

"GO THROUGH . . . AND . . . MARK!"

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Text: "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."—Ezek. 9:4.

Israel and Judah were in a sad condition. They had forgotten God, gone into idolatry, and God's wrath was kindled against them. The prophets had prophesied, had prayed and pleaded and almost worn themselves out, but to no avail. The prophet here says, "The Lord cried with a mighty voice." So sure, so certain and so definite was that voice that the prophet could not misunderstand. The Lord said, "Go through . . . and . . . mark."

I want you for a little while to investigate with me and see where God begins when He marks, and the judgment that follows upon the disobedient. God did not start at the farthest end of the city but He said, "Begin at my sanctuary." Peter says, "Judgment must begin at the house of God." When there is an indifference among the ungodly you will always find and locate its source among so-called Christians. We hear much about indifference today; almost every preacher I meet talks along that line. When the Church is alive and awake to the truth, and is concerned for the lost, there is always a concern among the lost themselves. Israel and Judah had sunken to the depths of degradation and had gone on and forgotten God's cause. God had given the prophet a vision and had taken him into the interior or the heart of things. Now you know that today there are some things which look all right on the outside, but God looks into the heart. He may see things entirely different from man, and this was the condition in Israel.

When God sent a man to mark He said, "Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." Now if He had said, Mark the professors of religion, a great many would have received the mark; or if He had said, Mark those who have a form of religion, a great number would have been marked. There are some such in this congregation this afternoon. There are folks who can measure up like the Pharisees. You simply cannot put your finger on their lives. But you know what Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." Those folks were beautifully fixed up on the outside just like a lot of folks in the Holiness Movement, and even more in the orthodox church. But He did not say, Mark those who have a profession, or Mark those who read their Bibles and say their prayers before they go to bed. God knows how to search men's hearts. We look at the outside. We touch the surface but God reads the heart. You may go on with a profession and not have any power or victory and even live so clear that few can detect your condition; but God knows just how you stand. Even the priest or the preacher may go through the form of service, of prayer and sacrifice, and yet not have the power of God. The prophet said that when God showed him, he found a priest who had his back to the altar and was not worshipping God; and more than that many had gone to worshipping the god of beauty. You know we have a great deal of sympathy with much

that God does not have sympathy with, with much that God bespeaks judgment on. If we are not careful we will be in worse condition than those that were not to be marked. People today can slander and backbite and say cutting things, and profess religion, and even profess Holiness. They can play the righteous man and yet they cannot be trusted. We are going to have a higher plane in the Holiness Movement or God is going to bring us into judgment. He holds us responsible for allowing things to slip. If we want an old-fashioned revival, and God knows this world needs it, we will have to go at things as God plans, and it has to start in the house of God.

When God began searching He did not touch outward things; He began at the quick, the heart life. Now in this Scripture He did not say, Mark the deacon in the church, mark the trustees or the Sunday School teachers or the superintendent or the treasurer. He did not say to mark him. When God puts a mark on you, you can tell it, and other folks can tell it. Live with one for a short time and you will know whether that one has God's mark on him or not. Those who are wholly the Lord's have a peculiar mark. In other words, there will be something different about them; you can always tell a man or woman that God has marked. There is something fragrant, something beautiful, something refreshing and something peculiar about them.

Mark them that sigh and cry. I want you to get that—"them that sigh and cry." The man with the inkhorn says, "Whom shall I mark?" "Mark the man that sighs and cries." Mark the man who has God's cause at heart. Mark the man who loves God and loves to work for the praise of His glory. Mark the man who loves God and who sees the terrible condition of things and weeps between the porch and the altar. Mark the man that weeps and sighs. Mark him. He weeps and sighs because God's glory is dragging in the dust, and souls by the millions are dying without God. Mark him! He did not say, Mark that crowd.

You remember the prophet Jeremiah was called the "weeping prophet." He was moved to weeping because the people were going back on God, because God's glory was at stake. Oh, we need more weeping prophets today. We have some wonderful prophets. They can tell us beautiful things, they can give us marvelous prophecies, but how few are weeping prophets. My God, give us more who will weep because God's glory is at stake and because God is being rejected! Weep, not because your salary is cut; weep, not because the temporal things of life are waning, but weep because the cause of Christ is not taken to heart. Go with your inkhorn and put on the mark. The Psalmist said that his eyes became a fountain of tears because the people regarded not God and did not respect the law of God.

But here was a man who was sighing and groaning. God says, "Blessed are ye that weep: for ye shall laugh." According to that word few are going to laugh. Blessed are they that weep now: for after a while they will laugh all the time. I want to be on God's side, weeping now and here. But what was the cause of the weeping? Israel had sinned and Judah had gone into idolatry. Here and there you find people mourning because of the condition of the people of Israel. If we were going to mark you this afternoon it would not be on how much you are reading

your Bible or how straight you are living; it would not be on your dress—whether you dressed one way or dressed another way—it would not be on the outward form, but it would be on the heart life. All of these outward things enter into the Christian life through the promptings of the indwelling Spirit. God knows we need plenty of reform in this country. The condition of things among the young people is appalling, but when God comes into the heart no one will have to go around and tell you how to dress. Old-fashioned religion will make you want to be like God, dress as He would have you dress, live as He would have you live, speak as He speaks, and act as He would have you act.

A great many would weep because their own needs are not supplied, and weep not because millions are unevangelized and the millions at home and abroad are not saved. Weep not for your own little personal things, but get your eyes on Jesus Christ! The enemy, who has gotten others interested in themselves, wants to interest you in yourself. If you will listen to him, the first thing you know you will be thinking only of your own needs, and the mark of God will not be upon you. When you are truly regenerated, when you get the mark of God, you lose the self spirit, and you want above everything to glorify Him in your life and in the lives of others. Oh, do you weep between the porch and the altar because of the millions unevangelized, because of the millions of unsaved, because of the millions of backsliders? The prophet went about marking those who wept because sin was multiplied and God's name was at stake. Oh, that is what we need, if we are to have an old-fashioned, world-wide revival! The Church must humble herself and pray. The Church must have a burden of real prayer. The Church must see men and women at the altar seeking God. The revival must start in the house of God.

The man with his inkhorn went through the city and marked them that were weeping and crying. The mark could be seen. Very few people like to be so marked that people know just what side they are on. I am appalled at the cowardice in the Holiness Movement. Hundreds of people who profess to be sanctified are afraid to go out and declare they are whole-heartedly on God's side. Men and women will go into the shops and offices and be afraid to say anything about Jesus Christ, and yet they will go to testimony meeting or prayer meeting and say they are serving God. Very few like to be known as "weeping" and "crying." It seems like foolishness to them, but it is because of the lack of heart agony that there is no spiritual progress. We talk about backsliders lightly, and sometimes I have even heard them spoken of in a tone of voice that sounded more like a laugh than a tear. Mark the one that weeps and sighs. The weeping men and women are the ones who love God, His cause and His people. Oh, that is what we need in the Holiness Movement! If we could only get men and women to weep for the glory of God, get them to weep because His banners are trailing in the dust, what a victory we should have!

Mark the ones that sigh and cry. I wonder if you have the mark on you this afternoon, if that is to be the standard. You say, I surely thought he would say something else. Do you mean to tell me those are to be the ones? Yes, mark those who sigh and cry. Mark