

God's Intention For This Midnight Hour



David Wilkerson January 1, 1984

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. "Why are you here? Just what is God's intention for you in this crisis hour? Do you know what God expects of His church in these times? What is God's one great purpose?"

How sad that so few today can answer these questions. There is only a remnant left today who understand God's purpose for His children in the last days. A majority of ministers today are blowing trumpets that make uncertain sounds. The uncertainty in the pulpit has spread a cloud of uncertainty over the congregation. Multitudes of Christians who profess to serve a mighty Lord, live in bondage and despair. There is so much ruin! Emphasis on various doctrinal issues by evangelists and teachers has only added to the confusion. Many hungry souls are asking, "Who is right? What is God's purpose for today? What is the Lord's intention in this midnight hour? Is it miracles? Casting out demons? Discipleship? Church growth?"

I believe that God has had but one great intention for His people ever since the Cross. It will not change until Christ returns in glory. God's intention has to do with understanding the mystery of the gospel, revealed first to Paul the apostle. It is a mystery no longer.

Paul said, "...By revelation...God...made known to me the mystery...which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed...by the Spirit...And to make known to all men what is the fellowship of the mystery..." (Eph.3:3-9).

The mystery revealed is simply this: Christ's body is still here on earth!

Only the head is in heaven; the rest of His body is right here on earth. We who love and serve Him are His body. We are the visible part, that which men see of Christ on earth.

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones..." (Eph.5:30).

"And he is the head of the body, the church..." (Col. 1:18).

God's full intention for these last days can be summed up in this one sentence: Being that we are Christ's body on earth, God's intention is that every member become a true expression of who Christ is!

God intends that we express such a complete fullness of Christ, any sinner on the face of the earth could see in us the Lord Jesus Christ as surely as if He once again walked here in the flesh. We are to appropriate so much of His fullness, His glory, His completeness — the world will see in us the hope, the answers to all their needs. If we cannot live out Christ in us as the solution to all life's problems, we have no right to preach Him.

It is not enough to know Christ. We must be a full expression of who He is! We must look at everything we say and do in the light of this: "Does this represent who Christ is? Is this what I want the sinner to see of Him, through me?" Would Christ, in His physical body, walk into an X-rated theater? Would He linger around a pornography counter? Would Christ abuse His body in any way? Would He indulge in adultery, fornication, drinking? Would He cheat,

gossip, tell dirty stories, or lie? Would Christ live a lie, then attempt to preach the truth? Would He try to spread the light, if there was a pocket of darkness in His own heart? Would He tell others not to commit adultery, then do it in secret Himself?

We must continually keep before our eyes this one great intention of God — that we His body reflect honestly and purely who He is! Set your heart on being a true expression of who Jesus Christ is, and you will stir the very wrath of hell. Satan will leave you alone until you are set on truly expressing the holiness of Christ. He will not trouble the miracle worker or the moralist.

Would you build an orphanage for Christ? Would you go into the jungles of the Amazon to preach the gospel? Would you go to our American city slums and spend yourself in reaching human needs? Would you heal the sick and cast out devils? Will you call your friends and neighbors to repentance? That is all very commendable, but it is not our Lord's first and great intention. If you are not becoming a true expression of Christ on earth, that is all human works — and it will burn at the Judgment! Scripture says many will come to Him on that day and say,

"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew. 7:22).

But Christ will answer them, "I never knew you" (v. 23).

Who is the one with vision? Is it the one who builds great churches, who has the biggest budget, or who speaks to the largest crowds? No! It is the one who reflects the presence of Jesus Christ. Vision is knowing Him. Then whatever is done is born out of a relationship, and it truly reflects the heart of God.

I don't see much today that is a true expression of Christ on earth. There is much of ego, much of bragging, much of competition and struggle for recognition. But so little of Christ. I switch on my TV set and cringe as I listen to much of the Christian programming. The pitiful appeals for money, the spectacular, expensive sets, the endless small talk...And I ask myself, "Is this the best expression of who Christ is that we can offer the world?"

The time is not far off when things are going to start unraveling, coming apart. The daily news will be terribly frightening. The economy will be in complete disarray. And the nations of this world will tremble with fear. We are about to enter the most ominous time in history, when everything that can be shaken, will be shaken.

What will count then, when everything around is crumbling? Some men of God will stand in the midst of their projects and weep and howl! Massive buildings will sit idle; cobwebs and bats will take over. And the monuments to self achievement will haunt those who built them. Those who chased after success and prosperity will be left empty and desolate, having no inner strength to face the horrors falling everywhere. Those who took the things of God lightly, who never broke away from this world, who were unwilling to forsake their old ways — will have nothing to see them through the evil days.

Only one thing will matter then — Do I know Christ intimately? Am I an expression of Him here in this dark hour? Will I be one of the few who will witness to a crazed world that Christ is above it all? Will I be Christ's shining light when all goes dark?

Is there something in your heart that responds to this call to fulfill God's intention for this hour? Do you yearn to become a true expression of the Lord Jesus Christ to your generation? There are two things that must first be understood. One of these things is the work of God; the other is something we must do.

1. We Cannot Be an Expression of Christ Until We Are Convinced All Is Clear Between God and Us!

We must once and for all understand what Christ did for us at the Cross — by satisfying the heart of God. Christ forever took away the thing that offended God's holy eye, so that we will always have a right to His presence. We are accepted in God's sight. There is not a single thing in God's heart against us!

You dare not go a step further, until you learn the efficacy of Christ's blood — that you are fully pardoned! God does not need to be appeased. He is fully satisfied! The Cross cleared us in God's eye. We may forget that, but God never does. The veil was torn to allow us entrance. It was God saying "You are accepted! Come boldly to My throne, for you are now Mine in the Beloved."

If God is satisfied, why shouldn't I be? This is the one issue that must be settled once and for all. Is there anything —

any cloud — between me and my Father in heaven? You say, "But my heart condemns me! I've said and done things that would grieve the Spirit. I feel unworthy. The heavens seem brass." To all this you can answer, "But God is greater than my heart!"

Do you repudiate your sins? Do you hate them? Have you confessed them? Do you believe that through this man Jesus, "forgiveness of sins is preached" (Acts 13:38)?

Here is where most Christians fail. They live with unnecessary fear and bondage, not understanding the victory of the Cross. They are clear in God's eyes, but they don't know it. God is satisfied totally by Christ's sacrifice, and the way cleared into God's presence. There is nothing blocking access except our fears and lack of knowledge. When the veil was split, God came out to Saul — and to you and me! We go in — He comes out!

How incredible! We offend God, yet He is so anxious to clear us in His own eyes, He sends His own sacrifice for our sins. He Himself cleared the way back. Sin was judged, the offense removed. Now God can say, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:12). He Himself removed the distance!

God is not wanting to impute sin against us. Instead, He seeks to reconcile us to Himself. He desires that we live in the blessedness of knowing the sin question was forever settled at the Cross.

What is there in us that attracts the grace of God in Christ?

What is there in us that attracts such marvelous grace, such mercy and pardon? Is it some kind of beauty, goodness, or strength? Is it some kind of potential in us?

No! It is our great need that attracts His grace. It is our utter helplessness. It is our weakness that attracts His strength. Misery attracts grace! Our greatest attraction to God is that we are poor, helpless creatures in need. What attracted Jesus to the Syrophenician woman? To the blind, the infirm, the widowed and fatherless? What they all had in common was their helplessness. What is it in us that attracts the power and grace of God? It is our helplessness.

Our helpless condition is exemplified by the palsied man in Mark, chapter two:

"And they came unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy..." (Mark 2:3).

Here is a picture of absolute helplessness, a man having not one iota of strength or power. He cannot even bring himself to Christ. Look again at that trembling, weak, helpless creature — a prisoner to his own bed. That is you, it is me, before we knew anything of Christ's power.

Jesus stood before this helpless man, let down to Him through the roof, and did not even mention his physical condition. First, the Lord chose to clear him before God. He would bring him into the Father's presence first — clean, cleared. He would be accepted, before healed.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee..." (Mark 2:5)

What a beautiful picture of the love of God in Christ Jesus! Here is a helpless man, too overwhelmed by his infirmity to even whimper. He cannot even muster a weak confession. He has nothing to offer Christ — he is too weak.

It is not of works, lest any man should boast. "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 2:10) The Pharisee, with all his good works, his boasting, never did attract the grace of the Lord. "The more parade, the less depth," said J. B. Stoney. But see how the weakness of man attracted Christ's sympathy!

Show me the child of God who struggles against a hated besetting sin, one who is crushed beneath a load of guilt and despair, one who feels helpless and weak — and I will show you the one who is the object of abundant grace. Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more (Rom. 5:20).

Satan will come against such a one and suggest that God is angry at him, that the right to God's presence has been lost, that wrath and judgment are at the door. Not so! All we have to do is look up to the Lamb of God, and in our utter helplessness, we hear these comforting words: "Son, daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee."

Stand by faith on the finished work of the Cross! Through faith in Him your sins are under the blood. You now live on the other side of the veil. You are seated with Christ in heavenly places, accepted in the beloved, one with Christ and the Father! God's wrath against your sin has been satisfied. You have been given an inheritance; you are now more than a conqueror — you are living and moving in the Spirit. There is a blood line between you and Satan; your accuser has been cast down and put to open shame. You are filled with the fullness of Christ. You have power in you to meet everything having to do with life and godliness. You are the apple of His eye, in the hollow of His hand, purged from all iniquity. Renewed in your mind, reconciled, justified, sanctified, and made ready as a bride. Translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light — and made an heir to all that belongs to Christ the Lord!

You are no longer condemned — for there is no condemnation for those in Christ (Rom. 8:1). Christ abides in you — He reveals Himself to you! No height, no depth, no principality, no power — not man, not angels, not things on earth nor heaven — can ever separate you from God's love for you, through Christ! You are feeding on Christ, the manna. You are living in Zion, God's presence. He is your friend, your priest, your advocate, your Lord, your guide.

Do you believe these things are true? Do you believe God gave these glorious promises to weak, helpless creatures, such as we are? Are you forgiven and clear in God's sight, and do you really know it? Do you accept your acceptance?

You can become the true expression of Christ only as you take your place with Him at the right hand of the Father — accepted! All hindrances removed — not by us, but by the sacrifice of Christ! This is what He has done for us. You can love Him and still be miserable — because you don't know acceptance!

2. To Become a True Expression of Christ, We Must Take Up Our Bed and Walk!

This is our part!

The palsied man was forgiven and cleared in God's eyes, but he was still a prisoner. He was relieved of all his sins, but still impotent. He knew Christ as a Relief — but not a Resource!

It is not enough to be a forgiven cripple, a relieved prisoner. There is something we must do. Christ's part is to clear us before God; our part is to get up and walk. We must go beyond relief from sins — to the freedom of His resources.

"...Is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins...I say unto thee [the sick of the palsy], Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house..." (Mark 2:9–11).

That man did not get up on his own strength. Christ imparted His strength to him. Without Christ we can do nothing. It is only in His strength we can overcome. We know it as the power of the Holy Spirit!

Christ was saying to this man, "I am going to make you an example of My power over sin! You are going to become strongest where you were the weakest. The thing that made you a prisoner, you will pick up and carry. You will overcome the very thing that held you down."

A spiritual cripple cannot be a true expression of Jesus Christ. We must be living in the full power and victory of a life free from the bondage of sin. Every Christian knows his or her weakness. We all know where we are most vulnerable. Satan would suggest to us that we will always be weak at that point, and one day be overcome by it.

Not so! By His glorious power God can make us strongest at our weakest point. That is what the Scripture means when it speaks of His strength made perfect in our weakness.

Is there something that hinders you — abetting sin, a weakness, an inner controversy still unresolved? The hindrance must go! The prison doors must open. You can no longer be chained to a bed of failure. You must be not only forgiven — but set free!

What will the Lord do? How will He get us up out of that bed? He will give us all the power we need to overcome, and walk in total deliverance! We must quit talking about this power as if it were some mysterious, incomprehensible thing, it must be understood.

We are engrafted as a branch into Christ, the Vine. The very same power that enabled Him, enables us. The very same Spirit that quickened Him, quickens us. The very same place He is at the right hand of God, is the same place we are by faith, in the spirit. How do we know our sins are forgiven? By faith alone! We must take God's word on it. And when we do, we are given great peace of mind.

So it is with His power. We must take His word for it, that His power is now at work in us, causing us to will and to do of His good pleasure! It can be appropriated only by faith. We must face our weakness with faith that He will help us do what He has commanded.

The delivered palsied man who gets up, walks, and carries his bed, is a type of the believer who is in mastery over sin!

What an expression of Christ's power he was. What hope he must have given to all who were helpless and in need. Isn't this what God is after today? Is He not seeking for overcomers who will set an example for the world, showing an evil generation how Christ completely delivers from sin's dominion? That sinners could see believers who live above the lusts and pleasures of this world? Men who love their wives and are faithful; wives who do not cheat and are good mothers and keepers at home; young people who practice purity and separation from all that defiles.

We have enough "fastest growing churches in the country." We have enough busy Christians doing exploits. We have enough gospel radio and television. We have enough crusades, concerts, and outreaches. We have enough abortion fighters and moralists. We have more than enough plans, projects, programs, seminars, books, records, tapes, magazines, and newsletters.

What we do not have enough of are Christians who truly express the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a shortage of those the sinner and the church can point to and say, "There goes a Christian who really expresses who Jesus Christ is! There is one who has nothing to sell, nothing to promote, nothing to prove — but Christ, risen and glorified! There stands a brother, a sister, who shines with the beauty and simplicity of Jesus Christ, the Lord! There is one who has what I'd like to have — areality that cannot be denied!"

This should become the one and only goal of our lives! To fulfill God's intention — to be a witness who expresses the fullness and completeness of Christ!

When I stand before Christ's Judgment Seat, I will be judged by one criterion: "How did I express Christ to the world? What did my life say to the world about who Christ was? Did I show forth Christ through defilement, compromise, shamefulness? Could the sinner see an overcoming Christ in me? Or did I show them nothing of the fullness, the joy, the victory of Christ the Lord?"

Will you stand before Him and brag about how many souls you've won? Or what tremendous projects you were involved in? How many you have preached to? How you fought abortion? God cares more about what you have become, what you are — than what you have done. Has there ever been a day with more works, more great things done — but so few in real union with Christ?

You have been promised power from on high. Appropriate it! You can be that true expression of Christ if you will believe the following.

1. Christ's shed blood washes you completely before the eyes of a holy God.
2. Everything that could rise up against you and condemn you has been removed.
3. God has never lost His satisfaction in Christ — and He will never lose His satisfaction with you, in Christ.
4. Through His Cross, Christ has removed everything that stood between you and God, and nothing can separate you again.
5. His divine power has been given to you even more surely than it was given to the man with palsy.
6. God has seen your weakness, your helplessness, and He says, "I will snap it, crush it, overpower it — and do everything necessary to put it away, and make you superior to what once crippled you."
7. His strength will be applied where you are the weakest, and you will become strongest at that point. You will carry what once carried you!
8. Christ's one great desire for you is that He Himself will shine through you, making you a beautiful expression of who He truly is!
9. We must live in total dependence on Christ. The good Samaritan put the wounded man "on his own beast."

This is the hardest thing for us to learn — Christ must get us off our own legs, and onto "his own beast." Most of us like the wine and oil poured out — but we won't ride the beast! We'd rather walk in our own strength!

10. There is only one choice — not two! We must be in constant communion with Christ! It is often misquoted, "Mary hath chosen the better part" — as if there were two choices. No! It was "Mary hath chosen the good part" — the rest was Martha's idea!
11. If we are His bride — and He is soon coming — shouldn't our greatest object now be affection for Him? Not power, but love!

Christ must be able to say, "There is a friend of Mine."

"The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her..." (Prov.31:11).

Can the Lord safely trust in you — to be His expression, to do His will?

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