**Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit**

**Clothed with Truth (4 things)**

Zec 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

2Co 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, De 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Mr 12:30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Lu 10:27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

2Ki 23:25 ¶ And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

1. The "heart" (lebab) is the inner part, the inner man of a person.

The heart is the seat of man's affection and will (devotion).

The heart causes us to give either good things or bad things.

The heart causes us to devote ourselves to either good or bad.

Therefore, Christ says we are to love God "with all our heart." We are to focus our heart, our affection, and our will (devotion) upon God. We are to love God supremely.

1. The "soul" (nephesh) is the seat of man's breath and life or consciousness.

The soul is the natural life of a man, the consciousness, the breath, the essence, the being of a man. The soul is the animal life of a man. The soul is the breath and consciousness that distinguishes man and other animals from vegetation.

The world of vegetation lives and man and animals live, but there is a difference in their living. Man and animals are breathing and conscious beings.

The essence of their being is breath and consciousness. They are living souls.

This is clearly pointed out in Gen 1:20: "Let the waters bring forth abundantly 'living souls' [nephesh] that hath life." The "living souls" that God created were different from the vegetation He had just created. The "living souls" were creatures (fish) that breathed and possessed consciousness.

Christ said we are to love God "with all our soul," that is, with all our life, our breath, our consciousness. We are to love God with all the breath and consciousness, all the life and awareness we have.

c.  The word “might”"strength" (meod) means the full strength, all the strength of a person. It means to use up one's strength thoroughly, to the point of exhaustion. We are to love God with all our strength—fully, thoroughly, to the point of exhaustion. All our power and ability

 Joh 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

The greatest commandment is clear: we must love God with all our hearts, souls, and strength.

**America is in a Spiritual and Moral Crisis**

America’s foundation is Christian, We as Americans have a Christian heritage, Many in America are rebelliously degenerating into a godless society.

The professing church in America, is powerless to stop and redirect the rushing secular currents. Mired in a spiritual and moral crisis, America's only hope is a national revival, like God has graciously bestowed in the past.

From the beginning, Christian values ingrained America's political and social fabric. Its democratic form of government was founded on faith in God. To this day United States currency bears the inscription, "In God We Trust." America flourished while Christianity permeated all aspects of life, including the laws, education, and culture.

1. **The thought of the Removal of God is a disgrace**

The powers in America are rejecting God and His ways. Federal courts have re-interpreting our constitution as requiring the Bible, prayer and religious discussion be removed from classrooms, community buildings and places of public gatherings. Government officials and educators across the country are disgracefully trying to eliminate God from society. Militant secularists have vowed, not be satisfied until God is erased from every facet of American life.

American laws are being reinterpreted and rewritten to sanction what is abominable to a holy God. In 1973 the Supreme Court legalized abortion for any reason, and Congress subsequently passed a law providing government funds for such barbarous acts. Old laws making homosexual practices criminal are being repealed, and new legislation is being enacted requiring society to support such deathstyles. While religious discussion is gagged, pornography is permitted to saturate our culture.

Our society is fast becoming openly hostile to Christian values. The media trivializes and ridicules Christianity in the name of humanistic and pluralistic concerns. American culture is dominated by television and movies, whose profanity and lewdness tramp God's honor into the mud, inculcating non -Christian values from infancy. Public schools teach our children how to practice various forms of immorality. One school curriculum in America teaches acceptance of homosexuality in the first grade and immoral acts in junior high.

America is reaping the dire consequences of rejecting God. Our society is morally bankrupt, and the problems resist government cures. William J. Bennet, in his *Index of Leading Cultural Indicators,* provides the following statistics for the past 30 years. Despite increased funding and stricter laws, violent crime has increased more than 500 percent. While sex education programs have boomed, illegitimate births have increased over 400 percent, significantly among teenagers. The divorce rate has multiplied, and single parent homes have become the majority. Our young people today exhibit a hopelessness, with a more than 200 percent increase in the teenage suicide rate. And America appears helpless before its great problems.

1. The church backsliding is a disgrace

The church in America, despite its many activities and apparent successfulness, has had no measurable affect in reversing this downward spiral. No country has had more Christian organizations, more radio stations, more books, more seminars, and more churches with proportionately less impact on society. It is a disgrace when researchers tell us that religion is up but morality is down.

Sadly, the influence has been in the wrong direction, as we see evidence that our culture has begun to permeate our churches. The church is seduced by the social agenda of wealth and pleasure, and has condoned sinful compromises. There is moral decay within the church, with highly publicized scandals involving ministers, and divorce statistics which are not much better than those outside the church. Think of all that we and our churches would have to repent of if a spirit of holiness began to captivate us. How can America be influenced by an inconsistent and hypocritical church?

If the strength of the church should be determined by its impact on its surrounding culture, we desperately need an injection of spiritual life. The present powerlessness of the church may be a sign that God has withdrawn His blessing that we might seek Him.

**A National Revival Needed.** There is reason to believe that only a national revival can pull us out of the ditch into which we have slid. I am convinced ­ as all of us must be ­ that every human resource is now inadequate and only the direct intervention of God can reverse our country's spiritual decay. If America will really be given another chance, at least some kingdoms of darkness will have to fall like dominoes. That can only happen if God chooses to show us the mercy we most assuredly do not deserve.

America has experienced three great periods of revival in the previous two centuries, during which all of society was dramatically affected. There was a widespread restoration of the people of God, that resulted in tens of thousands of conversions greatly affecting the culture of the day. America returned to its Christian roots. Taverns were closed, families were reconciled, and young people became sober in their pursuit of God.

From our past, we learn the clear lesson that a genuine spiritual revival can do more to transform culture than all of our political/social activism. We need a renewal that can only be effected by widespread repentance before the Almighty whom we have so grievously offended. The forces of evil are so deeply entrenched that any cultural shifts will only be cosmetic unless they are accompanied by a spiritual awakening that affects large segments of our population.

When Ephesus experienced revival, the people brought their occult books and artifacts, and publicly burned them (Acts 19:18-19). What bonfires of pornography, rock music, artifacts, and books of occultism we would have if God's presence was manifestly felt!

**There is Hope.** Revival is possible as long as God is God. Jonathan Edwards, a leader during the First Great Awakening in America, argued that God grants light when the darkness is the greatest, and it was in just such times that the glorious periods of revival occurred in America's history. When there was disinterest in religion, gross immorality and rampant unbelief, God poured out His undeserved gracious blessing.

Catch the vision of crowded churches from coast to coast, shops closing during the noon hours for special prayer, and our legislators turning to God for wisdom in making decisions. Think of the nightly news telling the story of tens of thousands of believers making restitution for past wrongs, and reports of thousands of conversions to Christ.

Imagine a country where abortion would become rare, not just through legislation but because mothers valued their children and immorality was on the decline. Imagine a country in which homosexuals repented and sought God for help in overcoming their deathstyles rather than imposing their immorality on society. Imagine a country where the courts would reflect America's Christian roots.

We must believe God for something more than our generation has seen. May our sights be raised and our faith increased, to fervently seek God for a national revival. What God has done in the past, He can do again!

**Josiah and the people immediately launched a major reform** throughout the nation. Never in history has a reformation of such magnitude been witnessed. Not only was Judah affected, but the reformation also swept throughout the land of the old Northern Kingdom of Israel. 14 specific reforms are mentioned by Scripture.

1. They committed themselves to the Lord
   1. “the people stood to the covenant”

2Ki 23:3 And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

1. Josiah instructed the priests to remove all the idols or false gods from the temple and burn them

2Ki 23:4 ¶ And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel.

Josiah's grandfather Manasseh had placed all kinds of idols in the temple, and Josiah's father Amon had continued the false worship of false gods.

There were images of the false gods Baal, Asherah, and the Astral gods of the sun, moon, and stars. In obedience to the king's command, the priests and doorkeepers removed the idols and various articles used in their worship. These were burned in the Kidron Valley, then the ashes taken to Bethel where they were scattered in order to desecrate the false worship. Scattering the ashes was a symbol that the false worship center was being desecrated, rejected, and defiled because of its corruption of true worship.

1. Josiah also drove away the priests of the false gods throughout the nation

2Ki 23:5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

This included all the priests who served the false gods at the high places located within the countryside and the towns, including Jerusalem. Any priest who served the false god Baal or the Astral deities of the sun, moon, and stars was driven away.

1. The wooden image of Asherah an idol of worship, Josiah gave it special

attention. Removing it from the temple, he burned it and had its ashes scattered over the graves of its worshippers. he was symbolizing that the idol had no more life than its worshippers who were lying in the grave dead.

2Ki 23:6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

2Ch 34:4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

1. Josiah then tore down the living quarters of shrine prostitutes—both male and female—who were living inside the temple

2Ki 23:7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

Nothing shows how false religion corrupts people any more than the practice of promiscuous sexual behavior within religion. The god and goddess of fertility were considered to be Baal and Asherah. In seeking fertility for their crops, the people worshipped and sought the favor of these two false gods by having sexual relations with their priests or priestesses. Sexual relations symbolized fertility through the blessing of children and a fruitful harvest.

1. When Josiah had desecrated all the high places throughout the nation, he brought the true but backslidden priests back to Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:8-9).

2Ki 23:8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

From Giba to Beersheba—the northern border to the southern border—Josiah destroyed all the shrines that had been built for false worship. This included all the shrines at the gates of the cities throughout the nation, including at the gate of Joshua in the city of Jerusalem. Once the backslidden, wayward priests had been returned to Jerusalem, they were restored to the Levitical priesthood, but disqualified from leading the temple worship services.

Special attention was given to the altar built at Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. For it was upon this altar that human sacrifice was made, being offered up to the false god Molech

2Ki 23:10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

By destroying this altar, the gruesome sacrifice of children was stopped, at least during the reign of Josiah.

1. Josiah literally wiped out the false worship of the heavenly bodies, the worship of the sun, moon, and stars

2Ki 23:11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathanmelech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

He did this by disposing of the sacred horses that were most likely used in the worship processionals to the sun. He also burned the chariots that had been dedicated and used in the processionals.

1. Josiah destroyed the false altars that had been built on the palace roof by various kings of Judah as well as the altars built by his grandfather Manasseh in the two courts of the temple

2Ki 23:12 And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king beat down, and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

Smashing them, he had the debris thrown in the Kidron Valley where the trash dump of the city was located.

1. Special mention is given to Josiah's destruction of the high places east of Jerusalem, the ones that, sadly, had been built by Solomon

2Ki 23:13 And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. 14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

In order to keep peaceful alliances with surrounding nations, Solomon had married the daughters of many royal houses. In order to maintain these alliances and to please his wives, he had built worship altars to the following false gods:

⇒  Ashtoreth, the vile and detestable goddess of Sidon

⇒  Chemosh, the vile and detestable god of Moab

⇒  Molech, the vile and detestable god of Amon

But thankfully, at long last, a righteous king was sitting upon the throne of Judah, a king who was attempting to turn the hearts of the people back to the Lord. In obedience to the Lord's commandments, Josiah destroyed all the altars to false gods that Solomon had built. In addition, he smashed the sacred stones and cut down the wooden images of Asherah, then defiled the worship sites with human bones, which would make them unsuitable for future worship.

1. Moving to Bethel, one of the two major worship sites in the Northern Kingdom, Josiah demolished the high place and its worship center

2Ki 23:15 Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

17 Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

To build the loyalty of the people to the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam I had chosen Bethel to be one of the two major sites of the new religion he instituted Special attention was given to Bethel by Josiah. Four very special acts were taken:

⇒  He destroyed the altar and burned the high place and Asherah pole or image (2 Kings 23:15)

⇒  He removed the bones from a priestly cemetery and burned them on the false altar to defile it (2 Kings 23:16). This was the fulfillment of a prophecy from an unknown prophet (1 Kings 13:1-13).

⇒  He honored the grave of an unknown prophet from Judah who had earlier been buried at Bethel (2 Kings 23:17).

⇒  Josiah also honored the grave of a prophet from Samaria who had also been buried there (2 Kings 23:18; 1 Kings 13:31-32).

1. Continuing throughout the towns of Samaria, Josiah demolished all the high places with their worship centers and shrines (2 Kings 23:19).

2Ki 23:19 And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel.

11.  When Josiah destroyed the high places, he executed all the false priests and burned human bones on the altars to defile the worship sites in the eyes of the people (2 Kings 23:20). By defiling the land, he made the sites unusable for future worship.

2Ki 23:20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

1. Josiah knew that positive action (encouragement, patience, examples of mercy set) was just as necessary as purging the land of wickedness.

So he reinstituted the Passover, the celebration that symbolized God's deliverance of His people from Egyptian bondage (2 Kings 23:21-23). For over 75 years the feast had been neglected, and no one had celebrated the Lord's wonderful deliverance. But now Josiah reinstituted the feast that God had commanded the people to celebrate annually in remembrance of their deliverance

Josiah gave only one very important instruction regarding the feast: the Passover was to be carried out exactly as God's Word said.

The result of Josiah's charge: this was the first Passover celebrated correctly—exactly as God's Word dictated—since the days of the Judges (2 Kings 23:21-22). This wonderful celebration of the Passover took place in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign (2 Kings 23:23).

13.  Josiah's reforms were so thorough that he actually weeded out the medians and spiritists and all other household idols in Judah and Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:24-25). In his zeal for the Lord, he was determined to obey the Word of God and its commandments to the fullest. As a result, note what Scripture says about him: his commitment to obey God's Word was unparalleled (2 Kings 23:25). He sought to obey the Lord wholeheartedly, with more zeal than any other king who had ever lived.

 Josiah had a concern for true belief, a concern that people would trust the only living and true God. When dealing with truth, there is only one living and true God—the Lord God Himself (Jehovah, Yahweh). All other so-called gods are false, only the creations of peoples' minds and imaginations. These imaginary gods are not living, are not able to help us nor respond to us.

No other god can answer our prayers, except the Lord Himself. Only the Lord has loved the world so much that He sent His Son to take our sins upon Himself and to bear the punishment for those sins. Only the Lord has redeemed us, paid the ransom price to set us free from sin, death, and hell—through sending His Son to die in our place. Only the Lord has given His own Son to bear the punishment of our sin so that we might live with God and for Him eternally. No so-called god has ever demonstrated such an incomprehensible love for us. Only the Lord has demonstrated such love. And He did it to prove that He is the only living and true God. For this reason, no human being has an excuse for living in unbelief. If a person chooses to reject the Lord as the only living and true God, he will suffer the consequences of his decision, will bear the punishment for his own sin.

Listen to God's Holy Word the Lord is the only living and true God:

**He turned not from His wrath**

**2Ki 23:26 Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.**

**27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.**

**28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?**

**29 In his days Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.**

**30 And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.**

**Over confidence in his reform took him out**

despite Josiah's great reformation, the hand of God's judgment against Judah was to fall. For centuries, the wickedness of the people had accumulated to such a degree that they would never genuinely turn to the Lord, not consistently and not permanently. Because of all the wickedness down through the centuries and especially under Manasseh , the anger of the Lord had been aroused (2 Kings 21:1-18). As a result, the fatal judgment of God was to fall upon the nation. They were to be removed from God's presence, from the promised land, just as the Northern Kingdom of Israel had been removed. The city that God had chosen, Jerusalem, and the temple upon which God had said He would put His Name were both now rejected by the Lord and would be destroyed.

After Josiah's death at the Battle of Megiddo, his body was brought back to Jerusalem where he was buried in his own tomb (2 Kings 23:30). He was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz. Judgment was to fall upon Judah for one reason and one reason only: because of their sin, wickedness, and evil. They refused to be genuinely converted, refused to consistently and continually walk with the Lord. Disobeying the commandments of God, they lived lives of worldly pleasure, immorality, lawlessness, and violence.

As a result, God had no choice but to bring His judgment upon them.

So it is with us if we continue in sin and wickedness.

When we refuse to be genuinely converted, never turning to the Lord, we condemn ourselves.

We choose the judgment of God instead of the mercy of God.

God's mercy is available to us, but if we reject His mercy, justice has to be executed.

We must face the hour of God's justice due to all the sin and wickedness of this earth committed by us—all the bitterness, anger, hatred, assaults, abuses, rapes, and murders.

The day of judgment—that day when perfect justice will be executed—is coming. And the surety of its coming has been guaranteed by God.

Listen to the clear, forceful statements of God's Holy Word, the straightforward statements that His judgment is coming.

Eph 3:16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; Col 1:11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 2Ti 4:17 Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

1. The word "strengthen" (*krataiōthēnai*) means to be made strong, tough, enduring. It means to have energy or force; to act, endure, or resist.

2.  The word "power" (*dunamei*) means force, energy, might.

3.  The believer needs to be strengthened with power in the "inner man," that is, in the deepest part of his being, in his soul, in his heart, in his spirit—in the spirit that God has renewed. It is there that he must be strengthened with power.

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Dad, has it always been this way?  
Well, even from the beginning men hated Jesus  
Even thought he did nothing but love them  
And teach them and heal them.  
They nailed him to a cross.  
They thought they had killed Him, but they only set him free  
To live in the hearts of people like you and me who believe in Him.  
Then came the apostles and most of them were killed   
For telling other people about Jesus.  
So they tortured them and killed them   
And even left their bodies to rot as an example to other people,  
But the church kept right on growing  
Watered by the blood of these precious Saints.  
But Dad, Did they want to die?  
No. They didn't want to die. I mean, many of them had children  
Just like you they had to leave behind.  
But they were forced to make a choice.  
They could choose to live this one life here on earth and reject Jesus  
And be dambed or they could to believe in the words of Jesus  
And live forever.  
I think I understand.  
Here, maybe this will help you understand.  
  
I have heard how christians long ago  
Were brought before a tyrants throne  
And they were told that he would spare their lives  
If they would renounce the name of Christ.  
But one by one they chose to die  
The Son of God they would not deny  
Like a great angelic choir sings  
I can almost hear their voices ring.  
  
CHOURS:  
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb  
With all my strengh  
With all I am  
I will seek to honor His command  
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.  
  
Now the years have come and the years have gone  
But the cause of Jesus still goes on  
And now our time has come to count the cost  
To reject this world, and embrace the cross  
And one by one let us live our lives  
For the One who died to give us life.  
Till the trumpet sounds on the final day  
Let us proudly stand and boldly say  
  
REPEAT CHORUS:  
To the Lamb of God who bore my pain  
Who took my place, Who wore my shame.  
I will seek to honor His commands  
I pledge allegiance to the Lamb.  
  
You've got to remember the it wasn't always this way.  
I mean, my dad could even pray in school.  
Of course, they took that away from him.  
Then it became uncorrect for us to believe in the Bible  
And after that they just stripped our right to worship away from us  
And we quietly stood by.  
But son, I hope that you're never in the position  
That you have to choose between your faith and your life.  
But if you are - I know which choice you're going to make  
Because I know that Jesus lives inside of you.  
In the meantime, just pray like I taught you to  
And take care of your mom  
And remember that God is the Father of the fatherless.