

He is the kind of God that does not need us to tell him that he's God to be God, he doesn't need us to volunteer to campaign for him, he was God before we were there to say he was God, he doesn't suffer from low self esteem and need us to come along and tell him who he is, he knew who he was before we knew who we were, he's God all by himself. He has never been worried, God has never been worried, God has never been shocked, he determines the end from the beginning and then works all things after the counsel of his own will, God has determined where are you going to end up before you were ever born. He says to one prophet, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, I ordained thee, and I sanctified thee to be a prophet unto the nations".

I didn't wait 'til you got here and then look at you and see what kind of gifts you got and try to figure out a position for you, I birthed you with intentionality, for you to fit a particular spot. Nobody can fit your spot like you do, I designed you for that spot, I gave you everything you need to function in that spot, how dare you think you're not enough; when you think you're not enough, you're saying

I didn't plan well enough. You are enough for your assignment and if you're not enough for what you're doing, you got the wrong assignment, because everything I intended you to do I equipped you to do.

So you can admire other people's gifts but never be jealous of them because if you needed what they had, I would give you what they had, I gave you everything you need to do what you gotta do. You must understand then that God is intentional and we are created in the likeness of an intentional God. Thereby, our greatest defense is not our legs like the hyenas running, or the wings of an eagle that spread out, or the eyes of an eagle that are given to it as a defense, or the roar of the lion. No, our greatest defense is our mind, our brain. Our legs are not fast, arms do not fly, we can't lift up out of the ground without building something to fly in.

The thing that gives us our defense is how we think, and if there were anything up under attack it is how we think. That's where the battleground is, it's in your mind, that's where the enemy wants to confuse you with

different voices and different ideas is in your head because he knows your greatest weapon is your mind; sisters, not your mouth. I know there are a lot of books out there that says your tongue is your weapon, your mind is your weapon. Your mind is your weapon, so winning the argument doesn't move the agenda forward because it is possible to win the argument and lose the war; so when you are insecure, you don't retaliate by talking but by thinking. "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he", so I'm gonna think my way out, I'm going to think my way out. I'm going to think my way out because I'm starting to understand that God is intentional.

When we look at our text today, we're not just listening at the writings and the murmurings of some itinerate preacher or some evangelist who has come into town to speak to the Philippian Church, we are looking at the one that God used to push out of his womb the Philippian church; he has birthed it himself, he has an attachment to it. There's something about your children that will get your attention quicker than anything else; good or bad, they determine your

mood sometimes, because when you have birthed something, you can't help caring about it.

You can say, "I don't care, it doesn't make any difference, you do whatever you want to do", but you're still going to be looking out that window seeing are they home yet? Did they get in the house yet? Yeah, because when you birth something you have a special level of passion about it, especially how God used Paul as a conduit to birth the church at Philippi. It was not that God brought him into the city just to do great preaching, because preaching was not the platform that shook the city, he did some of that but that's not what shook the city, he just preached enough to get on enough powerful people's nerves to get him arrested. So it was not his preaching that converted the city, it was him being arrested.

God created prison as a platform for purpose, he willed him into jail intentionally, God could've stopped the arrest. Sometimes God doesn't stop trouble because trouble is the platform whereby he shows himself strong, God said, "I'm gonna use you getting beaten and locked up in a way that I could not use your

preaching, or you're writing, or your intellectualism". I need a platform big enough that the wealthy people are talking about you because they had you arrested, the elected officials are talking about you because they executed the arrests, and the carnal criminals are talking about you because I'm going to put you in jail right with them; and I put you in jail to show off, I put you in jail and I watched.

I let you get arrested, I let you get beaten in front of everybody, I let you come down to absolutely nothing, I let them drag your bloody, striped body into a jail cell so that everybody could be sure that you were locked away in an inner sanctum, in an impossible situation, in a place from which you could not escape, with chains around your feet and chains around your hands; because you prayed and asked me to use you, so I'm going to use you, I'm gonna use you. There's a lady in the hospital I want you to meet, and so, I'm gonna bring you in with chest pains and an ambulance just so that you can be across the hallway...

Y'all can't, y'all-y'all-y'all-y'all-y'all can't, y'all can't understand how God sets things up. The big word I want to use, the first big word I want to use is exposure. God put Paul in prison to expose Philippi to the Gospel. In other words, God creates problems so that he can get the glory out of solving them. In other words, God lets Lazarus die just so he can raise him from the dead. In other words, God lets the blind man be born blind so that at the right time he can heal his blindness and get the glory. His mother didn't sin, his father didn't sin, I willed him to be blind because when the time is right, the way I bring him out is gonna give me glory, so just sit still and wait on me, I'm using the trouble to expose Philippi to my ministry.

Now you can only embrace this if you can get past your narcissism, and narcissism today is a hard wall to knock down; you can only embrace this when you begin to understand that everything you go through is not about you; you can only embrace this when you begin to understand that God is not a stewardess to make sure that you are comfortable and that your peanuts are warm. He is not as interested in

your comfort, he's interested in maneuvering you into a position of intentionality so that he could work out his will in your life, and he will use both your blessings and your sorrow to prove himself strong in your life so that he can get the glory out of your life; he will will you to come down to a Red Sea you can't get around, block you in on every side, blow back the Red Sea just so your Pharaoh can see that your God is bigger than your Pharaoh and he will let your Pharaoh drown in the afterthoughts of your God.

Until you start living your life with intention you will never make great decisions because great decisions are based on intentionality, they're based on purpose. Great decisions are made when you decide, "I am only going to make decisions that bring out the Israel and not the Jacob". When the Bible says, "Forgetting those things which are behind", it is not talking about Alzheimer's, it is talking about letting go of anything that contradicts your destiny. I make this confession and then I'll pray, I notice that I am the most comfortable around people who have the same history, people who have the same history, like the same foods,

have the same issues, use the same colloquialisms, they make me comfortable 'cause I have history with them.

People who I share destiny with, I visit them but I have trouble grasping that I'm really one of them because I have no history with them, I only have destiny with them. So my challenge is to become more comfortable with shared destiny than I am was shared history, because as long as you keep connecting with people who have shared history you will never go forward. The only way you can go forward is to hook up with people who have the same destiny and be willing to feel out of place in the room, and be willing to be a little bit awkward, and be willing to be out of your comfort zone, and say, "Lord, I trust you, that you wouldn't have brought me in this room if I weren't enough to be in this room, and I thank you for teaching me how to grasp that which has grasped me".

Oh God, there are some people in this room and I'm gonna close with this, God is doing some things in your life that you are experiencing and you have been exposed to, and you are trying to evolve into it but you're having

trouble grasping it. And you can visit it but you can't grasp it because you have no point of reference for what God is trying to do in your life, and so you talk schizophrenic, Jacob one minute, Israel the next minute, Israel one minute, Jacob the next minute. I got this, I believe God, everything's gonna happen, the devil is a lie, oh, the blood prevailed, I got this together... "Oh my God, is this whole thing, how come the whole thing gonna come apart, we're going to lose the house, we're going to lose our mind, we're gonna lose everything, I'm probably gonna end up alcoholic, living outside in the street somewhere, sleeping up under a bridge. I don't know what in the world is going to happen, oh, I coughed, I must have AIDS, I don't know what this is, oh, my hip's out of place, oh, my mind, oh", and whose report do you believe? "I believe the Book of the Lord".

I want to talk to some schizo people who are in a place right now, that sometimes you talk faith and sometimes you talk fear, and sometimes you feel like you got it and sometimes you're scared to death, and sometimes you're ready to take the mountain, sometimes

you feel like the mountain is on top of you, where're my real people at? Make some noise. I want to spend my last few minutes with you, I want to tell you first of all, you're not crazy. You're not crazy. I want to tell you that winning doesn't feel like winning, I want to tell you that God will bring you into a place that you don't feel worthy of and if you're not careful, you will sabotage it just to have company with your kin. I want to tell you, when God starts raising you up, people will resent you and say you're acting funny and that means that you're not acting like where you came from, you're acting like where you're going, and they have an issue with you because you are becoming something bigger than how they define you.

I had 10 members in a city with one red light. I pastored my church half the time from the piano, using my foot as a drum, leading the worship service in a mic, working eight hours a day and putting my check in the church to keep the doors open, but I kept having this sneaky feeling that there was more down inside of me than what my situation said that I was. "And, I count not myself: to have apprehended, but this

one thing I do, by minding that which was behind me, I strain toward that which is before me", I kept pressing. There's nothing wrong with having 10 members, nothing wrong with being in a storefront church if that is your purpose and that is your destiny, but it is asphyxiating to be stuck into something that is beneath what is calling you.

It is asphyxiating to be limited into a shell of what people think you ought to be, it is a prison to be incarcerated and stuck in the state they left you in, and that's why God is breaking chains this morning. Wait-wait-wait-wait-wait, the chains are not on your hands, they're not on your feet, yeah, you got it, you preaching good this morning. The chains are on your mind, and the Lord told me to tell you this morning that you're not going to get there by waiting and praying and believing God, and I know that's very unpopular to say to church people 'cause we respond to everything by waiting and praying and believing God. God said, "You have to be intentional", God said, "You have to get up every morning and strain to think on the level of where he's calling you".

To think yourself free, to think yourself well, to think yourself whole, to think yourself into the next idiom of influence that God is getting ready to take you. That it's going to happen in your head before it happens in your life, that it's going to be in your intentions, it's going to be in your spirit, it's gonna be at your mean-to, "I mean to, I mean to, I'm going after this".

And I want to pray and I won't take long, but I want to pray for people who are trying to grasp what has grasped you, something has grasped you and you can't hardly get your head around it, and you can't hardly get your hands around it, and you don't know exactly what to do with it but something is pulling at you. It won't let you rest, it won't let you hold your peace, it's bothering you, you don't know how to go about it. It doesn't line up with your history, it doesn't fit your background, it's not your personality, that's not even how you're wired, but in the back of your head it keeps calling you and calling you and calling you and calling you away from what you're kin to. I want to pray for people who are willing to strain, who are willing to strain.

Father, right now strengthen every person standing in these aisles, watching over the internet, log onto the broadcasts, waving out from the balcony, standing up in the pews. Every person in this room has felt that schizophrenia, that feeling, that pull, that tug, and they haven't been able to grasp yet what they've been called to. Every person that's willing to transform and change and recreate and renew and reevaluate their circumstance or situation, I know it's not gonna be easy, there's always something trying to pull me back. But I'm through making decisions that make it worse for me, I'm through making decisions based on my history, I'm ready to make decisions based on my destiny.

And devil, I know you don't want me to have it and I know you're trying to shut me down, and I know you're trying to shut me up, I know that, I know that. I know you come to kill, steal and destroy, I know that, I know that. I know that, but I want you to know something too, I'll fight you back, I'm gonna fight you back, I'm gonna fight you in the morning, I'm going to

fight you at lunch time, I'm going to fight you at night, whatever it takes, I'm gonna press so my children can see it and my grandchildren can see it. I'm gonna press so that my sisters and my brothers could know, I'm gonna press 'til my neighbor knows, I'm gonna press 'til hell knows. I'm in a fight right now, I'm straining right now, I'm going to grasp this thing, I'm gonna get this thing even if I have to shut up and not say everything I'm thinking. I'm gonna get this thing even if I've been sabotaging myself I'm gonna get this thing, even if my temper's in the way, I'm gonna drop that too. I press, right now, in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus.

This Sunday morning, when you walk out this door, you walking out of this door into your future, into your destiny, into your tomorrow, into your possibilities, into what God created you to do, are you ready? Are you ready? Put your fist up, I'm going to fight for this, I'm gonna fight for this, I'm gonna fight for this, I'm gonna press for this. I'm gonna fight for this. Still I press.

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