**Opening Hymn:**

**Scripture:**

**Closing Hymn:**

**Title:** Preparing for the Latter Rain

**Introduction**

**Picking up again on Church History**

The church’s general Laodicean condition is why Ellen White wrote so many articles in the years leading up to 1888. She was trying to call the church back to the Lord and to repentance.

This is also why the Lord also sent Waggoner and Jones to the church prior to, at, and after the 1888 conference. What was their message? **Righteousness by Faith, the Third Angel’s Message:**

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Savior, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.**[[1]](#footnote-1)**

The Laodicean message has been sounding. Take this message in all its phases and sound it forth to the people wherever Providence opens the way. Justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ are the themes to be presented to a perishing world…[[2]](#footnote-2)

**How the Early and Latter rain enable the Gospel. An Old Testament Prophet Gets His Call**

However, when the person is ready to receive the Holy Spirit and be called to bring God’s message, the Holy spirit grabs their heart and there is usually some dramatic change of heart. It is not usually a change from unbelief to belief. Instead, it results in a much deeper relation with God. Here is Isaiah’s special call. Note that Isaiah is already a prophet of God. This event was to call him to a special service and/or strengthen him for the tough times ahead.

[Close your eyes and try to imagine the word picture as I describe it. For visualization purposes, let’s suppose that Isaiah has just finished his prayers and is sitting in the dark as he considers all the things to do that day. Things like giving water to the livestock, fixing the thatch roof, and meeting with a couple of priests from the temple. Suddenly, he hears the sound of beautiful singing and feels a great sense of peace. Then the room explodes with light and he is transported in spirit to the very throne room of God]

*1In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2* [Explain train] *Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3And one cried to another and said: “****Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!****” 4And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.*

 *5So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.” 6Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7And he touched my mouth with it, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.”*

 *8Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”* (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Some brief words of explanation:

* “…train of his robe…”: Generally, the size of the train of the king’s robe speaks to majesty and power. God is simply helping Isaiah understand.
* “Woe is me for I am undone…”. God had told Moses that no man can see God and live.
* “…a man of unclean lips … in the midst of a people of unclean lips…”: What is this [pause]. Confession of his sins and the sins of the people.
* “…your sin purged.”: Forgiveness

We will see this pattern in the former and latter rain experiences: 1) People see the Lord in all His glory, beauty, and perfect holiness; 2) Then they see themselves as God sees them with all their absolute ugliness and detestable sin; 3) they cry out to the Lord in confession (“woe is me…”); 4) He forgives their sins and gives them His perfect righteousness and holiness; 5) He calls them to work in His vineyard. Keep this sequence in mind as we continue.

Another example from Luke 5 is when Jesus after His message asked Peter to launch out into the deep and the nets for a catch. When Peter saw the great quantity of fish, he realized that he was in the presence of God for only God could have caused the catch. Peter cried out *“depart from me, for I am a sinful man.”*

**The Two Phases of the Giving of the Holy Spirit**

1. As seen above in Isaiah’s example, we see the first phase of the Holy Spirit impartation: letting use see God in all His glory and then ourselves as He sees us. God has to plow the furrows of our heart and clean our vessel before He can commission us for work in His vineyard. Before Jesus’ resurrection, Jesus gave the disciples the Holy Spirit in order to cleanse and prepare them.”

*19Then, the* same *day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, … 21So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” 22And when He had said this,* ***He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.***(John 20:19, 21)

*44Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” 45****And He opened their understanding****, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.* (Luke 24:44-45)

This cleaning process continued for 10 days between the resurrection and Pentecost and occurred in the upper room. We will look at this in a minute but it is a pattern that gets repeated again and again before revivals and major interventions by God. Here, the Holy Spirit of opens minds to remember and understand the scriptures and to see their sins as God sees them.

1. Once all have had their vessels cleaned and are of “one mind and one heart” God issues their call, pouring out the Holy Spirit in great power as at Pentecost in the Early Rain (Acts 2). This will happen again before the Latter Rain is poured out with power!

**The Changed Disciples**

 *When the Day of Pentecost had fully come,* ***they were all with one accord in one place.****2* [Emphasize and tie to above]*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon* ***each*** *of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*. (Acts 2:1-4).

From Acts chapter 2, we see that this event was not restricted to the apostles but was heard by the multitude and drew the people to Peter’s sermon. We also see the apostles and others from in the upper room spoke God’s word with power, authority, and other languages as the spirit gave the utterance. From Peter’s first sermon 3,000 souls were saved for the kingdom.

But what were these evangelists like before? Give me some descriptive words that come to your mind as to the nature of the disciples before the cross and Pentecost?

What about the sailors, Peter and the “sons of thunder”? Peter, who would put his mouth in motion before his brain was in gear, who had zero conscious thought between stimulus and response. We call that the “knee jerk” reaction. Consider Peter’s denial of Christ or the 11 scattering at Jesus’ arrest. A motley crew to say the least. How about James’ and John’s offer to call down fire from heaven and destroy a whole town? Here are two more examples from scripture:

*20 Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. 21 And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”* (Matthew 20: 20)

Do you think that the boys might have been behind their mother’s request? Here’s one more. In a similar vein:

*33 Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” 34 But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.* (Mark 9:33-34)

So, what caused this dramatic change? Before we become a fly on the wall during the 10 days in the upper room chart some before and after personality traits. From these we can distill the likely changes God intends for us at the Latter Rain…

As we discuss these changes and chart them, consider the following statement by Ellen White. This statement forms the framework for all our needs to be ready for the Ladder Rain!

There is nothing that Satan fears so much than that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**[Chart in Word]**

From our chart we can see the character traits that the Holy Spirit needs to form in us to make us vessels worthy of carrying the last day message. Along the way, we must be purified of sin and become of one mind and heart. How do we do that? Can we do it in our own effort? Can we “fake it until we make it.” NO! It is the work of the Holy Spirit. However, there is much we can do to facilitate and hasten the work of the Holy Spirit. To get some thoughts along those lines, let’s consider the early rain period.

**A Look at the Early Rain**

As we examine our chart and look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the early rain, the changes He made in men’s hearts, we can deduce a lot about what might have been after 1888 had not many hearts been closed to new light and in Laodicea! By logical extension we can know what He will need to accomplish in our lives before Christ comes. As we look at these topics, think about what changes the Holy Spirit might need to make in you before Christ comes. [Can you see where I am trying to go?]

**Example of Holy Spirit Working in Recent History**

Without getting into the controversy, the Lord wanted to return after 1844 and then after the 1888 conference. However, He was met with decided opposition from leaders of the church. Even after the rejection, the Lord found a group of teachers and students in 1892, open to the Holy Spirit. The following quotes are also in Duffield’s book “Wounded”.

As the week of prayer neared its end, Battle Creek College held its final chapel meeting before winter break. During the morning prayer service, W. W. Prescott [president of college], who had just returned to campus from his travels out West, felt a deep conviction that he needed to make a statement of confession for some matters in his past. Standing before the student body, Prescott read a short portion from recent Testimonies received: “Breaking down in tears even as he read, the conscientious Prescott frankly confessed his past diffidence in responding to the ‘new light’—righteousness by faith.” Even though he had repented a year earlier that he had not been as forthright in accepting the Minneapolis message, he now was moved to go even deeper in his repentance.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Prescott later shared that he had never known of a similar experience: “Such a sense of our utter sinfulness, our wretchedness and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the need of that help which comes through accepting Christ and His fullness, seemed to rest upon all hearts. **Personally, I have nev­er known such horror of sin as took hold upon me that day, and others felt the same way.**” As a result of Prescott’s tearful confession, again the student body was moved and “although vacation was supposed to begin that after­noon, the meeting continued until six p.m.” Confessions were made by both teachers and students, “and the Spirit of God was present to witness to the character of the work.” After a break of an hour and a half, “the confession and testimony resumed again, finally ending at 10:15 p.m.” Yet Prescott was adamant that “there was nothing like a fanatical outbreak or anything to bring a reproach upon the cause of God. Everyone recognized it as the work of the Spirit, which while it convinced of sin, was still a Comforter.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

Confession and repentance! Old, bad ways gone and replaced. A people on fire. This was what the Lord intended for **all** attendees of the 1888 conference and the preceding ministerial meeting (staff and church members). The Lord wanted **a total dying to self, a complete paradigm shift from self to God. Once that was accomplished, they could not but tell others what God had done for them!** God intends for sins to be confessed and hearts yielded to Him. Once the refiner’s fire had refined the witnesses, then, could the strong angel of Revelation 18 be able to sound his trumpet through them. Then the fire would have spread until “the gospel of this kingdom will be preached to all the kingdoms and then the end.”

**Now Let’s Be a Fly on the Wall in the Upper Room**

In the upper room, I hear a lot of “do you remember when Jesus said this or did this and how we responded. “We were so stupid.” I see lots of soul searching as they really understood the scriptures for the first time. I hear lots of sincere prayers of confession not just to God, but to each other for their sinful attitudes, pride, actions, and words. Each experienced what Isaiah experienced. That is, being completely humbled before God and each other.

I also see lots of tears as they realize the opportunity that they had missed. Lots or “if only we had really understood Whom we were walking with.” I see “self” dying on the cross as they realized it was not about them at all and that they, of all people, were infinitely blessed by having been chosen for such an incredible job as apostles to the God of the universe.

I see recognition of the immense responsibility that lay before them. There must have been many questions and wonder about what lay ahead. I see apostles and others (120?) each with their own aspirations, viewpoints, etc. being molded into a totally united team, “of one mind and heart.” **In summary, they were being made ready to receive the full anointing of the spirit to enable their future work. But first, their vessels were to be cleansed and self crucified. [Commend Galatians 2:20 to be memorized]**

**Pulling it All Together**

1. First, we have clearly identified trying to save ourselves and how Satan will try to slip that **righteousness by works** shoe on us.
2. Then we looked at how the Holy Spirit will try to clean us up to prepare us for the last-day message.
3. So now let’s bring this into a landing because I’m out of time and out of gas. So here are a few questions before we try to wrap this all up.

**Questions**

* **A better walk.** How many of you think that you need to improve your walk with the Lord? Have you identified specific things?
* Should we keep doing the same thing we are doing now and expecting a different result?
* Should we just grit our teeth and attempt to change ourselves? Obviously not. So how can we work with the Holy Spirit so He can “Create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us?” “How can we enable the replacing our heart of stone with a heart of flesh” should that happen to be needed? Here are some quick thoughts.

**Possible actions**

* Deep soul search to be sure we are not in Laodicea and in any way attempting righteousness by works?
* While being humble before the Holy Spirit, ask Him to help us through a soul inventory. Look at thoughts, habits, lifestyle, everything.
* Is there anything that I need to confess to God or others?
* Is a reconciliation needed with other people?
* Are there ways we can join with other people to pray for each other and help hold each other accountable? Ways we can walk together on the narrow path?
* Are corporate changes needed in the church to help everyone with their walk with the Lord
* Is our church of “one mind and heart”? If not, what is needed?
* **Ellen White on Searching the Scriptures**

Let everyone who claims to believe that the Lord is soon coming, search the Scriptures as never before; for Satan is determined to try every device possi­ble to keep souls in darkness, and blind the mind to the perils of the times in which we are living. Let every believer take up his Bible with earnest prayer, that he may be enlightened by the Holy Spirit as to what is truth, that he may know more of God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Search for the truth as for hidden treasures, and disappoint the enemy. The time of test is just upon us, for the loud cry of the third angel has already begun…[[6]](#footnote-6)

* A. T. Jones chal­lenged them that “we should be gathered in companies praying for the Holy Spirit.” He also reminded them that

“When the people of God individually seek for his Holy Spirit with all the heart, there will be heard from human lips the testimony that fulfills that word, ‘I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory.’”[[7]](#footnote-7)

**A Final Warning**

What follows are two quotes from W. W. Prescot from 1892 that speak to the heart changes we need. He was speaking to issues his day when the righteousness by faith message was rejected by many of the church leaders. However, it seems to apply to us this day because the Lord’s return appears to be on the horizon. Listen carefully as this is read.

I don’t know what it will take, I am sure, but it seems to me some­times that there will be something **to awaken us to the way that God looks at sin, and the way he looks at us**. But we have refused the warning of the Spirit, and the instruction that he has sent, and the testimonies that he has sent us again and again right on this point: “Repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.” For years this has been the warning, repent! repent! repent! But we have not heeded this testimony, but have come to that point where we say: “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” And yet I say that if ever there was a needy company, it is this company.…

Now I am perfectly aware that I am speaking with great plainness, and I do not speak this without thought and prayer. I speak what I be­lieve to be the message of God to our souls, mine and yours. I say that it is time for us to be zealous and repent that God’s special outpouring of his Spirit may come upon us **without destroying us**. If we don’t make this matter a matter of earnest prayer, I say it simply means death to you and to me.…

We cannot come to this assembly, this institute and Conference and go day after day in an easy-going manner. It is time for everyone to be trembling in earnest for his own soul’s salvation.… There is an individual work for every one of us to do in connection with this gathering, and that means solemn heart-searching before God, taking his word and repent­ing, that we may receive this power.…

I enjoy the seasons of coming together, and of listening to these in­structions, and the explanation of God’s word. This I enjoy very much. But I tell you, we might come and go here, week in and week out, year in and year out, and yet not meet the mind of God concerning this time. **[[8]](#footnote-8)**

I have no disposition to try to crowd anyone, but I feel that it is my duty to present these things in the plainest manner possible, and to let the Spirit of God do its own work upon our hearts. That is all I can do.… Why, I tell you the simple fact when I say that if God would tonight let some additional rays of his Spirit shine in our hearts, we could not go home and rest easy, and sleep quietly, and take matters the same as usual.[[9]](#footnote-9)

*Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.* (Jeremiah 29:12-13)

1. Ellen G. White to O. A. Olsen, Letter 57, May 1, 1895; in *Testimonies to Ministers*, 91, 92, and *1888 Materials*, 1336. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ellen G. White to Uriah Smith, Letter 24, Sept. 19, 1892; in *1888 Materials*, 1051-1054. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ellen G. White, “The Church’s Great Need,” *Review and Herald,* March, 22, 1887. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ellen G. White, “Diary,” Manuscript 54, Dec 30, 1890; in *1888 Materials*, 787. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. W. W. Prescott, “The Work at Battle Creek College,” Dec. **1892**; in Document File 256, Ellen G. White Estate, Loma Linda Branch Office; Ron Graybill, “A.D. 1892: Revival Comes to Michigan,” *Insight,* March 30, 1971, 6, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ellen White, Nov. 22 1893 Review and Herald. (Quoted in Wounded 105) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. General Conference Daily Bulletin #5, February 5, 1893. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. W. W. Prescott, “The Promise of the Holy Spirit, No. 2,” General Conference Daily Bulletin, Jan. 31, 1893, 65-67. (Quoted in Wounded 100) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. W. W. Prescott, “The Promise of the Holy Spirit, No. 3,” General Conference Daily Bulletin, Feb. 2, 1893, 104, 105. (Quoted in Wounded 102) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)