

Comfort My People!

Overview

Hallelujah. Isaiah chapter 40. Before I go on, one little notation I didn't make a fuss about, and that's that we want to start a men's fellowship here. And so we've got a speaker book to come. This is not a Bible study on Saturday mornings. This will be fellowship, and you'll hear some outstanding testimonies of what God's done in some men's lives. And so we are organized now for June the 20th. It's on this little person here. It's on this. And June the 20th, we'll be meeting at nine o'clock in the morning, going to be a full breakfast, and we're going to charge you a lot of money for that. A loonie, \$1 for your breakfast that morning. If they can't afford to pay that, see me, and I'll pray over you. So we have a great.

I won't tell you any more about his testimony because it would spoil it. It's an amazing, an amazing story, and all men should hear about this. And it's quite a saga. So that is on Saturday morning, June the 20th. Next Sunday, we're going to be looking to find out how many men are coming. Now, by the way, I'm making up a rule each one must bring one. Bring a gentleman to this. Hey, look, I'll buy you. Just say, look, I want to buy you breakfast, okay? And we won't spoil the thing by telling him when he comes how cheap you are. So please, each one bring one. We're not interested in sitting and singing kumbaya. It's all about outreach.

I think everything in the church should be reaching out, reaching out, reaching out to people. And if you're no object to buying something on a Sunday, the Culp Antique Revival is still going on. It's just down the block and in. They're friends of mine. They've been here to the church before. They attend another church. It isn't any good, but they're great people. And they started off with like truckloads of stuff. I don't know how much they have left. They don't sell junk. It's all good, good stuff. So I took over two tables and I went back and asked if I could buy them back because I didn't get permission from somebody in my house. I made a mistake. I made a mistake.

So I made it up to them. Everything's okay. Everything's okay, dear. Yes. Okay. Isaiah 40. Comfort my people, says the Lord God. Speak comfort to Jerusalem and cry out to her that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. And then suddenly something changes here. There's a Lord calling out and saying, look, I want to do something for you. And then there comes a cry. I want to do something for you, but you've got to get ready for it. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley, every valley will be exalted. Every mountain will be brought down. The crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together for the Lord has spoken it.

Now that's repeated, of course, in the Gospels, especially the Gospel of John, where these very words are quoted because that voice was John the Baptist who came. And his message was get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready. That was his message. Get ready. And the word wilderness is very significant. The word wilderness in both here in Isaiah and also in the Gospel of John. The wilderness is speaking of desolation. It's speaking of death valley. It's speaking of corruption. It's a wilderness.

The only thing to grow in wilderness are thistles and scrub brush. It's not a place to turn your cattle loose, to graze. Wilderness is desolation. And that was the spiritual condition of Israel. So no wonder the Lord sent a prophet to say, if you want the Messiah to do something for you, you better do something for yourself to begin with. Those places have got to be brought down. The high-mindedness and the depressed areas have got to be brought up. The crooked have got to be made straight. The concept here, it's very clear in Isaiah, make a highway, make a royal highway for the King of kings and the Lord of lords to come. You need to get ready for what God's going to do. So I've done a study on this. And in John chapter 1 verse 2, I will send my messenger ahead of you. Speaking of Jesus, I will send a messenger, my messenger ahead of you who will prepare your way, a voice in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make a straight path. Now when Jesus came to Israel, there were three, I see three distinct kinds of people that he was confronted with.

And I'm going to talk about that this morning. And when I say that there was this group of people, this group of people, I don't suggest to you that all of the people were of the same mind. But in generally speaking, this group of people responded this way to his ministry. These people responded this way. And I'm hopeful that I can bring this to be made clear for you. One of the peoples that he came to minister to were in Galilee. And I've made a discovery that I never saw before. If you take Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and you look at them, and you start picking out the miracles, beginning with the marriage in Cana of Galilee. If you take those chapters, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and you write down or you mark the singular miracles that are recorded. Now all the miracles that Jesus did, of course, we have no idea. But in fact, if you go through those four gospels, and if you do it in chronological order, you won't have overlapping. You know what I mean by that? Because all four were telling you basically the same story from their perspective. So if you go chronologically and write down each of the miracles, here's what you'll come up with.

37... 37 miracles are recorded. And it matters where those miracles happened. So on the back of your little purple, you wonder why I picked such a dark color. The Gentile side of me said, no, this color was cheap. So that's how come you got this. But some of you ladies will say, I'd like a hat made that color. The water was made into wine. Where did that happen? In Galilee. Jesus heals an official's son in Capernaum. Where's Capernaum? It's in Galilee. Jesus drives out evil spirits from a man. Where'd that happen? In Galilee. Have a look down all the way down the page. Galilee, Galilee, Galilee, Galilee. There were two other kinds of people that Jesus discovered. There were people who lived in Judea, and there were only maybe three, four miracles that we recorded that happened in Judea. Jesus went down to Samaria, and I did not find any miracles that occurred in Samaria. And this is very interesting to me. When it tells us that even like, Philip says he went up to Judea.

The concept was that if you're going to Judea, you're heading up. So interesting this morning. I want to dismiss the concept of geography just for a moment, because when I say up, I don't mean geographically. I asked some people in the parking lot, did you go down? Did you go down to the Maritimes recently?

They said, yeah. I said to the other gentleman, did you ever go down to the Maritimes? He said, I think I went down there once. So to go east, you have to go down. We always say, oh, they're from down in the Maritimes. So when we say down in the Maritimes, we don't mean descending southward. We just mean, well, that's down there somewhere, I guess. Right? Or downtown. Downtown. Downtown may not always. You go to the city of Kamloops, it's built on a series of hills and small mountains. There's no such thing as, well, there is an area called downtown, but there are many downtowns in Kamloops, many downtowns, but there's many valleys. You got to go from hill to valley to hill to valley to get to one of my friend's houses.

He lives up on a hill, but he goes downtown to get his cup of coffee. But he's got to go uptown to get downtown. So we use these words, down, up, whatever. So when I am speaking this morning, I'm really talking in a biblical concept. Because when it says that Jesus went to Samaria, it will say he went down. But in fact, when you look at a Bible map, he was going from Jerusalem, which is south of Samaria. And he went up the map, as we would look at it, and it says that he was heading for Galilee. But to get to where he wanted to go, it says he had to pass through Samaria. I looked that up. He had to. It's a truth, and yet there's a little bit of error in that story. If you want to go the short distance to get up to Galilee, the short distance, you have to go through Samaria. But the majority of elite, high-minded, spiritual, if you would, Jewish people, they would go an extra two days journey to avoid Samaria. Jesus went through Samaria because he chose to go a direct path.

Instead of crossing over to the Jordan, going up on the other side of the Jordan, and then popping back in over to this side of the Jordan, he went straight through. So to go the short distance, he had to go through Samaria. But there's another reason he had to go through Samaria, and that was because he had a divine appointment with a woman in the town of Sychar, which was right on the direct part of his route. He had an appointment with a woman at a well who wasn't interested in an appointment with a man from up in Judea, which is actually down. They always say he went up to Judea. He went down to Samaria. Now watch this. See all these things that happened in Galilee? It never says that Jesus went up to Galilee. It doesn't say he went down to Galilee. It says he went to Galilee. He lived in Galilee. What's in Galilee? Nazareth, that's where he was born.

Capernaum, that's where Peter's wife and mother-in-law lived, and Capernaum is where he sort of made his spiritual base. When he wanted to kind of get away and take some time out, he would go to Capernaum, which was in Galilee. Where's the sea of Galilee? Well, it's in Galilee. Most of his miracles happened around the sea of Galilee. He walked on the water in Galilee. He told the fishermen, throw your net on the other side of the boat. Hey Dave, I see you're fishing in that little puddle right there. Yeah, move your worm over about three feet. And I'd say, you mean the fish can't see three feet? You mean the fish is here and you can't see my worm three feet away? No, just trust me. Put your worm there. We don't talk like that.

Throw your boat over. Throw your fishing net over the other side of the boat. What's the distance from one side of the other? Is it about six feet, seven feet? I don't know. But they did what he said to do. Was it a couple or three weeks ago? I mentioned to you, you'll find frequently in scripture that there'll be a word from the Lord. It'll be an instructive word, and it will tell you what you need to do to receive from the Lord. Israel wanted to receive from God. The Lord was basically missing because they had gone so very much astray. Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare his work. A word comes, get ready.

Do the work, and then there will be a work, a miracle. A word, a work, a miracle. They cast their net on the other side of the boat. It didn't make sense. But you know why they threw the net on the other side of the boat? Are you ready for this? They were Galileans. They were Galileans. I got a cute story for you. Thousands of people on the shores of Galilee. Most of the people that were in that crowd, most of them would have been original Galileans. And by the way, if you were up in Jerusalem and you're from Galilee, somebody'd say, he's from Newfoundland. No, no, he's from down east. No.

When people are from different parts of the country, they have a different lick to their words, right? If you went up to Jerusalem, they'd know you're a Galilean. Remember in Acts chapter two, they were surprised at what was going on. These are not learned men. These aren't highly educated men. That crowd, when you hear them speaking our language, they're clearly Galileans. They took knowledge of them. They understood these men were from Galilee. How can men of Galilee be used so much by God? Who had the attitude, how can God use a Galilean? Somebody from up in Judea, not up geographically, up here. My mother makes better cookies than your mother. I'm high-minded. What was the biggest allegation against Jesus?

I heard he's from that stinky little town called Nazareth. I bet I could name some towns in this country you've never heard of. There's no big manufacturing there. They don't even have a major industry there. There's no fishing. There's no nothing. It's just a little group of people that parked their tent, their buckwagon back beside a river, and it became a town. You've never heard of it. That's what Nazareth was like. It was a no-name town. It had no industry. Quite likely, Joseph, who was Jesus' adoptive father, quite likely he went to the next town to execute his skill and his craft. Most of the people in Nazareth, that was a bedroom town. Who's this Jesus think he is?

Who was his teacher? How can somebody from Galilee tell us Judeans? Now, what was significant about Judea? Psalm 48 speaks of the wonderful position of Mount Zion. Where was Mount Zion? It was up in Judea, Jerusalem. What was so wonderful and special about Jerusalem? It was the place that Abraham had sacrificed Isaac, almost. It's where God met him. Jerusalem was the place that was recognized by all the Jewish kings as God's chosen place. So that's where they built the temple. So if you were in the city where the temple was, that supposedly was where the best teachers of the law would be. That's where the Pharisees would study. That's, do you know what, one of the most well-named, why can't I think of the word university today?

I can't even pronounce it. A school, a famous school, Hebrew school. I'm not sure if it's in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. I think it's in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is high-minded. It's a wonderful place.

And when Jesus went to Jerusalem, they weren't interested in what he had to say because he was not the right pedigree. What's the right pedigree? You've got to be from up here into Judea. We're God's chosen people. What about Samaria? If you're going to go to Samaria, the wording would be, you're going down. It was like you're going to the other side of the tracks. And what was that all about?

After David passed, Solomon took rule over the Jewish people and made it one nation. But Solomon's sons who took over after him could not get along. And so the country, the kingdom that David had put together and Solomon inherited, the country got divided. So in the true north of the country became one nation. It was called Israel. And then there was a country at the bottom, and it was called Judea. The interesting thing is that the Assyrians came. I forget how many hundred years after 70 AD, a couple of hundred years happened, and the Assyrians came in and conquered the area that we know of as Samaria. And they took all the inhabitants. This was the work, this was the strategy of the Assyrians. If they conquered a country, they would take the people and they'd take them out of the country, ravage the place of its original native inhabitants. And then from the other countries that they would conquer, they'd bring people from that country and repopulate. And that's what happened to Samaria. The Assyrians brought in people from all over the world that they had conquered.

So now you had this thing that Canada is trying to celebrate right now, people from all over the world. And so what was a Samarian culture became Heinz Spaghetti 500, just like we have Canada now. What is our national food? What is our national language? What's our national religion? What's our national anything? We're just a mixed bag of people from all over the world, and our countries go into dissent. That's the only thing I'll say about that. But that's what happened to Samaria. And all of these people who came from all over the world, this is going to sound familiar, brought their little religions with them. Paganism. And why wouldn't they? Because the people who went from Samaria, who originally were, you know, into the Lord and Judaism and the laws of Moses, they took the scrolls of the Bible with them. They were allowed to take them.

So wherever they went, they took their Judaism with them. And this was the marvel of the day of Pentecost. People from all over the world, they were Jewish people who had many of them been taken out of the country like the Samaritans, and had been put in that country, and then they held on to their Judaism things. And so when there was the Feast of Pentecost, these people from all over the world came to that celebration, and they were there from all over the world, and they heard the gospel, and when they went home, they took the gospel with them. So there was a beautiful thing about that. But Samaria became a mixed bag. It became a mixed bag of cultures and of religions. So if you'd gone to Samaria at the time even of Jesus, there was all kinds of religious. It's called syncretism. I ran into this in India. I ran into it in South America, and I definitely ran into it in Africa. I won't name denominations. I won't name religions that would be related to Christianity in any way, but there would be certain missionary types from certain churches on this side of the world would go to Africa, and in order to get the local village to adapt to Christianity, they'd say, come and give your heart to Jesus and bring all of your concepts with you. I ran into it everywhere I went.

That's how come the witch doctors survived in Africa, because the missionaries didn't take them on. So you had people in all of these countries, but wherever I went, wherever I went to pretty well every country in Africa, and wherever I went, I saw syncretism. You'll see it in South America, where people who rely on Rome, the Pope, for their religious fanfare and whatever, but they also practice all kinds of other weird things, and it's all just okay. We're a mixed bag, and the Pope right now is suggesting that we've got to learn to get along with those other people who strap themselves with bombs and blow up buses and kill pieces. They're nice people. You got to learn to get along with them. That's called syncretism. That's called syncretism, synchronizing, and we're all going to be one big happy people.

Your God is my God. Your lunch is my lunch, and we're just going to. . . That was Samaria, so that when by the time Jesus came along, the Samaritans had a religion that was all mixed up, all mixed up, and they were not happy about the people up in Jerusalem, because they were the elite scribes and Pharisees, and the scribes and Pharisees would say, if you don't dress like me, if you don't wear the same color of lipstick like me, if you don't wear Adidas sandals like I do, if you don't pray at five in the morning, seven in the morning, nine in the morning, you're not like me. If you don't tithe a dime when you find it on the street, go to the confectionery store.

You can't even get pennies anymore, but if you've got some money, you'd have to. . . If you found it even on the street, you would take it, you'd get it broken down, and you'd take 10 percent, and you'd walk into the temple like this with your coin, and and everybody'd see it. When you were fasting and praying, you made sure that it looked like you hadn't eaten for weeks. Your hair would be all messed up. You smell. Well, you see, if you're fasting and you're praying, you haven't got time to look after your hygiene. Like, it would get really ridiculous, and they would make sure that everybody knows, I'm a man of the word, and so they would tie the word of God on their foreheads. They'd wrap it around their arms. They'd do all kinds of things to impress you. When you went to their house, they would indicate to you, don't slam the door. I just put a new little box of scripture on the doorpost. If it was a rich home, and it was a home that was really, really dedicated to the elite ways of those up in Jerusalem, you would have scripture on every doorpost in your house, because you believed that to tack that promise on your doorpost was like finding the best four-leaf clover, and not one rabbit's foot, but you found a rabbit missing two feet, and so you carry one in each hand.

You do everything that you know. You'd never walk under a ladder, because you know that that's bad luck. You stay away from the 13th floor. I always make fun of my friend who owns Brock Elevator. I said, hey, Ron, I'll meet you on the 13th floor. You won't find a 13th floor in any elevator anywhere in this country. You know why? It's a bad omen. You don't know. Friday the 13th, that's my favorite day of the whole year. I go down to the lake, and I carry on like a madman on a motorcycle. Friday the 13th, we defy it. I'm going to tell you the truth. If I walk, I'd still do this to this day, walking along the street, and somebody's got a ladder up underneath their building, I will cross the street to go to the side where the ladder is, and I will walk underneath it.

I defy the enemy. Don't ask me what month or day that I'm born of the year. I've had people say, do you know your sign? I say, yes, I know. It's called stop. Don't bring that up to me. That is folklore. It's of the devil, and I'll have nothing to. . .

I don't know my sign. Spare me. Don't tell me. I don't want to know, because it's foolishness, and the word of God is against it, but syncretism allows all of this. My personal cousin was living down in Palm Beach, Florida. April and I went to see them. Oh, they were so happy to see us. They were. . . He was an elder in the local Baptist church. Oh, such a stately looking building. The, you know, the spire on top of that building, everything was sparkling white. It was an amazing building. Such a marvelous church, and she was the butterfly of the church, taking care of all the social, everything that was moving. They were involved, and as I was going out of there morning, we stayed with them for a week, and as I was going out, I noticed this thing hanging beside the door, very ornate, very lovely, very charming, and I said to her, hey cuz, what's this? Oh, she said, each one of those represents.

Here's Bob's. Here's Bob's sign. Here's my sign. Here's John's sign, and my other son's, all their signs. I said, what is that for? Well, she said, I believe it's going to bring us luck. I said, so let me get this straight, and I wanted to be kind. I said, let me get this straight. So, that's hanging on the door in case on a Monday or a Tuesday morning you get fearful that God forgot about you today. Oh, no, no, no. I said, oh, I see. You just got to top up the glass to make sure you got a little extra. See, I ran into this in India.

I was invited to go to a home where people were suffering, desperately suffering, probably on the edge of death. When I went in, there was some kind of a thing mounted on the wall. There were candles burning, and that was to some Indian God, and over here there was another thing that came from another part of the world, and I won't mention that one. I get in trouble, and then there was one straight ahead of me, and that was another one with the Queen of Heaven hanging up there and candles, and I look. I said, they weren't taking any chances, or they're talking to every God that there is, and he asked the preacher to come and pray. Prepare the way of the Lord. The people in Galilee were different. They were different from the Judaizers. They were different from the elite who lived up there in Judea where, you know, the temple was, and all the Passover feast was there. That's where everything happened, and those people were high-minded, and they had a very low opinion of the Galileans, and if you said Samaritan, they'd spit on them. They hated the Samaritans. You know why? Because the Samaritans were syncretists, and the people up in Jerusalem who stuck to Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, they despised syncretism, but in fact, they had their own syncretism, didn't they? They came up with not just the laws, you know, I was going to say January, Genesis, down through.

There are laws there. Don't work on the Sabbath. The people up there were high-minded. You know what they did? So that you didn't break the Sabbath, and I've mentioned this before. If the Sabbath started on Friday night at six o'clock, they created a new law, a fence law. Don't be doing anything as of a quarter to six, so you don't get caught one minute over six o'clock, because then you're guilty of hurting the Sabbath. They created all these weird laws of how much time a day you have to pray, how you have to do this, how many times you have to wash, how many times you have to. . . They made all of these rules, and Jesus warned the people in his preaching, said, don't follow these people. They have all of these laws, but you watch them. They don't abide by their own laws. Take my yoke upon you.

Take my burden upon you, because my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Take my yoke upon you. So the people up in Judea, they were a miserable lot, because they were better than you. Let's go down to Samaria for amendment. Jesus visited a well at the hour of noon. Why did he go at the hour of noon? Because nobody would be there. Why? It's the hottest hour of the day. The women to draw water would go early in the morning, or just before dusk in the evening, because those were the cool of the time of the day. But he knew there'd be one woman at that well who was a social outcast. You see, she was known as a marriage breaker several times over. The women hated her of that village, and the men joined in so that they get the smile and approval of their wives. This woman was an outcast, so she went to the well at noon, because she knew nobody else would be there, and she wouldn't get their frowns and their spit.

But Jesus was at that well at noon, because he cares about the outcasts. This is so interesting. She's there to draw water. Now remember, she thinks he's from Judea, and all he asks her is, Madam, I'm kind of thirsty. Would you draw water for me? I'm going to put it in our vernacular and put it in our today's language. Sir, you're willing to take a glass of water from a filthy woman like me? Aren't you afraid somebody's going to see you drinking out of my hand? Have you lost your mind? I'm from Samaria. I can tell by the look of you. You're a special teacher of the word. Why are you having anything to do with me? In other words, she did not actually feel worthy to give him a cup of water.

He wasn't the bad guy. She was saying, I'm the bad person. If you associate with me, people are going to be upset with you. The Samaritans believed what the people up in Jerusalem said about them. They were called the dogs of Israel. The dogs. They were Samaritans. You know the story about the Samaritan who came along and helped the man who's laying by the side of the road all beat up. Do you know what word is not in that chapter? The word good. Have you ever heard the story about the good Samaritan? What made him good? Not the priests that passed on the other side of the road and left that man to die. It's we.

It's the Bible translators. It's the people who print this book out and sell it to us. They put a little heading. The good Samaritan. Why is that even in there? Because you see, traditionally, there is no good Samaritan. Oh, we found a winner. We found a winner. He's a good one. No, no, no, no. The Lord does not look upon people in that fashion. You're the wrong color. You speak the wrong language. You haven't got enough education and you're a loser.

Loser. She felt unworthy. Jesus had to lift her up. She said, you people are so high minded. You think that Mount Zion is the only mountain where God could ever bless you? What's wrong with our mountain? You see, they were such outcasts. They actually built their own synagogues and they built their own altar because they weren't they weren't really invited to go up to the Passover. They weren't invited to go and get in on the on the sacrifices for the sins of the nation. They knew that the people up there, the high minded, didn't even consider them to be proper Jewish people. We don't care if you're you're circumcised, you're filthy or rotten. I've seen the things, I've seen the things hanging by the door in your house. You're into syncretism. We have no use for you. They were already in a very negative mindset. And then there's those Galileans. Some went up to Jerusalem. Some went down to Samaria. But in Galilee, you just go there.

Jesus is by the side of the lake. Thousands are present. How many thousands? 5,000 men plus women plus children. That's how it's recorded. So give me a number. What do you think? Could there have been 10,000 people there? Sure.

Does it matter? Does it matter how many people were there? I mean 1,000, 10,000. You're going to feed them all. And Jesus sends the disciples out and says, go and see what you can find. And as the disciples are going on looking, see what's in anything that they're carrying. These were poor people, so many of them. And a little boy is sitting there with a little brown bag. He sees the disciples coming and he thinks to himself, I have a hunch they're after my lunch. And they said, the master needs its son. And he surrenders his lunch. Now, I'm not going to tell you how many pieces of bread and how many pieces of fish because I mess it up every time. Pick a number, any number you want. Okay.

Do you want to give me the truth? I'm asking a scholar in the back. How many pieces of fish were there? Larry? Thank you, sir. That leaves how many loaves? Pardon? Did you say something? How many loaves? And three fish maybe? Okay. So think about this. Let's say it's five and three. And we say, we would like to talk about the miracle where Jesus, the miracle is Jesus changed a couple of pieces of bread, a few dead fish, and he fed 5,000 men plus women and children.

Is that a miracle? Let me tell you a bigger miracle, honey. Jesus said, tell the people sit down. I'm going to feed them. Nicholas, the miracle is they, I'm getting goosebumps. They sat down. Hello? They sat down. Now, if Jesus had said to a whole bunch of, if Jesus had said to 20 people in Samaria, 20, a little bit of bread, a little bit of fish, sit down, I'm going to feed you, they'd say. It's a trick, isn't it? This is a, don't take the food. Don't, don't take it. There's something wrong going on here. He's with the government.

They're checking out to see if we speak French. Did you fill out the census? How many got a census? A few. So it said, who lives in your house? I said, April Wilma Forrest. Who else? David Charles Forrest. Good. Go over to page four. Who did you say is living in your house again? I thought, are you serious? I have to write it out again. I wrote it out again.

David Charles Forrest, April Wilma Forrest. And then under my name, they said, what is your gender? And I wrote, David, D-A-V-I-D. I did. What's the gender of the other person whose name is April? Gender? He's a lumberjack. We all love April the lumberjack. What's the gender of the other person, April Wilma? Wilma, I wrote, April. I'd like to think that the people in Ottawa are intelligent. Last page was a blank page. And it said, do you have any questions or suggestions? I wrote, yes, I do.

As a matter of fact, you asked me about my name and you asked me about my wife's name. Then you asked us our gender. I said, I am offended. I wrote it. I'm offended. And I wrote, wake up. And I left my phone number. And I almost wrote under that, make my day. It's a trick. Don't eat the fish. It's a trick. There's something wrong here. You have something better to do, sir, if you can turn bread and fish into a banquet. The people up in Judea, sit down.

We're going to feed you. Did you know that Wendy's meat is now halal? You will not get a burger at Wendy's going forward without eating halal meat. What's halal meat? Google it. Yum. If you had gone up to Judea and said, I'm going to feed you, they'd say, is it kosher? It's got to be kosher for us. A little boy is laying quietly in his bed. It's daybreak. And the little fellow is awakened by a hinge that needs a little attention. She tried not to disturb him as she opened the door, but his eyes popped open. There's his mother wrapped in a shawl that was very, very old, barefoot because her sandals were worn out. She says, go back to sleep.

He's looking out the door. It's still dark. Where are you going, mommy? I've got to go and see a doctor. No, mommy, please don't go. Mommy, we have no money. You said we spent all our money. The doctors have our money. How can you pay for a doctor? You had no money. She said, it's okay, sweetie. You go back to sleep. Last evening, my neighbor told me about a doctor who practices medicine and he doesn't charge. And everyone that he touches with his medicine gets 100% well.

Mommy, you'll never get near him if he doesn't charge any money. Please don't go. It's okay, sweetie. I have a plan. So she makes her way to the crowd and on her hands and knees, she's making her way between the knees and the ankles. Now to the Pharisees, this is a problem because you see, you've already read in that story that she had an issue of blood. A woman who has an issue of blood, whether it's a timely thing on a regular cycle or if in this case of this lady, she's dying of an issue of blood, she has an internal crisis. No matter the reason for the issue of blood, this woman is ceremonially unclean. And if this is a man of God, if she touches him, he becomes ceremonially unclean. And everybody that she touches as she goes through, whether she touches them with the rag of her shawl or touches their foot or if her foot touches their foot, her foot was unclean. No matter what she touched, if she puts her hand on a door handle, it becomes unclean. Don't touch anything that this woman has touched. But she dared. She dared to crawl through the people.

And when she got close enough, she reached out and she touched the hem of his garment. And Jesus turned and said, who touched me? Because when she touched him, virtue flowed from him to her. How come he wasn't made unclean? About 10 miles from here is a filthy garbage dump. And the sun is shining on that garbage dump today. Pure rays of the sun. That pure sun today will bathe that garbage pile. And we do not consider the sun having touched the garbage to now be unclean. Instead of Jesus becoming unclean, she became clean. He turned and said, who touched me? And the disciples almost mockingly said, master. Look at that crowd. People are banging elbows.

They're pushing. They're all trying to get close. They want to hear what you've got to say. If you're going to open somebody's eyes, they want to see it. They want to say, get out of my way. I got to see this. I got to see the crooked limbs straightened out. Blind saying, I could see, I could see. Everybody wanted to get close. Everybody's touching Jesus. But Jesus says in his mind, one touched me with intention. You look down and there she was. She was a Galilean. So she believed what no Pharisee would ever believe.

Now watch this. Galileans tended to start spiritual tsunamis. Check this out. See if Pastor Dave's correct. Until you get to that miracle, it says, everybody he touched was made whole. After that miracle, you'll read this. And as many as touched him, who reached out to touch him? Not the Samaritans. I'm unworthy. Their songs, when they would sing, were written in a minor key. Happy birthday. Happy birthday. The people up in high Judea, they were the high minded people. But the people of Galilee taught others how to trust and how to believe.

Out of 37 miracles, 32 or 33 happened in Galilee. Now to go back to our opening scripture, and I've got about two minutes to close. That two minutes is imposed by me. Nobody else is saying anything. Prepare the way of the Lord. A voice in the wilderness. Let the high places be brought down. Let the low places be brought up. And prepare a highway for the Lord. Jesus' message to all the Judeans. You say, Jesus talks such harsh, harsh words. No, no, no, no. Back up, back up, back up. Jesus' high words, hot words, denouncing words.

You snake in the grass. You whited sepulcher. You sons of the devil. He only said those words in Judea. Hello. Of his disciples, Nicholas, 11 were from, of the disciples, 12, 11 were from Galilee. Which one was from Judea? To those who are personally more righteous than the rest. I dare to tell you a story. I make you people afraid when I say I'm going to tell you a story. I was pastoring this little church in London. I'm going to tell you. And there was a man from a Baptist church in the city of London. He was a soul winner.

He was in your face with the gospel. He was incredible. Outgoing, boisterous, talked to people about Jesus. He was always in taking people to church, inviting them. You got to come to my church, come to my church. A soul winner. And he just happened that on this Sunday, he kept on coming over to check our church out. He couldn't believe that we were growing. It was supposed to die and close. And here this Sunday, he came. The place was full. And my boss, the district superintendent, was there. So the superintendent, I heard him standing right there. He says, what's your name?

Ed Peckham. How long you been coming here? Oh, 45 minutes. You don't come here? No, I go to, I go to Wortley Baptist. And my superintendent turned and walked away. I was thunderstruck. Don't, don't, don't do that. Don't do that. I had a district superintendent who was more spiritual than I. I never ran, I never let my name go into politics. I never would have got voted anyway. Nobody wants a loud mouth like me. But I believe that John the Baptist would have had a message for the spiritual leader.

Come down, come down. And to the little lady that I visited in the hospital, I got a call from down east. I don't know how you go down and you end up east. But I have a phone call, and they said, Pastor David, I don't know you. I've never met you. But the word is out down here that you love people and you lead people to the Lord. I've got one for you. She's in the hospital. She's got cancer in her leg. She's dying right now. She doesn't know Jesus. Would you be willing to go? I said, what's her name? And within hours, I was standing at the bed of this lady.

Her name was Betty. Why are you here? My name is David Forrest. I'm a preacher. Who sent you here? Well, I got a call from down east. Who did that? I said, you're getting pretty rankled.

I said, it's better to keep their name out of it, maybe. She said, well, you're wasting your time. I said, I don't think so. I said, somebody cared enough about you to call me, and I cared enough to come here. So, I'm not wasting my time, dear lady. I'm here.

I'm a man on a mission, and I'm here to tell you about Jesus. She said, Jesus wants nothing to do with me. I said, I have a question for you, Betty. Would you, by chance, be interested in taking interest in him? If he shows any interest in you, would you respond with interest in him? The story goes on. She started crying, and I've been a wicked woman. She was afraid to tell me the things that she had done, and I said, I don't care. If your people in your church knew who I was and what I had done, all the wicked things, I said, they'll never know, because you're not going to tell me, because I don't want to know. Jesus knows, and he's going to clean that up, and I led her to the Lord that day, and you know what that lady started doing?

She graduated from the hospital cancer-free, and she started with Jimmy Swaggart long play records in the sitting room of this big high-rise for seniors, and she had gospel hour every Friday afternoon. She soon had, she had a congregation of 50 people, and she's playing the long playing records of Jimmy Swaggart singing these beautiful songs, and between songs, she was telling them, we need this Jesus. She was leading people to the Lord in that place. She came from Samaria, but Jesus said to the lady down in Samaria, come up, and would to the Lord that everybody in this place is a Gentile, a dirty Gentile from Galilee, who says, I take Jesus as my King, my Lord, and my Savior.

You're sick, we'll pray. Oh, don't bother praying for me. Everybody and his friend has prayed for me. Oh, you must be from Samaria. Happy birthday. The importunate woman who kept on coming, and kept on coming, and kept on coming, that's for the Samaritan people. The good Samaritan, he's just a kind man. He wasn't a good one. He was just a Samaritan who did a wonderful deed that day. All Samaritans can become good Samaritan. So, when you're looking at me and say, I've got you sized up. You're a Samaritan. Leave it alone. He's high-minded.

He thinks he's special. Leave it alone. Don't be the accuser of the brethren. You know that one, right? Just identify people by the Jesus that you see in them. Get excited about that, okay? Galileans make a difference. God bless the Galileans. Hallelujah. Heavenly Father, some of us are probably living in Samaria. Lord, help us if there's any high-minded, self-righteous people. We want to be Galileans. That's actually a high calling. Lord, for some of us, we need to be called down, and some of us, we need to be called up, and it's Jesus that's calling.

He's tenderly calling today. Help us to be faithful to the Word, and help us to believe what we read in the Word. Make the Word alive to our hearts. Lord, I pray that this Word today, out of the Bible, this was the Word today. I pray it'll make a difference in every one of us. Change me, O Lord, freshen my heart. Give me new vision. Give me new passion. Search me, O God, and know my heart, I pray. Cleanse me from every ounce of waywardness. Be ye holy, you said, for I am holy.

Amen.

Jesus loves you.

Jesus loves you, Betty.