

## **BLOW YOUR PROOF ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS, HOLY SPIRIT**

Hosea 6: 1-3 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Tonight, God wants to blow on us and show us His proof in our hearts and minds that He is changing our hearts and minds so that we may dwell on Him in 2012. On Wednesday, Pastor Larry called me from McDonalds and told me he wanted to buy my lunch. I was struggling over this third message, really struggling, adding, erasing, and asking God for His proof in my spirit that His hand was on this message. God had spoken to me in the night, and awakened me with words as He did on the first two messages so far. Nevertheless, I was in a battle in my mind as to how to go about bringing this message to you all until... The phone rang and a man from Washington State told me, "This is going to be the strangest call you've ever received." I said, "Go ahead!" He told me his name was Patrick Kiser and he was on the Covenant Players team that came on a Wednesday night to do drama in our church. The time was ten or so years before. He is a married man now with two children. He told me that what happened the night they came here had never happened before to him. He reminded me that I as Pastor had asked the team to meet with me an hour and a half before the service. I then asked them about their health, prayer requests, their interpersonal struggles on the team and how their van was doing. He said no one ever did that before. Then Patrick reminded me that during the service, I stopped the performance and told the people some of the team's prayer requests and the problem with the van, the alternator had gone out, and then he reminded me that I said, "Now it's time for us to prove we are the family of God in how we respond. But before we do, he said I saw a man that just walked in the church, that just got off Greyhound. I told the people, he said, that this was our moment to prove we were the church. A special offering was taken up for the needy man, and then another offering was taken for the Covenant Players with a call to ask someone to put on the alternator. The man off the Greyhound Bus said he could put on the alternator as he was a mechanic. The whole story came back to me. He said, "God just told me to call you and tell you right now that you and your church proved that night you were the family of God to us.

Then Patrick went further to say he told this story to his pastor not long ago. An elderly couple in their church was losing their trailer and couldn't make the payments. The pastor announced it, led in prayer, and then said, "Now it's our chance to prove we are the family of God to the Lindermann family. The church gave an offering and went to work. Today the Lindermann family now live in their own 1400 square foot home, paid for by the church in Washington, because God moved that night and He changed the minds and hearts of the people from not just praying and dropping the matter, but by being the church and proving it, by their

love. I still get chills thinking about Patrick Kiser calling me in the middle of trying to prepare this message. God's blowing wind and rain and dawn all hit me at once. As I looked at Hosea 6: 2, I knew God was saying, "I've done it before and I want to do it again at Snow Camp. I want to blow My proof into your hearts and minds by My Holy Spirit. We have no promise that revival will come here tonight. Remember from last night what Jesus said? He told Nicodemus, "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from or where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit. Part of the changing of our hearts and minds is of course, up to us. But most amazingly, the real working of God's reviving and raising us up that we may live before Him is up to Him. He knows when to come and move and where to come and move in hearts. God didn't have to blow on Patrick Kiser to call me on Wednesday, but He did. You see, God knows when and where to blow. In John 2: 23-25. We read, "Now when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, beholding His signs which He was doing. But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man." Jesus alone knows what He wants to do at Snow Camp 2012. But I am praying that tonight He will blow down His proof in our hearts and minds by His Spirit as He is changing our minds to dwell on Him.

None of us are so private about ourselves that Jesus is scratching His head and saying, "I wish you would open up and share with Me, so I could know what is on your mind." No, Jesus knows all about human nature, and that includes all about you and all about me. Have you ever wondered what it would have been like being a perfect sinless son growing up in Nazareth and still having to be raised by imperfect sinful parents, Mary and Joseph, and having imperfect, sinful brothers and sisters? Did Jesus get off the hook easy? I have pondered that question more than once before. I believe that by examining the Word on this issue, it will help us get ready for tonight's lesson on God's proof. Hebrews 5: 8 is a difficult verse but it helps answer the question about whether Jesus' growing up and being perfect was easy. The writer of Hebrews wrote, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which he suffered." Even Jesus, who was sinless, was not above being disciplined growing up. Why is that? We know Jesus never sinned. We know He never needed discipline nor did He ever need to learn from His mistakes in sinning. Do you think it is possible He was ever in trouble as a teenager growing up with brothers and sisters? The neighbors in Nazareth said about Him, in Mark 6: 3, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses, and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us? And they took offense at Him." Jesus had 4 younger half-

brothers, sons of Joseph and Mary, He had at least 2 half-sisters. At the very least, there were seven children growing up in the home of Joseph and Mary. Now again I ask you, “Do you think Jesus was ever in trouble? Have any of us here ever falsely accused our brothers or sisters? Have any of us ever gotten disciplined for things we didn’t deserve, or have some of our brothers or sisters ever been in trouble for things they didn’t do, but we did? Have you ever felt misunderstood? Have you ever felt picked on, set up, and have you ever had a bad dose of self-pity? The difference in us and our Lord Jesus is that each of us have hearts and minds that are at times—not where they ought to be. Each of us like Isaiah 53: 6 states are “like sheep gone astray.” We have each” turned to our own way.” Yet, Jesus has borne the pain and the brunt and the punishment for our sins? Isaiah 53: 6 tells us, “But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.”

Last night, we looked at what happens when God moves. We learned that (1) God’s movement will bring pain, and this morning, we learned that (2) God’s movement will bring prescribed training. Tonight, God has another result of what happens when He moves. Tonight we are going to learn how God moves when we are faced with difficult things that are not the result of our sin. As Christians, we sometimes face situations that we don’t understand. Nevertheless, these situations are part of God’s movement to change our hearts and minds. God has a reason for allowing those moments? God is leading me tonight to preach to you about this third amazing movement of God inside our hearts and minds when we have not sinned. What is this movement?

**GOD’S MOVEMENT WILL BRING PROOF IN PROVING TESTS.** God at times uses proving tests in our lives. He often uses His blowing proof to revive His dreams for us. He blows His proof on us as He raises us up. He helps us set our minds on things above, not on things on the earth. In Colossians 3: 2, Paul declares, “Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.” God awakened me in the night seasons to share with me three special ways God proves in us that He belongs to us and that we belong to Him. When we know that we know that God is blowing His proof on us and talking to us and proving Himself in us before Him, it gives us hope, it revives our spirits and raises us up. It opens us up, as Hosea 6: 2 declares, to live before Him, to live before His face.

**The first proof or proving test is God’s pruning.** Jesus said in John 15: 1, 2, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit.” Pruning doesn’t come because of sin. No! Pruning is a

vinedresser's plan to enable a branch of a vine to bear more fruit. From a book, "The Art Of Giving," I read the words of Steven Simala Grant about pruning. We all need to hear these words. Listen carefully. He writes, "I have a lilac tree in my back yard – beautiful white flowers. Well, I decided it needed a little bit of pruning, so I got out some cutters and – well, the truth is, I hacked it up. I didn't really know what I was doing, but it had overgrown my clothes-line and needed to be cut back, and now it looks a little bit funny. Not too bad, but one look and you know it wasn't pruned by someone who knows what they are doing." Young people, that's why the pruning Jesus talks about isn't as scary a thing as it could be. Our Gardener knows what He is doing. The pruning might still cause us some pain – He might cut off a particular part of our lives, that we are fond of, a habit we enjoy, something we are proud of. It might be a part of our lives that we think is really important, something we consider that we couldn't live without. But the Gardener knows what He is doing. *He prunes with a purpose – that we might be even more fruitful.*

Have you ever been pruned? Maybe you have been best friends with someone and for no reason, they tell you that they are moving. This person could be your best friend and you may spend lots of time together. Clip! He or she is gone. It's over, and now we seem lost, until one day as we are having devotions, it occurs to us—we're taking more time now for the Lord. Why? It wasn't a sin, but God clipped us and pruned us so we could bear more fruit. I remember when God allowed my best friend, my girlfriend, Pamela Peterson to break up with me. We had remained pure. We hadn't sinned. But God took his pruning knife and went click. I thought I would die for three months. But the Father knew best. He had a better plan so I could bear more fruit for Him. Who would I be without Jinny and our 7 children? God pruned me away from Pam with a greater purpose. Have you been pruned by the Lord in the last few months? Secondly.

***The second proof or proving test is popularity.*** Popularity may not seem like a test but it is one of the toughest tests of all. I am reminded of an announcement on the radio. You've all heard the test of the Emergency Broadcast System in which the announcer says, "This is a test. This is only a test. If this were the real thing you would have been given instructions to do this or that ... " The truth is, I as a pastor for the past 45 years have watched young people and adults who really loved Jesus until they got popular, got good in sports, got a promotion, or something that made them elevated in their minds. I have seen sports rule over Jesus. I have seen good looks rule over Jesus. I have seen peer pressure and the popularity of being liked end any apparent interest in Jesus. I believe that just as Jesus prunes our lives so we will bear more fruit, He also proves the genuineness of our love for Him by

allowing us to become quite popular. I warn all of us. Don't believe your press reports of how great you are. The message from heaven might well read like this, "This is a test. This is more than a test. This is the real thing. Your instructions are found in Luke 9: 26: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." God lets us be popular to see if we give Him the glory. God says, in Isa. 42:8, "I am the Lord, that is My name: I will not give My glory to another." God lets us be popular to prove in us if we still place Him as # 1.

**The third and last proof or proving test is persecution.** You may not like this, but it isn't because of sin. Persecution comes from being faithful to Jesus. II Timothy 3: 12 declares, "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. Did you know that a godly life will always attract the enemy's attention? A well lived Christian life, a mind dwelling on the things of God, and a heart dedicated to Jesus is such a powerful influence that the devil refuses to leave that life undisturbed. I have faced it often. Have you been persecuted? I still remember our youngest daughter, Amanda. She had taken a strong stand for the Lord on her basketball team at Rock Springs High School. The coach was not saved. After playing three years in high school, while on the first five, the coach cut Amanda from the team. Her team players raised a stink, and wept and begged, but the coach wouldn't bend. It was tough persecution. God was faithful. In college, Amanda took many top honors and played all the way through at Barclay College. God lets us be persecuted to see if we will stand for Him.

During World War II, Hitler imprisoned a German pastor, Martin Niemoeller, for eight years. Martin spent some time in prisons and concentration camps, including Dachau. Hitler realized that if Niemoeller, a World War I hero, could be persuaded to join his cause, then much opposition to him would collapse. Hitler sent a former friend of Martin to visit him, a friend who now supported Hitler and the Nazis. Seeing Niemoeller in his cell, Martin's one time friend said, "Martin, Martin! Why are you here?" Martin responded, "My friend! Why are you not here?" When God changes our hearts and minds, He shows us it is happening by these three proving tests. Now I ask you? Are you willing to put up with God's pruning so you will be more fruitful? Are you willing to survive popularity and still keep giving God all the glory? Are you willing to suffer persecution to show the Lord you won't quit standing for Him? Hosea 6: 2 reminds us that when God raises us up, it is so we will live before Him. He longs for us to be His and His alone. When we pass the three proving tests, then as Hosea prophesied, God will come to us like the rain, like the spring rain watering the earth." Where does your mind dwell in 2012?