

## PREFACE

What you are about to read is presented in the form of a story, but make no mistake—what is contained within these pages is real.

The warnings, the visions, and the call woven throughout this narrative echo timeless truths found in the Word of God, particularly in the prophetic writings of Isaiah. The same voice that called Israel and Judah to repentance centuries ago now speaks to the Church today, urging us to awaken, to rebuild what has been broken, and to return to the Lord with all our hearts.

Isaiah's words are more than ancient prophecies; they are a mirror reflecting the spiritual condition of our age. They warn of the danger of empty religion, misplaced priorities, and hearts that have drifted far from God. They also offer hope—a promise of restoration and renewal for those who will humble themselves, repent, and rise to live as a holy remnant set apart for Him.

Though these events unfold through the lens of one person's journey, they reflect a greater reality: the urgent call to the Body of Christ to return to its first love. We have built platforms but neglected altars. We have pursued comfort but lost the fire of devotion. We have been busy with activity but have forgotten the presence of the One we serve.

But God, in His mercy, is calling us back.

This story is not merely a tale; it is an invitation. An invitation to examine your own heart and rebuild what has been neglected. It is a summons to rediscover the awe of His glory, the weight of His presence, and the beauty of surrender.

Let the words of these pages stir something within you. Allow the Spirit to search your heart, to reveal the cracks in the foundation and the fire that still waits beneath the ash. Hear the call of the prophet Isaiah as it resonates across the centuries, crying out to us today:

*“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on them, and to our God, for He will freely pardon.” Isaiah 55:6-7*

The time for complacency is over. The time to respond is now.

*‘Not everyone who says to me,  
‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter  
the kingdom of heaven”*

– MATTHEW 7:21-23

## I | THE WARNING IN THE NIGHT

It was late, and the house was quiet. The kind of quiet that presses on your chest and makes you aware of every thought. My Bible was open in front of me, the familiar weight of preparation for Sunday's sermon resting heavily on my shoulders. I needed something strong this week—a message to challenge, inspire, maybe even stir the congregation out of the spiritual lull I had sensed in them lately.

I turned to a passage I had marked earlier in the week, one that had always carried a sobering weight: Matthew 7:21-23. It was familiar ground.

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

I let the words settle for a moment. It was a strong warning—Jesus pulling no punches. He wasn’t speaking to the unbelieving world here. He was speaking to people who thought they were doing everything right. People who claimed His name, who worked for Him, who even saw the miraculous. And yet, when they stood before Him, they would hear the most devastating words imaginable: “I never knew you.”

I jotted a few notes down on the computer—thoughts about the danger of false assurance and the importance of genuine obedience. I could already see the sermon taking shape. But even as I wrote, something about the passage felt heavier than usual, as though the words carried a weight meant for me, not just the congregation.

I shook off the thought and moved on to the next verse. But I couldn’t focus. My eyes kept drifting back to that passage. It was as if it was calling to me, demanding my attention.

I sighed, leaned back in my chair, and reread the words:

“I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers.”

That's when it happened. A voice—clear, firm, and unrelenting—cut through the stillness:

“That is you.”

My heart skipped a beat. I froze, my fingers unable to type or even try to delete my notes, as the words echoed in my mind. No, no, no. That couldn't be right. That couldn't be true.

I closed the Bible quickly, as though shutting the pages could block out the voice. I sat back, took a deep breath, and shook my head. “This is the enemy,” I told myself. “This is an attack, a lie meant to distract me from what God has called me to do.”

The thought seemed reasonable, even comforting. The enemy was known to accuse, after all. Why wouldn't he try to plant seeds of doubt in my heart?

But no matter how hard I tried to shake it off, the words wouldn't leave. They lingered, pressing against my heart, growing louder with every passing moment:

“That is you.”

I stood up, pacing the room, trying to drown it out with my own thoughts. I've been faithful, I reasoned. I've given my life to God's work. I preach His Word. I lead His people. Surely, this isn't about me.

But deep down, I knew something wasn't right. I knew the voice wasn't lying.

I sat back down, staring at the closed Bible on the table. My hands felt heavy, my chest tight. Slowly, reluctantly, I opened the Bible again and read the passage once more.

“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven... Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you.’”

This time, the words didn’t just sting. They pierced.

“Could this really be me?” I whispered. My voice trembled, the question too big, too terrifying to fully process.

I tried to reason my way out of it. Surely, Jesus was talking about people who had rejected Him in their hearts, people who used His name for personal gain, not someone like me. But no matter how I twisted it, the words wouldn’t let me go.

I closed my eyes and thought about the last few months—the hurried prayers, the neglected time in God’s presence, the way I had poured myself into ministry tasks but felt distant from the One I claimed to serve. My life had become a series of obligations, performances, and appearances. Somewhere along the way, I had replaced intimacy with activity.

Tears burned in my eyes, and I buried my face in my hands.

“Lord,” I whispered, “if this is true—if this is really true—show me. If I’ve drifted from You, bring me back. If my heart is far from You, reveal it. Whatever it takes, God. Whatever it takes.”



When I finally stumbled into bed, I couldn't sleep. The words of Matthew 7 replayed over and over in my mind, like a chorus I couldn't escape. My heart wrestled with questions I didn't want to face:

"Am I truly known by Him? Have I built my life on appearances? Am I on the very path Jesus warned about?"

I tossed and turned, desperate for rest but unable to silence the storm inside me. And then, as sleep finally overtook me, the storm followed me into my dreams.

I don't remember when I finally fell asleep. It must have been sometime in the early hours, after the wrestling, after the tears, after the questions I couldn't answer. My body was still, but my soul was restless, heavy with a weight I couldn't shake.

And then, in the silence of sleep, it happened.

I was no longer in my room but in the middle of a vast city. It was unlike any city I had ever seen—majestic yet broken. The walls surrounding it, once mighty, were cracked and overgrown with vines. The streets were eerily quiet, filled with rubble and the faint sound of a wind that seemed to whisper warnings I couldn't understand.

I felt an unexplainable pull toward it, as if I had no choice but to go inside, though every step filled me with dread.

I pushed the heavy doors open and stepped into the darkness.

The inside of the temple was worse than the outside. The air was thick with abandonment, heavy with loss. My eyes adjusted to the dim light, and I saw the altar—or what was left of it. It had been smashed into pieces, the rubble scattered across the floor like discarded debris. The lamp stands that once lined the temple walls were dark, their oil long dried, their wicks burned out.

A wave of grief washed over me. I didn't know why, but it felt personal, as though this ruin wasn't just a building—it was something deeper, something tied to me.

And then I heard the voice.

It wasn't loud, but it carried a weight that filled the room. It echoed in the silence, shaking the very ground beneath me:

“Who will rise and stand holy before Me? Who will rebuild what has been broken?”

I fell to my knees, trembling. The weight of the voice was unbearable, like standing in the presence of a power far beyond anything I could comprehend. I tried to speak, to answer, but the words wouldn't come. My mouth was dry, my chest tight, my heart pounding in fear and sorrow.

The room began to glow, and I realized I wasn't alone.

A figure stood before me, cloaked in a radiant light that illuminated the dark temple. His presence filled the space with a holiness so overwhelming that I couldn't lift my head. It was as though the very essence of God's glory radiated from Him,

exposing every crack, every flaw, every hidden thing in my heart.

The figure spoke, and His voice was like thunder and fire, yet it carried an undeniable sorrow:

“You have served in My name, but you do not truly know Me.”

My breath caught in my throat.

“The altar is neglected, and the oil is gone, and your lamp stand is dim. What you have built cannot stand when tested.”

Each word pierced me, stripping away the layers of excuses I had clung to. I wanted to argue, to defend myself, but deep down, I knew He was right. I had been busy—so busy—doing the work of ministry, pouring myself into sermons, programs, and meetings. But somewhere along the way, I had neglected the most important thing: knowing Him.

The Messenger continued, His voice steady and unrelenting:

“You are on a path of destruction. If you do not turn back your fall will be great. It will not only harm you but will lead others astray. The time is now. You must choose: will you drift into destruction, or will you rise and be set apart?”

The words hit me like a hammer. I saw, with horrifying clarity, the truth of what He was saying. My life, my ministry, my faith—it had all become performance without presence. A house built on sand, ready to crumble under the weight of the storm.

The Messenger raised His hand, and the room around me began to shift.

I was no longer in the temple. I was standing on a cliff, looking out over a valley filled with broken structures, toppled lamp stands, and shattered altars. Fires burned in the distance, their smoke rising into a darkened sky.

In the center of the valley, I saw myself.

I was standing on a platform, preaching to a crowd. My words were passionate, my gestures confident. But as I watched, the ground beneath me began to crack. Small fissures turned into gaping chasms, and the platform collapsed, sending me tumbling into the dust. The crowd scattered, confused and disillusioned.

I heard the Messenger's voice again, this time filled with grief:

"This is the path you are on. If you continue, this will be your end—a fall that is public, painful, and far-reaching. But it is not too late. I have come to warn you, to show you the way back, to call you to holiness. Will you listen?"

I dropped to my knees, tears streaming down my face. "Lord," I whispered, "how can I rebuild? How can I be set apart for You again?"

The Messenger extended His hand, and the vision shifted again. I was back in the temple, but this time, it was different. The altar had been restored, the oil filled, and the lamp stands

relit with their flames burning brightly. The air was filled with the fragrance of worship, the kind that rises from a heart fully surrendered to God.

“This is what I desire,” the Messenger said. “A people set apart, a Church restored, a Bride made ready for her King. But the choice is yours. Will you rise and rebuild, or will you fall and be forgotten?”

His words carried an urgency I couldn’t ignore. They weren’t just a challenge—they were a lifeline. I had been drifting for so long, but in that moment, I knew: I didn’t want to stay on the path I was on. I didn’t want to lose the intimacy I had once known with God.

“I will show you the way,” the Messenger said, his voice softening. “But you must choose to follow.”

And then, as suddenly as He had appeared, He was gone.

I awoke with a start, the vision still burning in my mind. My heart was pounding, my face wet with tears. I sat up in the darkness, my body trembling, my soul undone.

The words of Matthew 7 echoed once more in my heart:

“I never knew you.”

I told myself it was just a dream, a strange projection of my worries about the Church and my ministry. But deep down, I knew better. This wasn’t the kind of dream that faded with the morning light. It clung to me, pressing on my chest like a burden I couldn’t shake.

The Messenger's words echoed in my mind: "Who will rise and stand holy before Me? Who will rebuild what has been broken?" The questions lingered, chasing me through every moment of the day. But I didn't have answers—only silence, only the weight of what I had seen.

I tried to move on, burying myself in the usual routine—sermon prep, meetings, ministry plans. But everything felt hollow, like I was walking through a shadow of my life. The vision had cracked something open inside me, and the questions it left behind refused to let me go.

That night, as sleep overtook me once more, I found myself standing in the temple again. Only this time, the vision went deeper.