Rebuilding Your Altar

1 Kings 18:30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.

The Importance Of The Altar

- I’m not going to take the time this evening to retell a very familiar Bible Story.
- I will, however, briefly fill you in on what is happening in the events surrounding our text.
- Ahab has risen to power in Israel and, along with his wicked wife Jezebel,
  - he has led the nation of Israel into the worship of false Gods and has even set out to murder all of the prophets of the one true God.
- There was a particular prophet, however, who was a thorn in Ahab’s side.
  - God used Elijah and Ahab,
    - no matter how hard he tried, could not lay a hand on him.
- Our text takes place as the conflict between them begins to come to its climax.
- In a dramatic episode,
  - under the instruction of God,
    - Elijah comes out of hiding and sends word to Ahab that he is ready for a showdown.
- Ahab brings all of his priests, which worship the false god Baal, and meets Elijah on Mount Carmel.
- It was great supernatural showdown where the God of Elijah was to be proven against the false gods of this world.
- You will remember the story from Sunday School.
  - The prophets of Baal went first.
    - They prepared their bull and placed it on an altar for Baal.
- Then they prayed to Baal,
• asking him to send fire down to the altar.
  • They prayed all morning long.
    • They prayed until noon.
      ▪ They cried out for Baal to hear them
      ▪ and answer their prayer.
    ▪ But nothing happened.
  • They even danced around the altar.
    ▪ But they received no response from Baal.
• At noon Elijah began to tease them.
  • “Shout louder!” he said.
    ▪ “I’m sure Baal is a god!
      • Perhaps he has too much to think about.
      • Or maybe he is busy right now.
      • Or perhaps he’s away on a trip.
      • Maybe he’s sleeping.
    ▪ Shout a little louder,
      • you might need to wake him up.
• They shouted louder and louder.
  • They continued praying and shouting
    ▪ with all their might until evening.
    ▪ But there was no reply.
• When they finally gave up,
  • Elijah gathered the people to himself.
    ▪ Come near to me, he said, in our text
      • and help me repair the altar of the Lord
    ▪ that is broken down.
• The nation was in the grip of sin and idolatry,
  • they were on the brink
    ▪ of the terrible judgment of God
  • and this great prophet
    ▪ was about to demonstrate for them
      • the power of God
    ▪ and call them back
      ▪ from the brink of destruction
        ▪ to a place of repentance
  • But the first thing that he does
    ▪ is to point out the fact
      ▪ that the altar of the Lord
        ▪ is broken down
      ▪ and in need of repairs.
    ▪ They needed to rebuild their altar.

• There is a significant link
  • between the condition of the altar
and the condition of the nation of Israel.

- There always has been.
  - Throughout the record of the Old Testament,
    - the condition of the nation of Israel
      - could be judged by
      - the condition of her altars.

- When Israel would neglect the altars,
  - when she would turn her back on God,
    - the nation as a whole
  - would fall into a state of spiritual decline,
    - they would free fall into sin and hypocrisy
      - until they reached a place
        - of absolute apostasy.

- That kingdom of priests,
  - that nation that was chosen by God,
    - his elect people,
  - would always drift into
    - the bondage of sin and idolatry
      - whenever they abandoned their altar.

- The reason why the altar
  - is the best barometer
    - of the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel
      - is that the altar is the place
        - where God has chosen
          - to meet humanity.

- The altar is where God deals with his people.
  - And, when the altar is neglected,
    - when communion with God no longer matters,
      - that is when sin rises up
        - in the hearts of the people
          - and begins to reign
          - in the midst of the nation.

- The writer of Proverbs says
  - that righteousness exalts a nation,
    - but sin is a reproach to any people.
  - The record of scripture bears out that truth.

- When there was an active altar in Israel,
  - they were an exalted nation.

- But, when the altar no longer held
  - a prominent place in the nation of Israel,
    - without fail, that is when sin
      - would rise up in the nation.
• I cannot overemphasize, tonight,
  o just how important
    ▪ the condition of the altars were
      ▪ to the success or failure
        o of the people of God.

• The altar is the place
  o where heaven meets earth,
    ▪ it is the zipcode where
      • a man can meet God
    ▪ it is where God deals
      • with the heart of a man.

• It was never supposed to fall into disrepair.
  o It was supposed to be a central part of their lives.
    ▪ The altar was intended
      • to be a place of place of daily sacrifice.
    ▪ It was a place for man
      • to be daily reminded
        o that his greatest ambition in life
          ▪ was to be a servant of God.

• It was at the altar
  o that the nation of Israel was reminded
    ▪ that they didn’t become great
      • by their own power.
  o They didn’t get there by their own hand.
    ▪ They didn’t owe their greatness
      • to the strength of their armies
      • or the skill of their warriors.
  o Their greatness wasn’t
    ▪ in their natural resources
      • or the wealth they may have amassed.

• The altar was about reminding them
  o that the thing that made them great
    ▪ was the presence of a holy God
      • in their midst!
  o It was God, and their service to him,
    ▪ that had exalted them above other nations.
  o It was God that had set them apart,
    ▪ God that had provided for them,
    ▪ God that had made a way
      • when there was no way.
• And the altar served
  o as a daily reminder
    ▪ not to rely upon themselves,
    ▪ not to depend upon their own strength
      • but to remember that the presence of God
        o was their greatest resource!

• **When they neglected the altar,**
  o **they neglected God!**

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**Altars Matter**

• I am very excited about our new altars.
  o It thrilled me to see folks
    ▪ kneeling at them and praying this morning.

• I recognize the fact that we have been using the platform
  o and the front pew as altars
    ▪ for four years now
      • And I know there’s nothing wrong with that.
  o I even understand that
    ▪ those practices will continue,
      • because there isn’t enough room
        o at these altars for everyone
        o at the same time,

• But I am excited, tonight, about the fact
  o that there are altars
    ▪ in the house of God again.
  o It thrills me that they are here
    ▪ because I don’t want to ever
      • send the message that, as a church,
        o we do not value a special place
          ▪ called an altar!

• I think it’s a good thing
  o I think it’s a God thing
    ▪ To make it a priority to reestablish
      • the presence of altars in our church.

• I also feel very strongly that,
  o as we do that,
    ▪ it is a good time to
      • reestablish the priority
        o of altars in our personal lives!

• **Listen to me, folks: We need altars!**
  o We need a place
    ▪ where we can meet with God
  o and a place
    ▪ where God can meet with us.
• Your altar may not be made of oak like these are,
  o And it may not be in the church house
    ▪ Like these are.
  o Your altar may be an old chair
    ▪ in your living room
  o or beside your bed
    ▪ in your bedroom,
  o Or at a bench in your work room
    ▪ It really doesn’t matter where it is.
  • --YOUR ALTAR CAN BE ANYWHERE--
  o but wherever your altar is
    ▪ you need to make sure
      • that you don’t neglect it!
    ▪ You need to make sure
      • that you haven’t let it fall into disrepair.
  o Listen to me, if your altar has been neglected
    ▪ If it is old and broken down for lack of use
      • It is time to repair your altar!

• The Holy Ghost has instructed me tonight
  o to tell this church
    ▪ that it is time to
      • rebuild the altars.
    ▪ It is time to reestablish
      • the importance of altars in our lives!

• Let me tell you something about altars,
  o they were supposed to be used every day.
    ▪ This isn’t just a once a quarter thing,
      • this isn’t just a monthly thing
        o or even a weekly thing.
    • altars are intended to be used daily.

Everything Happens At An Altar
• Everything that is important
  o in the life of a child of God
    ▪ happens at an altar.
  o Your altar is where you meet God.
    ▪ God deals with your sins at the altar.
  o Repentance takes place
    ▪ at an altar.
  o Your heart responds
    ▪ to the presence of God
      • at an altar.
  o God’s blessing and provision
• are secured at an altar.
  o God’s healing touch
    ▪ is loosed at an altar.

• Everything you need from God
  o Is obtained at an altar!
• If you need an answer from God,  
  o it can be found at an altar.
• If you need direction from God 
  o it can be found at an altar.
  o If you need deliverance
    ▪ from a spirit of oppression
      • or the clutches of depression,
      ▪ your deliverance can be found at an altar!

An Altar for You
• Let me make it personal. 
  o YOU need an altar in your life tonight.
• We needed altars for this church  
  o and I am so thankful that Brother Donnie 
    ▪ put his talent to work
      • and made us altars.
• But more than we need  
  o an altar for the church,  
    ▪ you need an altar for you!
  o You need a personal altar in your life!

• It all comes down to a simple question: 
  o How bad do we want a move of God? 
    ▪ How bad do we want the anointing of God? 
      • How hungry are we for the presence of God?
  o Listen to your pastor: 
    ▪ The anointing of this church will never be 
      • bigger than our altars!
    ▪ And the anointing on your life will never be 
      • bigger than your personal altar.
• If you want a move of God,  
  o then you need an altar.
• If you want to be used by God,  
  o then you need an altar.
• If you want the power of the Holy Ghost 
  o to work in your life,  
    ▪ then you need an altar!
• Let me tell you where anointing flows from.
  o Anointing comes from Sacrifice.
    ▪ And Sacrifice only happens at an altar.
  o If you don’t have a fresh sacrifice on your altar,
    ▪ you are operating without the power
      • and the anointing that God
        o desires to give you!
  o Sacrifice is costly.
    ▪ It costs me something to make a sacrifice to God.
  o The reason why altars are so important
    ▪ Is because sacrifice is so expensive.
    ▪ The altar requires your very best.
• Let me tell you why
  o you can’t neglect your altar;
    ▪ because when you neglect your altar,
      • you give God something less than your best.
• When you neglect your altar
  o you give God the leftovers in your life.
    ▪ God doesn’t want your leftovers!
      • He wants your best.
• The altar will challenge you to put God first.
  o The altar will compel you to put
    ▪ his house,
    ▪ his kingdom,
    ▪ his will for your life
      • above everything else.
• The altar will challenge you
  o to seek the kingdom of God first
    ▪ and let God take care of everything else.
• The altar is where the things
  o that hinder your walk with God
    ▪ are consumed in the fires of sacrifice.
  o The obstacles and stumbling blocks
    ▪ that are keeping you from being
      • what God has called you to be
        o are broken and destroyed at an altar.
• The altar is where you surrender to God.
  o It is where I let go
    ▪ of my death grip on my life
      • and turn it over to God.
  o Where I surrender my will to God.
    ▪ Where I pray, not my will but thine be done!
  o True submission to God
can only be accomplished at an altar!

• The altar is where people
  o set themselves apart to God.
    ▪ Where they consecrate themselves to the Lord.
• The altar is where I become a living sacrifice.
  o Where we submit our lives to God.

• The altar is where we deal with our flesh.
  o It is at the altar
    ▪ where the old man is crucified with Christ.
• If you are going to die daily, as Paul did,
  o my friend that can’t be done
    ▪ at any other place than an altar.
• The altar is that place
  o where I enter into the presence of God
    ▪ and say search me Lord.

• It is a place of confession,
  o it where I stand in the presence of God
    ▪ and confess my faults.
• Let me tell you how you deal with sin.
  o You take it to an altar
    ▪ and you confess it before God.
  o You put it under the blood of Jesus at an altar!

• Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

• If you try to cove your sin up, you will not prosper.
  o But if you confess your sin at an altar,
    ▪ God has promised to have mercy!
    • Secret sins,
    • hidden sins,
    • those sins that are covered up,
      o only develop in lives
      o where altars are neglected!
• When you meet God at an altar,
  o his holiness and his righteousness
    ▪ will convict you of sin in your life!
  o In the presence of God,
    ▪ sin becomes a burden,
      • it becomes obvious,
      • and it must be dealt with
• when you are kneeling at your altar!

• The holy presence of God
  o brings overwhelming conviction
    ▪ of sin in our lives.
• Many times our greatest problem
  o is that we try so hard to live Holy
    ▪ while we are not in the practice
      • of exposing ourselves
        ▪ to the holiness of God!
• His holiness deals with our sin.
  o His holiness makes worldliness
    ▪ uncomfortable in our lives.
    • His holiness will convict us and change us!
• The Altar is where we meet a holy God.
  o We commune with God at an altar.
    ▪ And God communes with us.
  o It is at altar where my inadequacies
    ▪ meet a God who is more than adequate.
  o It is at an altar where my inabilities
    ▪ meet a God who is more than able.
  o It is at an altar where my impossibility
    ▪ meets a God who thrives
      • in the impossible circumstance.
• It is at an altar
  o where my weaknesses,
  o and my insecurities
  o and my shortcomings
    ▪ are met by the one
      • who makes me an overcomer
      • in Christ Jesus.
• It is at altar where my need
  o meets my provider
    ▪ where my obstacles
      • encounters the way maker.
• It is at an altar
  o where he speaks peace
    ▪ to my troubled storm,
  o at an altar
    ▪ where he corrects my direction
      • and orders my footsteps.
    ▪ It happens at an altar!

• It is at an altar
Rebuilding Your Altar

Notes by Pastor Tony McCall

The Pentecostals of Lake City

- where we give thanks to the Lord.
- It is at an altar where we are reminded
  - of what he has done
    - and we lift our voices to thank him
      - for his many blessings.
    - Thanksgiving happens at an altar.
- It is at an altar where we praise God.
  - It is at an altar where we set our burdens down,
    - where we lay our struggles aside
      - and lose ourselves in the presence of God
        - as we worship him.
  - Many times we are depleted and empty,
    - worn out and physically depressed,
      - simply because we have not
        - taken the time to go to the altar
        - and lay our burdens at the feet of Jesus
          - while we take a praise break!
- Everyone needs a break from time to time.
  - Everyone needs the relief
    - of a little rest and refreshing
      - from time to time.
  - Let me tell you where your rest is at.
    - It is at an altar!

An Altar for Your Family
- Our priority this month is families.
  - I want you to know that our families need an altar.
- Hell is waging war against our families.
  - Your enemy would love
    - to destroy your marriage
      - to wreak havoc in the lives of your children,
        - to destroy your home.
- How do you safeguard against that?
  - Your family needs an altar.
    - Your family needs a place of prayer.
    - Your family needs a place of conviction.
    - You family needs a place of communion.
      - Your family needs an altar.
  - Mom and Dad, you need to teach your children,
    - not just by your words but by your deeds,
      - that the church is a priority in your life,
        - that serving God matters
          - more than anything else.
Bring your children to the altar,
  • bring your family to the altar,
Teach them that everything good in life
  • Comes from their heavenly father.
Teach them the importance of an altar!

A Neglected Altar
• So how does an altar fall into disrepair?
  o How does an altar get to the place
    • where it needs to be rebuilt?
    • **It only happens by neglect.**
• The only one that can damage your altar is you
  o and the only way that you can damage your altar
    • is by neglecting the altar.
• The devil, as bad as he would like to,
  o cannot destroy your altar.
    • He doesn’t have that authority.
• You are the only one that can determine
  o the condition of the altar in your life.
  • **If your altar has been neglected,**
    o **there is no one to blame but you!**
• That which is neglected
  o never gets better on its own.
• When you neglect something
  o it begins to deteriorate
    • and the longer you neglect it
      • the longer it deteriorates.
  o And it will not change
    • until you make up your mind
      • that you are going to rebuild
        o the altar in your life!

Rebuilding Your Altar
• The first step to rebuilding your altar
  o is to recognize that it is broke.
    • This is where it gets tricky.
  • **We are experts at deceiving ourselves.**
    o The way of a man, Solomon said,
      • seems right to the man.
• If you aren’t careful,
  o you will convince yourself
    • that there’s nothing wrong with your altar.
• I mean, come on now,
  o I pray when it really matters.
    ▪ I pray every now and then.
    ▪ I pray when something important is going on.
• God and I have an understanding,
  o He knows I care about him
    ▪ and I know he cares about me.

**Don’t fool yourself.**
  o When you neglect your altar,
    ▪ you drift further and further from God.
  o When you neglect your altar,
    ▪ sin begins to gain a foothold in your life.
  o When you neglect your altar
    ▪ his righteousness gives way to self-righteousness.

• It is my prayer, tonight,
  o that a convicting spirit of God
    ▪ will move through this house
      • **and make us uncomfortable**
      o with the condition of our altars!
  o Lord, don’t let us be satisfied with neglected altars.
    ▪ Don’t let us be satisfied with altars
      • that have fallen into a state of disrepair.
        o Convict us God.
        o Call us back to the altar.

**A Platform for God to Work**
• The altars were broken down in Israel
  o and no one seemed to care.
• So Elijah gathered the people to himself.
  o And he rebuilt the Lord’s altar
    ▪ that had been destroyed.
  o He built it with twelve stones
    ▪ just like it is supposed to be done.
  o He placed firewood on top of the stones,
    ▪ and dug a ditch around the altar.
  o He prepared the bull
    ▪ and placed it on top of the wood
      • on the altar.
• Then he did something amazing!
  o He told the people to fill four barrels with water,
    ▪ and pour them out on the altar!
  o Then he told them to do it again.
    ▪ And yet again, a third time.
They soaked the sacrifice,  
- the wood  
  - and filled the trenches with water.  
- **The altar was absolutely drenched with water!**

The challenge was for God to answer by fire.  
- And Elijah made sure  
  - that when the fire fell,  
  - everyone would know  
    - that only God could have done it.

Finally, when it was time to offer the evening sacrifice,  
- the prophet stepped forward and prayed.

And when he prayed  
- at the altar that he had repaired,  
  - the fire of the Lord fell,  
    - and consumed the burnt sacrifice,  
      - and the wood,  
      - and the stones,  
      - and the dust,  
      - and even licked up the water  
      - that was in the trench.

**Let me tell you what happens when you rebuild your altar:**  
- **You create a platform in your life for God to prove himself.**

When Elijah rebuilt the altar he set the stage  
- for the mighty miraculous  
  - outpouring of the presence of God.  
    - Do you need a miracle?  
      - Rebuild your altar.  
    - Do you need the provision of heaven?  
      - Rebuild your altar.  
    - Do you want to see God change things  
      - in your home,  
      - your family,  
      - your children’s lives?  
      - Rebuild your altar.

- **Do you want to have revival in Lake City?**  
  - Rebuild your altar.

**I stand behind this desk tonight**  
- under the anointing of the Holy Ghost  
  - to tell you with the full authority of heaven  
- that when you rebuild your altar  
  - God is going to demonstrate himself in your life!
CLOSE

- Fire couldn’t fall from heaven
  - until the altar was repaired.
    - Revival couldn’t come to a nation
      - until the altar was repaired.

- The situation in your home
  - is going to change
    - when you rebuild your altar.
      - Deliverance is coming.
      - Healing is coming.
      - Purpose is coming.
      - A Change of direction is coming.
        - When you rebuild your altar.

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.