

## ***David's Sacred Vow: The House of Prayer***

### **INTRODUCTION**

For those of you who are really a part of this, we live in the splendor around the throne, the indescribable light display at the end of the age. I heard them last night when they were talking about London and said, “This will be the best of them all.” It really probably was, and they said, “There’s going to be light that will cause the Thames River to be like a river of fire, and it will go for 10.4 seconds.” All the working of years and the best of the earth—undoubtedly it was, as the commentator said. Although it didn’t end up exactly as they had planned with the full, spectacular dimension, but it was going to go ten seconds, and forty tons of this and that, and all the money, and it was probably the very best that the earth had.

Several million people gathered and it took their breath away, even though it didn’t reach the fullness of what they were thinking, and they did the same things in the other cities of the earth. I thought, “Oh my, how the heart of man is fascinated by light displays.”

We gaze at the jasper God around the throne by faith and we speak to Him about His transcendent splendor. Psalm 132. This being January 1, 2000, I just spent twenty-four hours recommitting myself to an old, very dear and familiar passage of Scripture in the last twenty years. It’s a passage I had visited maybe four or five times for months at a time in the last twenty years because it’s one of those renewal passages. Probably each of you in this room has a passage or two of Scripture. I have just a few of them that are among the old favorites that never fail to ignite the heart in a new way.

Psalm 132 the Lord used in a very life-changing, life-forming way beginning twenty years ago in 1979. I guess it’s 2000, so twenty years and a half now. That’s when the Lord first emphasized it, and I preached it in the little church I was pastoring in St. Louis, probably four or five times in a one-year period of time, and shared it everywhere I went. I was alive with this passage, and several times since then it has had a prominence in my heart for several months at a time in my personal, private life, so I decided to look at it again because of the important time it is, being January 1, New Year’s. I said, “I will give my heart to it again.” It didn’t disappoint me in these twenty-four hours that I really focused on it. It was igniting. Again, I hope it will ignite some of your hearts to a certain degree.

### **DAVID SET HIS HEART TO SING THE PRAISES OF GOD ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE**

Psalm 132. It’s a psalm describing a vow that David made before the Lord, and interestingly enough it’s the vow David made related to the tabernacle of David and establishing it in his generation. It’s a vow that I believe he made in his youth. I believe in the early days of his life he made a very solemn vow before the Lord that he kept. We want to imitate the spirit of this vow. Not that we have to make a full sacred vow, and I really encourage people to hesitate in making sacred vows. I believe that the yes/no of our heart is good enough.

David spoke in Psalm 57:7 of the setting of his heart. He said, “I set my heart, O Lord” (Ps. 57:7, paraphrased). One version says, “My heart is steadfast, O God” (ibid, NKJV), and others say, “My heart is set.” He set his heart to sing the praises of God all the days of his life. There was a setting, and I believe that the setting of David’s heart is in the same vein, the same flow of Psalm 132, when he made this vow unto the Lord. It was a very, very important time when David set his heart. I used this passage to set my heart in a certain way back in 1979, and then really in an official way in 1983 related to this very passage. I’ll just read it to you.

**“LORD, REMEMBER DAVID AND ALL HIS AFFLICTIONS”**

Verse 1. “Lord, remember David and all his afflictions” (Ps. 132:1). The Psalmist is writing many years later and using David as the portrait, the picture, of what they wanted to live in the overflow of. That’s what we will do tonight. Of course, through the lens of the New Testament we apply this to the Son of David, the God-Man, Jesus, because this is really but a token of what the greater Son of David would do with His life in accomplishing redemption. But let’s look at the lesser David.

“Lord, remember David and all his afflictions.” He’s going to talk about his righteous afflictions—not those he brought upon himself through sin, but the afflictions related to his callings and anointing and his passion to be a wholehearted lover of God. You know there are afflictions related to becoming wholehearted. You do understand that those are the afflictions the Psalmist is calling to God’s remembrance: the afflictions that are necessary in the life that’s abandoned to God; and in the pursuit of abandonment and in the walking out of wholeheartedness to God, there are afflictions that are inevitable, and that’s what the Psalmist is calling the Lord to remember.

He’s going to really specify in a really specific way what he means: the afflictions as related to a vow that David made in his youth. It’s a vow that he lived in the power of all the days of his life. The youthful setting of the heart is very powerful when it’s set right. The youthful setting of the heart in a wrong way is very powerful and hard to undo. The young people of the earth set their heart in all kinds of ways and want to be famous and beautiful and esteemed. They want to do all kinds of things that take them outside of the will of God, but there’s a righteous setting of the heart that’s even more powerful than the unrighteous setting.

“He swore to the Lord, and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob” (Ps. 132:2).

That’s Psalm 57:7 right there, and I’m going to call you to set your heart. It won’t be a sacred vow, but I’m calling you to a setting of your heart in a few moments.

Here’s what he said concerning the house of prayer. “Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob” (Ps. 132:3-5). It’s a place where the mighty God manifests His glory and His splendor that pleases Him. David said, “I’m not going to live in business as usual. I won’t be content with the status quo in the kingdom until something happens—until I find, until I give myself entirely to see the Lord have a place that’s His”—a place that’s for Him, a place that’s His place.

**“LET US GO INTO HIS TABERNACLE; LET US WORSHIP AT HIS FOOTSTOOL”**

He goes on and talks about it being a manifestation place: a place where God displays His glory. We know he’s talking about establishing a ministry to the Lord both in that special revelation that we call “the Davidic order of worship” and also the temple that Solomon, his son, would build. He was talking about ministering to the reality of God in the way He desires, and he was also talking about the geographic context that would make provision for that ministry to the Lord.

“Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of the woods” (Ps. 132:6). Verse 7 is the exhortation and the call to wholeheartedness. David’s vow has been reviewed in verses 1-6. “Let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool” (Ps. 132:7).

After the call to wholehearted worship, the Psalmist goes into intercession in verse 8-10. “Arise, break through in power, God, to Your resting place, the place where You have chosen to manifest Your glory. Arise to the place where You have chosen to release Your power, You and the ark of Your strength” (Ps. 132:8-10, paraphrased). The ark of the covenant was often used by God as the means of grace to release the power of God. 1 Samuel 5-6 gives you a few very powerful examples of how God displayed His power in the physical ark, that little, wooden box, about four feet long and two feet by two feet high and wide, covered with gold. The Lord used it to display His power, and that’s why it’s called “the ark of God’s strength.” Also, it speaks of His footstool, speaking of the ark of the covenant here in verse 7.

“Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy. For Your servant David’s sake, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed” (Ps. 132:9-10). Then it goes on to talk about an oath that God made to David in verses 11 and 12, but we will skip that.

### **GOD HAS CHOSEN TO DWELL IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE**

In verse 13, we see that God has chosen Zion: He has desired it as a place where He would manifest His glory. Zion was a little hill; actually it was David’s backyard. It was about five acres square, and the tent was about the size of this platform, but he placed the ark of the covenant on that four- or five-acre piece of ground on a hill in his backyard. The reason that little piece of real estate was important on that high hill was because the ark of the covenant was in that area under the tent. Then of course they built Solomon’s temple and they put the ark of the covenant there, but it’s just a little piece of geography. God isn’t mostly interested in a piece of geography, though God does have designs on pieces of geography. Jerusalem is a very important piece of geography, and God has designs for it, but this is describing Him manifesting His presence in Zion in that place.

He’s also talking about the people of God, the heavenly Zion in its fullest fulfillment, the fullest intention of God. He has chosen to dwell in the midst of His people. God has earnestly planned to dwell in the midst of humans. That’s what the house of prayer is all about, and why it’s such a critical ministry. He has desired it for His eternal dwelling place. I added the word *eternal* in verse 13, but that’s what it means. It’s His place forever. “This is My resting place forever” (Ps. 132:14). He says, “I will dwell there in the midst of My people, for that is what I want! I desire this! I really want to be with My people in full power. It’s what I want with all My heart.”

Then He goes on to pronounce blessing in verse 15. God says nine times, “I will, I will, I will,” etc. “I will do this when I dwell in the midst of My people.” This is a magnificent psalm, by the way. This psalm would take some weeks of going over with a bit of thoroughness, which we won’t do at any point in the near future. It’s a stunning psalm, and not one you’re going to grasp in a deep way by a causal reading. What I really want to focus you on is Psalm 132:1-6, and then the exhortation in verse seven. Verses 1-6 describe David’s youthful vow, the vow of his youth. Verse 7 is a practical exhortation. In other words, since all this is true, let’s be wholehearted; since God is building the house of prayer, let’s go to it. Since that’s what God is really about, let’s rearrange our lives and go to the tabernacle of the Lord and sit before Him at His footstool, the place of His presence. Not that the house of prayer is the only place of God’s presence, but it was the place of direct ministry to the Lord: the place where they worshiped the Lord and sang psalms and prayers to the Lord.

### **THE NUMBER ONE APOLOGETIC FOR THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

Verses 8-10 describe the intercession for the breakthrough of God’s purpose, for His presence. Verse 8 is intercession for the presence. “Let the ark of Your strength be manifest. Arise! Release Your presence” (Ps.

132:8, paraphrased). In verse 9 the prayer of the Psalmist is, “Lord, release men and women with happy holiness; release the excellency of righteousness in the people” (v. 9, paraphrased). Meaning, “Let them burn with desire for God; let them burn with righteousness and let them be really happy in their righteousness. Let them be filled with lovesick righteousness, with happy holiness,” which is the number one apologetic for the presence of God: His people in happy holiness loving each other.

In verses 1 and 2 the Psalmist said, “Lord, remember David and his afflictions”—the afflictions related to his pursuit of wholeheartedness; his desire to see a place where they could minister to God. David fulfilled this by building that tabernacle of David. That’s the fulfillment. This is the heart behind the action.

### **THERE’S A RELEASE OF RESOLUTION WHEN THE HEART IS SET**

In 1 Chronicles 16, David pitches a tent and puts the Ark in it. 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 16 tells us the story. Psalm 132 tells us the passion of David’s heart behind the story. Without Psalm 132, we miss the heartbeat he has carried for years and years and years. We lose out on the secret history of David’s heart before the prayer ministry was actually put into order, put into place. David swore; he made a vow. David’s intense devotion is sealed with an oath. Again, in Psalm 57:7, David set his heart; he established his heart. It was steadfast and fixed. I believe one of the biggest problems in the Body of Christ today is that the heart is still not set. The Body of Christ is still casual about the fullness of God; the Body of Christ is still saying, “We want it if it comes, we’ll be happy if it comes, but we won’t go out of our way until it gets here.” It’s the lack of the setting of the heart—the established heart.

Again, I’m not calling people to some sacred oath in this formal sense that David made, but I tell you, there’s a release of a resolution when the heart is set. When the bridges are burnt, when we settle who we are and what we’re about, there’s a tremendous energy and resolve that’s released when we get rid of the options and burn the bridges of our life. It’s an energy-sapping way to live, without a set heart of keeping all the options open. Try this ministry for a while and then that ministry for a while. We’ll get to know this leader for a while, and if that doesn’t work we’ll try that one for a while. We’ll try this business for a while and we’ll try that business for a while, a little here and a little there; we’ll see where the best options play out for us, and we can get more friends and more honor and the best deal we can come up with, and that’s how most believers live their lives in the Western world in my opinion: keeping all their options going, just checking it out, flirting a little here and there, moving around just seeing where it could be a little better, and what we need is a set heart: bridges burned, a sense of calling, a ministry.

I know in my own life, and I’m not trying to make myself an example of this; I’m only explaining the power of it, because I’ve felt it. I remember when the Lord through this passage made it clear in 1979 that my major life calling would be that of an intercessor, and I knew that and announced it. I told my friends; I preached it several times. I preached it in the first message when I started this church seventeen years ago. I told the congregation seventeen years ago that I knew my primary calling is to be an intercessor. There’s a tremendous amount of energy and resolve that’s released when you know what you know what you know. Everyone doesn’t know that, but when you do know it and you put the stake in the ground and you build your life on it, there’s a tremendous amount of resolve, a determination that’s loosed out of that set heart.

People have asked me over the years, “How do you stay so energetic about this?” I have a few answers. One reason is because I’ve pursued the idea of a God with a burning heart filled with beauty: a fascinating God. There’s no question that’s the main thing that has kept some enthusiasm in my heart for the Lord. It’s my image

of God. Number two, undoubtedly is the fact that I've determined what my life is about and have burned some significant bridges even in my ministry. I've had a certain focus that unlocks the heart.

Number three: I've tried to surround myself with people who are passionate. You get around passionate people and you burn a bunch of bridges; you know where you're going even if you don't know the exact destination. I knew it would be intercession, wholehearted, night and day, and I kind of dreaded the fact that fasting would be involved. I don't dread it, but I did for years.

Some of you right now are putting a bull's-eye on your heart and saying, "God, please get me; O Lord, please be easy, but get me."

You're putting yourself right in the way of that, and I honor you for that, but you still aren't settled yet. You've tried this, and I'm not calling everyone to a full-time lifestyle as an intercessor. Some of you have said, "We'll try this for a while, and if that doesn't work we'll try that over there." I tell you, when the Lord graciously graces you to set your heart, you'll find an energy and a resolve and a resilience that you've not known before when your heart is set. You burn the bridges and say, "There are no more options."

The big guys call me and say, "Will you do this with us in ministry?"

The answer is, "No." I know what I'm called to do. I would stoop to be the president of a great nation; I would stoop to take over a big ministry. I'm called to do the twenty-four-hours-a-day house of prayer and to preach the forerunner ministry. There's no ministry bigger than that for me, even if it stayed small numerically. It doesn't matter; the bridges are burned. I'm not saying that's noble; I'm saying it's effective and makes your heart have a fire in it that it doesn't have until you have that kind of resolve.

### **WHEN YOU FIND WHAT YOU'RE CALLED TO DO, DO IT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT**

David really gets practical. The genuine-ness of his vow in verse two is walked out in verse 3. He really gets specific. He embraces radical lifestyle changes. I want to assure you that the vast majority of the intercessors in the earth who are called to it full time find that it radically changes their lifestyle. There might be some exceptions, but certainly the majority find it so, and you have to settle that deep in your soul. When you settle the issue in one season of your life, it saves you hundreds of energy-wasting dilemmas in your life—really, it does. When you don't settle the issue and you have to deal with it every time, you don't get enough of whatever it is that you want. You don't get enough money, you don't get enough honor, the crowds aren't big enough, the ministry isn't working. You have to work through it every single time until you settle it. It's not efficient to do it that way, but that's how people do it, and we just work through it a thousand times instead of putting the axe to the root and deciding our lives are going to be this way until the end.

### **"I WILL NOT GIVE SLEEP TO MY EYES OR SLUMBER TO MY EYELIDS"**

Look at what he says in verse 3: "I will not go into the chamber of my house, the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or comfort to my eyelids." He refuses a normal life until God is ministered to on the earth in the way God wants us to minister to Him. I'll use that kind of definition to the Lord in a way that pleases the Lord. Jesus says, "My Father seeks to be worshiped in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23-24, paraphrased). There are so many dimensions to that. It's wholehearted and according to the divine pattern: the Spirit of truth, wholeheartedness.

**THE LORD WILL HONOR THE HOUSE OF PRAYER BECAUSE OF THE REPROACH IT BEARS**

David says, “I won’t live a normal life until God is ministered to on earth like He is in heaven.” Remember Matthew 6:10: “Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Mt. 6:10)—obviously, through the grid of all the limitations of the flesh. “Business as usual isn’t going to work for me,” David said. That’s what he’s saying in verses 3 and 4. Ease, a life of ease: some people are going to try to mix the house of prayer with the same style of the ease of life that they had before they said yes to the house of prayer. They’re going to try to marry the two for a year or two or three. It will be far harder to marry the two than just to decide for one or the other.

Some will try to keep the status quo. The house of prayer—Paul Cain said it last night. I know it profoundly but I’m glad he said it. He said, “The Lord is going to visit the house of prayer and the Lord is going to honor the house of prayer because of the stigma that will be on it.”

There’s a stigma on the house of prayer; there’s a stigma upon David’s life, because it was extreme. David was insistent and wouldn’t take no for an answer. He didn’t back down, and his friends and family were pressing him: “David, back off a little.” David refused to be indifferent, as though indifference is normal; and it’s normal today, but it’s not OK for David to be indifferent. He said, “God doesn’t have a place anywhere in the earth where He’s ministered to in the way He wants.”

The house of prayer is more than just ministering to God in a prayer meeting. That’s what I mean. It’s ministering to God in the way that looses the power of God upon the whole Church for the great harvest. God is after being ministered to in the whole Church. My desire isn’t to get a few thousand people in the course of seventy prayer meetings and just have good worship times. No, I want God ministered to in the way He desires from the hearts of a billion people through the great harvest. I’m not content if a few thousands people enter into awesome worship meetings night and day for forty years. I love that, but that’s not enough. I want it to have impact in the nations where a billion lovesick worshipers come in. That’s what we’re talking about: not just anointed prayer meetings where we feel God, though that’s good and it has its power and impact and it’s valuable. Someone would say, “That’s not good enough,” and that’s not good enough; we want the harvest. but I tell you, I love to feel God’s heart.

**IT’S NOT OK THAT THE PRAYER MINISTRIES OF THE EARTH LIE IN RUIN**

David said, “I won’t be content.” He refused to take pleasure in his own house. When it says, “In his own house,” if you want to get the spirit of this, go to Psalm 45:10, where the daughter is exhorted to leave her father and her father’s house and all her people, because it came into conflict with the word of the Lord for her. It was a calling to leave that which was comfortable and that which has its own pleasure in and of itself; our father’s house. David said, “I won’t live in the confines of business as usual when the ministry of God in the house of prayer lies in ruin.”

The prayer houses in the earth with very few exceptions are almost non-existent. We’re facing the end of the age, with the promise of the great harvest, and yet the Church is almost prayerless across the earth and that’s not OK. It’s not OK that we’re right before the end-time judgments with the end-time harvest of over a billion people, and the Church is more interested in all the stuff we do that’s outside of getting this thing ready. It’s not OK. It’s not OK that the prayer ministries of the earth lie in ruin. It’s not OK to the Lord and it’s not OK to a number of you in this room. It’s not OK that the prayer ministries that do exist aren’t entering into worship in spirit and truth. We want to enter into that; we’re entering into the very fringes of it, but it’s not OK. But we will enter into it.

I look at where we are today and I say, "I'm grateful," but it's still not OK. We're still in ruins in the absolute sense, but I'm grateful and encouraged by the progress of the growth. But I tell you, if that's where we end up, my heart is sick. I want to see a house of prayer in the spirit of the tabernacle of David in every city on planet earth, and a billion lovesick worshipers in the great harvest, and then we can go do business as usual after that.

A year's wages in today's economy—\$40,000 or \$50,000—this young, single woman wasted. It says in Mark 14 that they—not just Judas, but they—criticized her (Mk. 14:4). In Matthew 26, the disciples plural criticized her. The good guys looked at her and said, "You're out of control, woman" (Mt. 26:8, paraphrased).

Jesus said, "Let her alone, this is what I want" (Mt. 26:10, paraphrased).

### **WHEN WILL GOD GIVE US THE HIGHEST THINGS OF HIS HEART?**

I tell you, there are so many people in the Church today who aren't concerned that the prayer ministry today is in ruins. They're not concerned that the evangelism isn't happening. They're not concerned that the priests of the Lord, the people of God, aren't living in blazing righteousness. Their concern only goes so far. They maintain a comfortable distance, they'll even go to a few conferences and preach on it. People will say, "Wow, it was good," and tell some friends, but they'll never be touched in a powerful way in personal inconvenience.

In Psalm 132:3-4, David says, "I will radically make changes until this thing comes to pass." There's a law in the kingdom where God won't give the highest things of His heart until they're the highest things of our heart. There's a law that says, if we're content to live without it, we will go without it. We really will—the highest things.

When we look at verse 3 and 4, we might say, "David, you're going a little extreme here."

But God says, "The highest things of My heart I won't give to the people until it's the highest thing on their hearts—until their lives embody it being the highest thing."

It will change the way we eat and sleep; it will change the way we spend money. It will change the way we talk and relate. It will change the way we look to other people. It will move in an invasive way and touch our lives very, very powerfully.

I predict there will be a season where IHOP has an initial kind of romantic popularity. It's already having it right now, but I predict there will be another season where it begins to take root and become invasive.

Leaders are going to say, "How dare this group or that group think that what they're doing is so important, which implies all these other things."

Then things are going to get stirred. The Body of Christ is all bedded up, well-fed, and well-housed, and the prayer ministry of the Lord is in ruins. It never touches them or disturbs them. I have my stuff to keep going, they're trying to maintain the same lifestyle touching this anointing, and it's never going to work in the long haul. It will be collision for a few years, but eventually one will give way to the other. You can walk with the two of them for a little while, but the demand will necessitate one of them being let go before it's over. They aren't the slightest bit disturbed; it makes no difference if the Body of Christ is on fire or not.

## **IF WE'RE CONTENT TO LIVE WITHOUT OUT, WE'LL GO WITHOUT IT**

It doesn't make any difference whether it exists. If we got up and announced, "We're closing the doors on the house of prayer; the twenty-four-hour prayer thing didn't work," there are plenty of people whose only comment would be something like, "Well, I wonder what they're going to do now." That would be the only thought they'd have. I tell you, if the doors are ever closed, it will be a grievous, grievous loss, not because of a ministry but because God wants twenty-four-hour-a-day houses of prayer in the earth, and it's not OK if they fall into ruin.

I talk to people all over, and they have a heart for that, and I'm pressing them but I want to tell them about verses 3-4, because it will cost you more than you might be thinking right now, and it's not for me to define it all to you, but I know this: God is only going to give the highest things of His heart—and this is one of the highest things of His heart; it really is—to those for whom it's the highest thing of *their* heart.

It will cost. Let me tell you what the full-time IHOP-KC people are going to experience. You're going to lose significant financial potential in your life. It's a fact: you could have made X amount of money doing something different, and you could have made X amount more in the ministry. You'll lose a significant amount of your economical potential as a human being in this age. Something that I've reckoned with and decided many years ago is that I will live a simple lifestyle, getting ready, and this is one of the significant passages I used, along with Isaiah 58. You're going to work a lot harder if you do that than you will in another job or ministry. You *are* going to work harder. You're going to have a loss of personal ease in your life to a greater degree. I'm not saying there won't be times of rest; I demand times of rest. You'll lose a dimension of comfort in your natural life; that's OK and permitted by God. You're going to lose out on a significant measure of that which we're used to, and that's permissible for people to walk in. The full-time forerunners, intercessors night and day, fasting and praying, are going to lose out on money; they're going to lose out on honor and they're going to lose out on personal comfort. Settle it now if that's where God has called you, and make it easy, because within two or three years you'll pick one or the other anyway. The two can't exist together, this anointing with business-as-usual lifestyles. They really won't end up in the same heart after a period of time.

I want to say something boldly. I want to say it to give you courage, not to act heroically. I'm not afraid to lose a lot of money compared to what I could make, I'm not afraid of being tired, I'm not afraid of being uncomfortable, I'm not afraid of godly men and women shaking their head and saying, "You're really using the Scriptures wrong and you're really off base and you're really dangerous and you're really hurting a lot of people by the way you're preaching." I'm not afraid of it.

I won't personally make hardly any money at all in my life, and I'm going to work really long hours. I work sixty-hour weeks right now. I work ten hours a day, six days a week. I'm not calling everyone to that, but then I go do church work on Sunday after that and I'm tired all the time and I do lots of fasting and I'm tired and I say, "God, this is really..."

Verses 2-4 are what I go back to. What if the prayer ministry never grows? The Lord says, "Is it enough for you that you're doing it, even if there's no one who joins it more than have joined it now? What if the numbers decrease?"



I told the Lord, “I’ll be there in that place. No matter whether the numbers are significantly smaller or significantly greater, because I’ve purposed in my heart who I am in the Lord.”

I tell you, that resolve—again, I’m not trying to be heroic myself, but I’m trying to help you settle it, because the settling of it will unlock a certain resolve and determination and an energy of God in your soul. It makes it easy, it’s settled, and I plan on doing this until I die. I don’t plan to establish it, turn it over to someone, and then go on. I plan to do this until I die, I told the Lord I want to pray and fast, as much as my strength can hold, until I die. If I die when I’m fifty, seventy, or ninety, I want to do it until I die and that’s it. There you go. I don’t ever plan to be free from it—never. I don’t want to be free from it. I’m not afraid of it; I’m going for it. It’s my glory.

Hebrews 11 describes men and women of whom the world was not worthy (Heb. 11:38). I want to be one. You don’t have to be famous, you don’t have to be anointed, you don’t have to be known by anyone. I want to be a man for whom this world isn’t worthy of the way I’ve lived for God, and I want to be in the midst of a company of people; most will never be known by anyone, but you’ve lived a life of whom the world is not worthy. Just so you don’t feel overwhelmed or even too heroic, a million people have gone before us—in the monastic movements throughout Europe alone. There are probably two or four million people; I don’t really know. It’s amazing, the numbers. A million human beings have spent their whole life in prayer outside of the financial potential and outside of the honor that their friends in the world got, and they spent their entire life in that mode and they died. A million people have done it before us—a million.

I don’t want to live in the practical lifestyle of the monastic movement; I don’t want to be cloistered away. I want to be involved in the work of the kingdom. I want to see the lost come in; I want to see the prayer furnace. I want to be in the middle of a city, not up on a mountain somewhere all by myself or with a few people in a cave. I don’t want that part of it, but let me tell you this: a million people have gone before us in lives of prayer and fasting, their whole life, not for three years but for their whole lives. Forty, fifty, sixty years they did it, and now they’re in heaven. In the Western, Protestant world, that’s so bizarre; we can’t fathom that there will be a million of us answering to God on the last day with that kind of lifestyle, and I want to be one of them. When it’s all over, I want to answer to God according to this.

### **OUR PORTION IS A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE IN A PROFOUND WAY**

Another reason that I’ve committed myself to this simple lifestyle economically is because I know God only gives the highest things. He says, “If I give you surplus, then sow that others can do it; help the poor or help other intercessors do it.” If it’s the highest thing on your heart, then help others to do it.

There’s a second reason why I settled it, because the Church as a whole right now doesn’t see the value of night-and-day prayer, and as the intercessory missionaries are raised up—and there are going to be many of them across the earth—they’re going to be living in such simple lifestyles and so much less than their economic potential. That’s fantastic; that’s our glory. I’m not into poverty but I tell you what, our portion is a simple lifestyle in a profound way. It really is going to be more profound than we know right now.

The Lord says, “I will make available economics, but I want you to share them with the others. I want a lot more released than this, and I will put some of the keys into your hands. I’ll give you a little blessing here or there to release more,” or you can stop releasing them and keep it, but if it’s in your heart, release more. Just

burn the bridge. It's fitting. The Bethlehem stable was where He was born; He had no house, no place to lay His head. John the Baptist grew up in the wilderness.

### **GOD WILL BE ADORED IN HOUSES OF PRAYER ALL ACROSS THE EARTH**

In verse 5, David said, "I will do this until there's a manifestation, until I find a place where God is adored" (Ps. 132:5, paraphrased). We don't want God adored in one house of prayer, or even ten of them; we want God adored in houses of prayer, twenty four hours a day, in every city of the earth, and by a billion people in the harvest. We want God adored until God is adored in the earth in the way that He has decreed.

### **DAVID VOWED TO RECOVER THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**

Verse 6 is a very interesting, very significant part of it. I believe that verses 1-6 go together. They're still talking about David. David is speaking: "I won't give sleep to my eyes until I find a place." Verse 6 is still the echo of his heart. "Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of the woods" (Ps. 132:6). He's talking about the ark of the covenant. These are interesting lines. "Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah." *Ephrathah* is the ancient name for the city of Bethlehem. Genesis 48:7 refers to Ephratah, "now called Bethlehem" (Gen. 48:7, paraphrased). Micah 5:2 prophesies that a ruler shall come forth out of Ephrathah of Bethlehem. A ruler shall go forth. Bethlehem and Ephrathah are the same place. Bethlehem was the city of David.

David is speaking: "Back in the days of my youth, in Ephrathah, we heard stories about it." What is it? It's the ark of His strength, the ark of the covenant, the place of David's youth. The war stories surrounding the Ark are powerful, and you can find them in 1 Samuel 5 and 6: how thousands of people were struck dead when they touched the Ark in wrong ways. David was a shepherd boy in Ephrathah and said, "That's the first time I heard about the Ark being lost." When David was a boy the Ark had already been lost a good twenty years. It had been in the hands of the enemy.

Here's what happened: the most unthinkable neglect you could fathom—the ark of the covenant was lost. The nation of Israel was doing evil, and they took the ark of the covenant as a lucky charm because they didn't love God. They took it so they could be helped, and maybe God would break in and help them anyway, even though they were totally disobeying God, and the Philistines stole it. Of course, when they touched the Ark all kinds of strange negative things happened, so they just dumped it.

You know what? It stayed dumped for fifty years. The ark of the covenant is out in the woods somewhere and no one cares. Saul doesn't care. For forty years Saul never looked for it, not even once, and David says, "I was in Ephrathah when I first heard about the ark of the covenant, and it had been lost for twenty years. That troubled me! I heard about it in Bethlehem when I was a boy." I believe that's when he made the vow in his heart in his youth: "When I have a place of power!"

Samuel comes in and anoints him. I believe it's in that time when he's anointed by the Holy Spirit and he knows he's going to be king that he makes the vow and says, "I promise you, when I'm king nothing will get in the way until I get the ark of the covenant, the presence of God in its rightful spot in the midst of its people."

He says, "When I heard the stories in Ephrathah about the Ark I made a vow to God," and I believe he had been anointed (1 Sam. 16), because there's no way he could have vowed to return the Ark unless he knew he would be king. I believe it was after his anointing at the age of about seventeen. He said, "I promise You when I have the position and am in the right place in the will of God, I'll do it with all my heart."

### **COMMITTING RELEASES A NECESSARY RESOLVE**

That was the logic that the Lord put into my heart, and I said in 1979, “Lord, I don’t know when, where, or how, but I know this: whenever it’s the right time, I promise I’ll do it when You make it known.”

To me I’m supposed to do night-and-day prayer. In 1983 when the Lord spoke audibly He said, “Night-and-day prayer ministry in the spirit of the tabernacle of David.”

That’s when I made a fierce commitment in my heart: “When the will of God is here, I’ll do this thing.” Some of you have made commitments in your heart, and I’m not appealing to the commitment, because I don’t want someone to do something that their heart isn’t inflamed with today, but I say this: the commitment releases a resolve in you that’s necessary.

He said, “We heard of it in Ephrathah, and we found it in the fields of the woods.” What an amazing thing. David heard of it in his youth and set his heart to it. He searched for it, and fifty years after it had been lost he found it. He was crowned king of Israel in 2 Samuel 5. He established the Ark in 2 Samuel 6. Do you see that? In 2 Samuel 5 he’s king over Judah and Israel, he’s thirty-seven years old, and in 2 Samuel 6 one of the first things he does is to fulfill the vow he made to God. “When I’m king, I promise I’ll do this, God. I won’t live in business as usual.”

### **THE VOW THAT DAVID MADE BECAME THE SOURCE OF SOME OF HIS AFFLICTIONS**

Verse 1: “Remember David and all his afflictions.” The vow that David made became the source of some of his afflictions. The totally abandoned heart will have inevitable pressures related to the sacrifice and social disruption that abandonment and personal sacrifice always brings. You’ll be tired, you’ll make less money, you’ll have fewer honors, and you’ll go through more warfare. I assure you of these things.

Psalm 69 is amazing. Psalm 69:7-12. I’ll just quote it to you. David said he suffered great reproach because of zeal for God’s house. David says his reproaches are the reproaches of God. They hated him with the hatred with which they hated God; his friends and family members had written him off. He had become an alien and stranger to them and they thought he was crazy. He said his reproach was that he had committed himself to fasting and sackcloth. Zeal for His house had consumed him (Ps. 69:7-11).

David at eighteen or nineteen is saying, “Guys, when I’m king, we’re going do this thing and we’re going all the way.” These guys were soldiers and didn’t know what he was talking about, but David told them they wouldn’t do it any way but that way.

He says, “I became a byword to them. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards” (Ps. 69:11-12).

David said he became the song of the drunkards: “That young, crazy, wild-eyed singer who thinks he’s special.”

“The drunkards sang songs about how stupid I was and how religious I was.”

He says the elders in the gate wrote him off, his friends and family wrote him off, but it was zeal for God’s house that ate him alive and he couldn’t live life like other men lived.

God is calling you. Verse 7. They found it in the fields and established it in its place. Let me tell you, the anointing of the prayer ministry isn't going to be found unless it's sought after, right now, IHOP-KC. Some of you are investing incredible hours; others of you are investing finances; you're investing tremendous energy and cost, because you know why? We have the form, but we haven't entered into the anointing there or the loosing of the great harvest in which we're going to participate in a far greater way, but we're searching. Let me tell you, though, we will find it.

I can imagine when David said, "We found it!" There's going to be a time before the Lord when we will say, "Lord, we're in the flow of the Spirit we've sought after. We're there!" Not in the sense that there's no more, but we're in the flow of what God meant by the establishing of the tabernacle of David that had fallen into ruins. We're in the flow of it, connected in a mature way with the great harvest and with the heavenly symphony, and our lives are abandoned. We've found it. Peoples of the earth will find their place in this thing in the Spirit.

We're searching right now; we're searching the ways. I'm really thrilled with the progress we're making. Honestly, I'm not trying to be demeaning or flattering. We've gone from kindergarten to first grade. We'll turn around one of these days and we'll be in another place than we are right now. We're finding it! We're going after it!

The exhortation turns to the contemporaries. The Psalmist is saying, "Guys, when the tabernacle of David is built and the ark of the covenant is there—why aren't you doing it? Let's go! Let's go! Let's give ourselves to it."

The Lord spoke by the audible voice of the Lord and said, "Do it."

### **RESETTING OUR HEARTS TO GO INTO THE TABERNACLE OF GOD**

In 1984, I had a heavenly experience, a heavenly visitation, and the message in the most literal sense was 2 Corinthians 12: Paul said, "In the body or out, I don't know, but I was caught up into the very presence of God, into paradise" (2 Cor. 12:1-4, paraphrased). A number of you know this story. I was wide awake and the Lord took me and I traveled awake, whether in the body I don't know, and I stood in the very presence of God. I was awake the whole time, and when it was over I was still wide awake. The whole time I was touching my whole body saying, "This is real!"

And the Lord spoke to me, when it's all said and done, about the tabernacle of David. I'm not saying you're all going to have this kind of experience, but some of you believe me, and if you believe me, the impact of even that story—the Lord really spoke to me audibly, and really is in the business of giving visitations about this. The Scripture really promises that it will happen at the end of the age. Go back to verse 7: why are we not getting about the business of it with all our hearts? It sounds like I'm correcting lack of wholeheartedness. There's no doubt there's that lack, but the point is that it's January 1st of the year 2000 and I wanted to pull my heart through that again. Yes, I spent the last near twenty-four hours reading Psalm 132, saying, "Yes, this is how I want to face the future. I want to reset my heart and go into the tabernacle, and Lord, I'm doing this with all my heart."

## **MINISTRY TIME**

Amen. Let's stand.

There's a setting of the heart, and Psalm 132 is so much bigger than one night. If you're going to do this thing, the abandonment to which the Lord is inviting us, you'll make significantly less than your economical potential in life. If you happen to be one of the exceptions, the Lord will undoubtedly invite you to share the surplus so that others can enter in. You'll work long hours, longer than normal. You'll be a byword; you'll be mocked by genuine believers; they'll call you dangerous and off the course, and not responsible with Scripture. They'll have a hundred, "What about this and what about that!"

You'll have fewer honors, you'll have a family of intercessory worshipers, but you'll also have people say, "I don't know what she did but she kind of went off the deep end. She had such a good career path; she was singing or something all the time."

Here we are, Lord. Remember David; remember the man who went ahead of us and all the afflictions he experienced related to the covenant he made. Remember him and help us. He said, "I will build the tabernacle of David that the nations will know that the nations will be Yours."

Lord, wash our hearts! You can try to live business as usual and do the house of prayer and it won't work after a few years. Burn the bridge; put the stake in the ground. Settle it! Set your heart, abandon yourself, and do this thing with all your might until we die! No clauses to get out of, no escape clauses. Till we die! I want no escape clause from this lifestyle. Till the end! I realize that not all of you are called to that, and I'm sorry, I was speaking to the full-time people; you may not be full-time for five years, or ten, but set your heart now. You may not be called to this, but some of you are. I wanted to call those people who are on this first day of the year 2000.

"Wash over me!"

Don't make a vow! Don't do that. Just set your hearts.