watch television](#) and your family go to hell!**
- Does it really matter to you that your unsaved loved ones are dying and we're getting closer and closer to the end?
- Where's the anguish. Where's the tears. Where's the mourning? Where's the fasting?
- It's going to take more than preaching. More than a new revelation.
- **There's going to be no renewal, no revival, no awakening until we're willing to let Him once again break us. Folk's it's getting late and it's getting serious.**

- Please don't tell me you're concerned. Don't tell me you want your unsaved loved ones saved while you're spending [hours before the internet](#) or [television](#).

Come on...

This is classic Wilkerson. Anguishing over the [fall of God's people](#) just like Habakkuk before him. Throughout David's 50 year ministry he's witnessed a downward spiral of [spiritual disciplines](#) such as [prayer](#) and [Bible study](#), [sanctification](#) and [service](#) during the same period we've been given unprecedented [wealth and prosperity](#). As in Christ's warnings in the [Rich Man and Lazarus](#) and [Good Samaritan](#), we've refused to [humble ourselves](#) over the spiritual loss both around and within. Like [Laodicea](#) we've been deceived into believing we're on a cruise rather than battle ship.

It's one thing to fight and fail and quite another to fail to fight...

This lack of fervency and [righteousness](#) is exactly the kind of [apathy](#) and worldliness [James, the brother of Christ warned Christians of millennia ago](#). He begins by identifying two underlining causes of unanswered prayer:

- "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. *You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.*"

James 4:1-3 NIV

James continues addressing the deeply [embedded problem](#) of worldliness within the 1st century church:

- "*You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.* Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?" James 4:4-5 NIV

James concludes with a prescription universally considered more objectionable than the disease:

- "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." ***Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.***" James 4:6-10 NIV

Prescription

Having laid a foundation, let's examine James' radical treatment regiment against worldliness in the church. The Holy Spirit uses James to identify both the two primary causes of unanswered prayer and the fact that powerlessness is a leading symptom of worldliness:

1. **Don't ask, don't have:**

- "You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God." James 4:2 NIV
- The tenor of the text suggests believers were taking matters into their own hands rather than pressing in and praying through to God:

2. **Ask but don't receive, ask amiss:**

- "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures." James 4:3 NIV
- Those attempting genuine intercession appear to have their efforts short-circuited by the pursuit of pleasure.

James continues by castigating the dualism of believers as "adulterous people" who attempt to befriend both God and the world:

3. **World or God:**

- "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God?" James 4:4 NIV

4. **Enemy of God:**

- **"Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.** Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us?" James 4:4-5 NIV

Next James offers a brief respite of solace. While the encouragement is genuine, it's as conditional as all the free gifts and promises of God:

5. **Gives more grace:**

- "But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: **"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble."** James 4:6 NIV

- This begs two questions. What exactly is [grace](#) and to whom does God give “*more grace*.” To those unmoved and thus failing to follow this prescription, or *those [humble enough to be moved to full and lasting obedience](#)*?

Finally James, and ultimately the [Holy Spirit](#) whom we have been so greatly offending, get to the heart of matter:

6. **Submit to God:**

- “*[Submit yourselves, then, to God](#)*.” James 4:7 NIV
- This first command, directed towards believers, is somewhat perplexing if not perturbing. As Christians are we not already submitted to God? Clearly the [quality or our submission](#) is wanting.

7. **Resist the devil:**

- “*[Resist the devil, and he will flee from you](#)*.” James 4:7 NIV
- Millions hope that simple [belief in Christ](#) is resistance enough. Here as elsewhere, Scripture points out that this is far from the case. To their peril billions fail to give the [devil his due](#), failing to take [spiritual warfare](#) seriously. This verse also suggest that ***worldliness is a principal weapon in Satan’s arsenal***.

8. **Come near:**

- “*[Come near to God and he will come near to you](#)*.” James 4:8 NIV
- It’s often noted we are all [telling ourselves a story](#). The question is how [honest](#) is our narrative compared to [Omni’s](#)? Rather than grieving the Spirit of [grace](#), [diligently](#) drawing near is a prerequisite to [reestablishing an authentic connection](#) with God.

9. **Wash your hands:**

- “*[Wash your hands, you sinners](#)*.” James 4:8 NIV
- Targeting our actions, this imperative implies habitual [sins](#) of both omission and commission.

10. **Purify your hearts:**

- “*[and purify your hearts, you double-minded](#)*,” James 4:8 NIV
- Identifying [divided thoughts](#) and [allegiances](#), we are commanded to purify our hearts of [spiritual adultery](#) through four additional steps of radical [repentance](#).

Note: We highly recommend [Keith Green's](#) updated version of [Charles Finney's](#) one page handout entitled, "[Breaking Up The Fallow Ground](#)."

11. Grieve, mourn and wail:

- "[Grieve, mourn and wail](#)," James 4:9 NIV
- Clear enough but as [David Wilkerson pointed out](#), who does this? Long gone are the days of even converts anguishing at the altar to pray through to salvation, much less leaders and laity.

12. Laughter to mourning:

- "[Change your laughter to mourning](#)," James 4:9 NIV
- Again clear enough and again, what church much less denomination does this?" The context of this entire passage thus far is corporate. For example "adulterous people" bespeaks of plurality. As with the disease so too the cure. The [Holy Spirit](#) is calling for individual and congregational, denominations and the [whole of Christendom](#) to respond with [pre-revival repentance](#) in [realistic hope](#) of nothing short of a [New Pentecost](#). Yet among thousands if not millions of modern church services who has seen the like? To the contrary, quick to [assume salvation](#) we continue to exchange [presumption for faith](#) in [fellowship](#) and [song](#).

13. Joy to gloom:

- "[and your joy to gloom](#)." James 4:9 NIV
- While joy is a fruit of the Spirit, inappropriate joy is anything but. Here again James points out that like a [modern Laodicea](#), the [spiritual story](#) we are telling ourselves leaves much to be desired.

14. Humble yourselves:

- "[Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up](#)." James 4:6-10 NIV
- Once having [honestly realized](#) and [fully responded](#) to the distasteful truth of our bad behavior, James assures that God will reward our extreme and ongoing efforts.