

The Preacher

by Alan Redpath

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being a called man, having evidence of fruit from testimony, and having a right attitude toward sin and people in order to be a successful preacher.

Duration: 54:09

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 4:23, Matthew 6:33, Luke 6:28, Romans 2:21, Romans 7:18, 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

Topics: "Preachers"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his 31 years of ministry experience and shares about his own health breakdown due to overwork. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the kind of person God requires in the ministry today. The speaker discusses the temptation to seek success and recognition through intellectual prowess, but highlights the need for humility and a genuine relationship with God. He also acknowledges his own struggles with prayer and encourages listeners to prioritize their spiritual life.

Transcript

Good morning, brethren and sisteren. I'm very happy to be able to be here today on my second visit to Australia. The previous one was quite brief, during December and January of 1967-68, and of the only meetings I spoke at during that brief visit, one that stands out in my memory is the convention of the Christian Endeavour, which was held at Adelaide that year, and we had a tremendous time.

It was very hot. Eventually the heat gave way to a rainstorm of mud, and I've never seen anything like it in all my life. I shall always remember that.

It rained mud, and everybody was absolutely covered with it. So we had a great time at Adelaide in many ways. When I speak at a minister's meeting, or at a meeting of so-called full-time Christian workers, you may have already noticed that I'm very nervous.

There are so many things one feels one could say. As I thought about this and prayed about this this morning, I thought to myself, well, would it be helpful if we talked together about the pros and cons of the ecumenical movement? Or should I discuss the question of neo-Pentecostalism, which of course has made a tremendous breakthrough in recent years? Or should I discuss the problem of communication that the Church has with this generation? This, these, and many other things came to my mind, all seeming to knock on the door for attention. However, I felt that I would discard the lot, and I would speak to you about what kind of a man God requires in the ministry today.

I should say that I have spent 31 years in the ministry now, four years in evangelism, and 14 years in my first pastorate in London, and 10 years in Chicago, and recently in Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh, before I had quite a serious breakdown in health, which I brought on myself, really, to overwork. And subsequently, I have been privileged in the last year or two to visit many missionary mission fields and different countries on behalf of the English Catholic Convention and on behalf of various missionary societies, of which you will be all familiar. And I want to draw, if I may, from the pages of memory and the experiences of these years.

Most of my ministry is now in retrospect rather than prospect. Thank the Lord I'm not candidating for any pastorate. I'm not looking for any new appointment.

I'm not prepared to make any future move. My wife and I have moved twice across the Atlantic Ocean and back, and we've settled in a little cottage in the grounds of Capenry Hall, and we've said to ourselves that our next move will be up. When we participate in the most wonderful space lift that the world has ever known in history, which will make a journey to the moon seem like just going across the street.

And I look forward to that day, of course. And therefore, as far as I'm concerned, as the Americans would say, the chips are down. And I just pray today that I may say something not simply that will interest you from the intellectual point of view, but will perhaps touch our hearts.

Because I want to discuss with you the kind of person that a preacher ought to be. It's so important that we realize this because the basis of acceptability in the ministry today is so different from what it used to be. You remember how solemnly and prayerfully the Lord Jesus made the choice of the first group that were to handle the task of world evangelism.

He went up into a mountain to pray and spent all night in prayer with God, and then he chose the disciples. They were those he wanted. They weren't any of them intellectual men.

If any of them had been candidates for a ministry or a pastor today, they wouldn't stand a look in. No pulpit committee would have given them a second glance. No missionary society would accept them.

They hadn't got education. They hadn't got degrees. They hadn't got gifts.

They hadn't got what it takes. But they had one outstanding quality which the Lord appeared to put a premium upon, and that was a wholehearted devotion to himself. It doesn't suggest that he played down the intellect and intellectual ability.

I think that's clear in the subsequent calling of Saul of Tarsus. But at the same time, if he was to choose between the two, it was quite clear that he would choose the man who was obsessed with a love for himself. And this was the beginning of the calling of a ministry.

Today I find as I go to different colleges and different seminaries and speak to the students and to the faculty, over and over again the selection is entirely on a different principle altogether. It's achieve your maximum potential. Major in the things in which you've succeeded.

Putting it very crudely but just bluntly, be a big shot. And by your sheer intellectual command of an audience, you will draw a crowd. Some time ago in Chicago, I had a call on the telephone from New Jersey, about 800 miles away, from the chairman of a church board.

And he said to me, Our church is without a pastor present. Do you know anybody who might be able to fill the pulpit? So I discussed with him one or two men whom I knew in the Chicago area, and described their qualifications and their gifts. And then we went on talking for about three quarters of an hour.

It wasn't my call, it was his. I didn't mind, it was he who was guiding the conversation, as it were. And then I'll never forget how he closed down.

And he said to me, Well, thank you so much for telling me about these men. I'm very grateful to you. But he said none of them are big enough to fill our pulpit.

Now I don't know whether he thought I was rude, but I couldn't let him depart until I asked him, Sir, are you quite sure you don't mean they're not small enough? Because God is always concerned about reducing a man to a minimum, that he may do through him his maximum. And all the experience of all the years in my life have been concerned with God's attempt to reduce me to a minimum, that it may be not I, but Jesus. And that leads me to just give to you, at least to be orthodox in this sense, three points about a preacher, a full-time worker, and the kind of person that he ought to be.

I don't place them in order of importance, because I think they're equally important. But I would begin by saying a man in the ministry, or in any Christian work, needs to be a called man. A called man.

Over and over again I've had to ask myself at least one or two questions about this. Why did I decide to go into the ministry? Why didn't I stay in business? I was a chartered accountant in ICI with a good job and business prospects. Why didn't any of us just be lawyers, teachers, farmers, anything? Why did I decide, why did you decide to preach the gospel? Was it at the suggestion of friends, maybe? Or perhaps you thought you had the gift of speech.

Or maybe because you felt it would be a satisfactory sort of career. Or because some friends of yours or mine had succeeded in it and you hoped that you and I would do the same. Or because, perish the thought, you had failed in other things and thought the ministry would be easier.

Well, of course, none of these reasons are adequate. And the only justification for any of us being in the ministry of the word of God is that we have been clearly and definitely called of God to that particular job. Not just another job as an alternative, but a call from heaven.

If you were to ask how am I to know that, I would say that the answer is never easy. God spoke to Moses out of a bush. And he spoke to Balaam through the mouth of an ass.

And he spoke to Gideon through a fleece. But I can't wait for that sort of thing, and nor can you, before we know we are called of God. I believe that a call is sent by an inner conviction, by a sense of divine urgency from which we can't possibly escape.

We somehow feel the pressure of the hand of God upon us. And however we try to reason against it, we just can't silence that voice. However, there are some simple tests that I apply and can apply to my life in regard to this question that will help me to know as I am today, have I been called into the ministry or have I made a colossal blunder? Is this my choosing? Am I here simply because I decided to go into the ministry or am I here under the pressure of heaven? Quite frankly, if I wasn't sure about that, I'd have quit long ago.

If I wasn't absolutely convinced that it was the day when God put his hand on my life and pushed me into the ministry, I would have quit. Only the absolute conviction that in the sovereignty of God he had put his hand upon my life and I was there not because I wanted to be but because he put me there. Only that kept me with my hand to the plough.

I think, if I may, I'm sure you must have, all of you have thought of these and often considered them, but forgive me, just reminding you of basic essentials, I ask myself this, is there evidence of fruit from my testimony? That is to say, can I accumulate evidence that God's hand is on my life and blessing? I don't mean necessarily by results. These days a church will forgive their minister anything except failure. He's got to produce.

He's got to have enough confirmations or baptisms or additions to his church members or he's in for trouble. My very good friend, perhaps my best friend, Stephen Alford, who is in Calvary Church, New York, as you probably know, he and I were in the States together at one time for several years. He was minister there in New York and I was in Chicago.

And every Sunday night, without fail, we used to phone each other, take it in turns. One week he did, the next week I did. And it was quite expensive, but to us at that time it meant a tremendous lot to encourage one another.

Two Englishmen there in these American pulpits. And we had great encouragement. And I remember one Sunday, I think I had called him and we were chatting and I was asking, he said, Brother, he said, we've had a tremendous time this week.

We've had a breath of revival. And I was so thrilled, I said, Stephen, that's absolutely marvelous. Tell me, I said, how many people have you had added to your church roll? Added, he said.

Added. I haven't added any. I've had some blessed subtractions.

I knew what he meant. I say that simply because additions to membership rolls aren't any evidences of God's hands upon your life, necessarily. Baptisms, confirmations, not in that age.

But can I accumulate in my mind, looking back over the years, evidences that God's hand has been upon me in restraint, in constraint, so that I know that he's guiding and directing my life and controlling it? There's a fruit. And the fruit for which God looks is not outward success, but it is Christ-likeness in life. Situations in which, hitherto, I would have reacted and given people a real sharp edge of my tongue, am I now reacting in such a way as Christ? My friend John Stott, who was here recently in Canberra, spoke at the English Keswick Convention last summer to missionaries at the missionary meeting, when there were about 800 of them gathered together, and they come for a special missionary reception, and a short message is given by one of the speakers.

And he said to them, when you get up to speak, I'm going to speak to you about your greatest problem. And everybody sat up and wondered how on earth a preacher could know what their greatest problem was. And he said, about your fellow missionary.

And he said, I'm going to give you the answer to it from the Bible, and then develop it. I've no time to develop it, but I'll never forget the two-fold answer he gave, which was this. Treat every fellow missionary as though he or she was Jesus.

React to every fellow missionary as though you were Jesus. My, there's a whole gamut of New Testament teaching on holiness of life and Christian maturity of character in those two sentences. Can I accumulate fruit, evidence of fruit, from my testimony? Can I look back upon all the years and see a mellowing, a gentleness, a meekness, a graciousness? Or can I look back and see a hardening, a strictness, an authoritiveness, which nobody respects? Are there evidences that God has called? And then I would say, what kind of preacher do I want to be, or do you want to be? A good one, you say.

Well, yes, but recall 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 4. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And Ephesians 4, 11, where God has given to us, to some prophets, some apostles, some pastors and evangelists and teachers and so on, not all are to be evangelists, not all to be teachers, not all to be pastors. Is there evidence that God has placed upon in my life a particular gift, and He has developed it through the years of ministry, that I don't attempt to covet other people's gifts and to desire to be like them, because God doesn't want to produce copies, He wants to produce originals.

Some people who in different ways present the Lord Jesus. Has God been doing that with you? Furthermore, am I clear that my message is adequate? There's one thing we need more than anything else in this generation. It is the declaration of the authority of the Word of God in our pulpits.

We have forgotten it in many areas. And if I have any doubt about that, I'm defeated before it begins. In my heart, in the midst of a society which, well, we don't choose the climate in which we preach.

Many of us might wish we had a more favorable one today than we have today. Personally, I think it's very favorable. I think it's climactic.

It's days for crisis ministry, in crisis days, days of revolt and revolution and so on, which I mustn't go further into discussion. But for days like these, am I quite sure that the Bible is adequate? Have I any hesitancy about the authority of this message and about what the Word of God can do through, when it's preached, through a man who is submitted to its authority and who has upon him the authority and the power of the Spirit of God? Am I clear that my message is adequate? I mean, really, when Sunday morning comes, have I just got to say something? Have I got something to say? Am I there in that pulpit on Sunday with an extraordinary sense of the breath of God behind me, the touch of heaven? I believe this is needed perhaps more than anything. Then may I say, what is my attitude and your attitude toward sin? Have I personally declared total warfare against it? Or are there shady areas, areas of compromise in my life? You see, my attitude toward sin will govern my attitude toward repentance, toward regeneration, and redemption.

A shallow view of sin will always give me a shallow view of the gospel. What's my attitude toward sin in my own life? Am I called of God to the ministry? And what evidence of that call will be that I have declared total warfare? Was there any compromise at all? And then, what's my attitude toward people? A pastor, a minister, an evangelist, a teacher, anything. You spend your life with people, all kinds of people, and your reactions to them will decide the success or the failure of your ministry.

Are you easily hurt, easily made resentful, or have you and I learned, perhaps a simple lesson, but one which we skate over, that all of us, at best, are only stepping stones to Jesus, and a stepping stone has to be walked on? How do you react to people? Do you remember the prayer of Solomon when he came to a position of authority at an early age, out of right succession, and the Lord said to him in 1 Kings chapter 3, what do you want me to do for you? Sort of a blank check on heaven. What do you want me to do? Oh my, if God wanted us, asked us that, I wonder what he would say. Just a blank check.

What do you want me to do for you? And Solomon poured out his heart to God and said, Lord, I'm just a little child, and I'm in the midst of this people, thy great people. Lord, give me a heart that understands. That's what he asked for, an understanding heart.

What's your reaction to people? You know, the country of Scotland has a very interesting national motto. I don't know whether any of you are Scottish by background, but if so, you'll know it. The motto is a thistle, an emblem, a thistle.

Prickly thing. And around the thistle, there is written in Latin, Nemo me impune leccesit. Nobody touches me with impunity.

That's why in times of warfare, usually Scottish troops went in first. For you get a Scotchman's heckles up, and I tell you, you have somebody to cope with. But you know, we're all like that.

And this has been God's training ground for me. Because by my nature, I'm just like that. Easily made resentful.

Easily hurt. Always wanting to prove myself right and the other man wrong. In any situation, that I might not show up in a bad light.

What's my attitude to people? Has the Lord knocked that out of you through the years? You see, in every situation, you'll find difficult people. And the question is then, on your reaction, are you really to be trusted with leadership? There's no perfect church. The conference in America some time ago, I spoke to a fellow, and he told me he was 47 years of age and he'd had 17 pastors.

Didn't need to tell me anymore. I knew exactly all about him. 17 pastors in 47 years.

He was proud of it, mind you. It just told me this, that whenever the situation got a bit difficult, he quit. Whenever the honeymoon was over, he was off.

He refused to stay with the difficult people. And he was looking for the perfect church which he'd never find this side of heaven. The Lord Jesus said in Mark 10, 45, the Son of Man has come not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

And if you and I go into the pastorate of Christian work and imagine that we are the boss, or the brains, your throne will soon begin to totter. And others will lose every bit of respect for you. You will find always, as you've already done, no doubt, people in every situation who oppose you right from the beginning and right through to the end.

Jesus said it would be so. Luke 6, 26, Beware when all men speak well of you, he said. What's your first instinct with difficult people? If you're like me and we're all made in the same mold, some of us moldier than others, but we're all made in the same mold.

My first instinct always had been to crush the opposition, which you can probably do, especially if they're in the minority. But far better to win a man than lose him. Better to work with him than against him.

One of my trustees of Moody Church was this type and from the word go he was absolutely opposed to the ministry I was bringing. I'd gone to that church very afraid of it because I was following Dr. Ironside who was a great preacher. And I had read everything that he had written.

And I was scared stiff because I knew that I would suffer that comparison. So I decided to venture out on themes upon which I noticed he had not majored. And so for the first six months I preached in the book of Joshua.

And for the next year every Sunday morning I preached on the Sermon on the Mount. My! That started a hornet's nest. I was bringing the church under law not under grace.

This was for a future dispensation of the kingdom of God, etc. and was not for today. I believe it's the most necessary thing for today.

It's the quality of life that every child of God can live by the power of the indwelling Christ. Well, by the time that was halfway through I really had especially this man I'm thinking of on my neck. And every Sunday morning he used to come into the room from which I left to go to the pulpit just put his head round the door and all the choir were gathered together there.

We had a prayer and we're just about to move in and he would come in and call out in a loud voice Pastor, hopeless! The church is half empty today. Every Sunday. Fortunately you know that does something to a minister right down here.

Fortunately just after him another man came in who had entered into life and victory in blessing and he came right past the door and put his arm round my shoulder and said Pastor, it's wonderful the church is half full today. Both were saying the same thing. Mind you, it seated 4,000 people and 2,000 not a bad it wasn't a bad congregation.

But I didn't need anybody especially a man like that to come and tell me the place was half empty. 2,000 little devils were on every empty seat just standing up and putting their fingers to the nose at me. How do you react to difficult people? I'll tell you what the Lord has taught me.

This lesson, Luke 6, 28 Pray for those who despitefully use you. I always have on my prayer list someone I don't like. It's amazing what that does for you.

Have you ever tried that? You won't find it difficult to find somebody you don't like. You'll find them. They're in your church.

They're in your group. And naturally you react contrary to them if you don't like them. Perhaps they're people of another race or another color and we consider ourselves superior.

Henceforth, says Paul in 2 Corinthians 5, 16 I know no man after the flesh. In other words, I don't allow my likes or dislikes to regulate my love. I can't like everybody, he says, but I can love them.

I once knew Jesus after the flesh but now I know him no more like that, he says. Now I know him as a living, indwelling Lord. A life, a person who fills my heart.

I know him like that. Therefore, therefore, I preach a gospel which superimposes itself or mounts over and gets through, breaks through every racial barrier to all difficult people with the dynamic of love. And that's what prayer teaches you to do.

You can begin to love people you don't like. Well now, I've just summed up some of these things which I think constitute the evidences of a call for ministry. I mean, if in 30 years or more, sometimes maybe a lot less for you, there aren't accumulating these evidences in your life.

I wonder seriously whether God has put us there. You see, God's purpose for us all is identical and that's to make us like the Lord Jesus. He won't settle for anything less and he chooses the particular sphere of service for us which is most calculated to produce that result.

Puts us where we are in situations that are very unpleasant and difficult so often in order that just right there our reactions and actions and all our attitudes may reveal the Lord Jesus Christ. The quote called us into ministry. He must be a called man.

Now the second thing I would say is that he must be a choice man. Choice man. Matthew 22 verse 14.

Many are called but few are chosen. And the word is choice. Now what do I mean by that? Well let me take an Old Testament example.

In 2 Kings chapter 4 you'll remember as Elisha walked along the road the lady with whom he was staying looked and said to her husband behold I see there passes by our door a holy man of God continually. That's not a bad testimony from your landlady. A holy man of God continually.

And you know a minister, a pastor is like, being in a pastor is like swimming in a goldfish bowl. Everything you do is seen and watched by everybody. It's like a new house open for inspection.

A minister is carefully watched and he has no immunity from temptation. And the experience of temptation and daily testing and battle to overcome is absolutely necessary to our growth in grace. And none of us are exempt from this principle.

I thought it would be so much easier when I left business and went to the ministry. How wrong I was. The minister can afford to have no yawning gap between precept and practice.

How hot the apostle Paul was on that in Romans chapter 2 and verse 21. You who teach you should not steal. Do you steal? You who teach you should not commit adultery.

Do you commit adultery? The name of the Lord is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. I don't mean that we are expected to be sort of paragons of virtue, but I do mean that we're expected to be consistent. And that which touches other people more than anything is the feeling that the man who preaches to them every week is what he is expected to be in his daily life.

There's no more telling advertisement for the gospel than the holiness of your personal life. Let's be honest with God and deal with these shabby corners of our soul and remember that this is the greatest factor for evangelism. And if I may say so in a mixed company, the two greatest dangers which face any minister are money and sex.

Money and sex. Six or seven times, if not more, in my study I have sat opposite a man who has been broken. Been in the pastorate, been in Christian work, and been overcome by temptation.

No longer in the ministry. And my heart has been so sad. I wouldn't judge or condemn because God only knows the temptation which he has faced.

But these things are the things which face a man in the pulpit more than anything else in the world. Brethren and sisters, somehow by the grace of God our lives must be beyond reproach. Yes? You can show your consistency of life to other people not by a mock piety which is easily detected and seen through, but by all sorts of ways.

You can show an example by the choice of your life partner. I don't know whether I'm right in saying this, but I feel it in my soul that a man's ministry is either made or broken by his wife. And a man in the ministry thanks the Lord, I can say, praise God, that this is true in my home, who has a life partner with whom he shares everything, and who shares everything with him, and who shares his burden and his love and his concern, and who opens the home to the people, and who is a perfect partner.

What a strength she can be in the ministry. But what a hindrance it can be when she isn't of the same mind. Yes? He'll show his consistency by the right choice.

And the way he conducts family worship in his home. And the way he dresses. He won't dress to attract and to be extravagant, but he'll be careful in his dress.

And his absence of gossip. He will never use, in any circumstances, his own people as illustrations in his sermons. He will preserve the integrity, often at the risk of being misunderstood.

And the way he handles money and pays his debts. All of these will give him away as a man who is absolutely consistent. He must be a choice man.

And none of us can be that, but for the grace of God. And one other thing, I think a minister must be a chaste man. That word is spelt C-H-A-S-T-E.

A chaste man. By that I mean a disciplined man. You know, it's much easier, I can say this because I've been on both sides of the fence, it's much easier to discipline your life in business than it is in the ministry.

In business, well, you're due there at nine o'clock and you finish at five thirty. There may be slight exceptions, but that is principle. And after that, you can throw the cares of it overboard and you can get on with other things, Christian work.

But not a minister. He has nobody to discipline his life. And morning, noon, and night, he is with his work.

It's with him all the time. Sometimes all through the night as well. And he has a great danger, is in great danger of becoming self-indulgent, lazy, intemperate.

How easily he can neglect the basic principles of Christian living, such as communion with God. I like the language of 1 Corinthians chapter 9 and verse 26. Especially in, I think it's Philip's letters to young churches where Paul says, I am no shadow boxer.

I do not beat the air, I buffet my body. And I deal it blow after blow lest having preached to other people I should be disqualified. Now the word Paul was making it perfectly clear that I am not my body.

My body is under the control of the Holy Spirit. And I buffeted day after day. I used to play rugby football actively.

And in training for ruggar, first class ruggar, every morning at 6 o'clock I was up running for 10 miles. After business, running again for another 10 miles around a running track in London. Then doing half an hour skipping.

Then going back to my digs, my apartment and sticking one shoulder up against a brick wall and bending down and pushing. And doing the same with the other shoulder. Nobody watching.

Except my landlady who thought I was, no. But I was determined that I turned out on Saturday as a person who if anybody hit them they would hit a lump of concrete. Trained, disciplined.

I did that for a nursery crown. What have I done for a heavenly? Are you ever ashamed, brethren, I am, of how often I have to drive myself to pray? Even yet. Even after experiences of real an open heaven and a real sense of communion with God yet the very next day I have to drive myself to go.

How often that life with God can be scant. I recall days when to enter my study was a painful business because on my desk there were neglected prayer lists. That's the testing point of a man's ministry.

In every arena of battle there's got to be an altar of worship. And if I win there heaven will open to me. If I lose there I tell you on a Saturday I'm going around my study wondering where on earth I'm going to get the other sermon from.

And my wings are being clipped and the sense of authority is gone and there's one weary drudgery day after another which are the judgment of God upon a prayerless life. Time magazine published recently this extract which I take the liberty of reading to you written by a Presbyterian minister in Salem, Indiana. His recipe for the minister in charge of an organizational church.

This is what it says. Fling him into his office. Tear the office sign from the door and nail on the sign Study.

Take him off the mailing list. Lock him up with his books. Get him all kinds of books his typewriter and his Bible.

Force him to be the one man in our surfeited community who knows God. Set a time clock on him that will imprison him with thoughts and writing about God for 40 hours a week. Shut his garrulous mouth from spouting remarks and stop his tongue always tripping lightly over everything non-essential.

Bend his knees in the lonesome valley. Fire him from the parents and teachers association. Cancel his golf club membership.

Rip out his telephone sheet his telephone. Burn his ecclesiastical and denominational success sheet. Refuse his glad hand.

Put water in the gas tank of his car and compel him to be a minister of the word of God. Well that may be drastic but I wonder what it will take to make us men who really know what it is that there are no tricks to sainthood no shortcuts to holiness of life and Christian maturity and if a man is to be in Christian service he has to be a disciplined man. First Chronicles chapter 4 and verse 23 speaks about certain descendants of the tribe of Judah who worked among hedges and ditches nothing glamorous about that and we read there they dwell with the king for his work.

May I ask you a very simple question but one that searches my heart as I think of it maybe your Christian service hasn't got a touch of glamour to it maybe it's all hard ground tell me do you dwell there with the king for his work or do you dwell there with the work for the king? It makes all the difference what you do. If you dwell there with the king for his work you have all the resources of heaven at your disposal if you dwell there with the work for the king you are shut up to the limited resources of your own life and you have a peculiar lack of the one quality that it takes to move men to God.

Brethren and sisters I am told today that the greatest tragedy is the way we have lost touch with this generation of young people I don't agree with that I say the greatest tragedy is the way we men who are occupying pulpits and occupying Christian work have lost touch with God but because we've lost touch with God we've lost touch with people because there isn't that sense of reality that sense of glow that sense of authority about it and there's nothing to attract people to Christ yes a man who is in the ministry must be a chaste man that means that prayer will be the key which is unlocking every day to him and prayer is the key which locks it at night locks the door at night and personally I find the night shift is never as good as the day shift do I begin do you begin every day with

the Lord or am I demanding that other people should do this and yet I've forgotten to do it myself and then my last thing is just that as a chaste man he must not only know communion with God but he must take care of his body Romans 12 1 and 2 I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercy of God did you present your body your body well I suppose I might say that means don't eat too much get regular exercise learn to say no to social requests get needed sleep needed sleep I don't know how much you need it's not for me to say you know yourself but when somebody tells me the need eight hours a night boy that means to say if I live to be 75 I've spent 25 years unconscious I don't really think I can afford to live like that you know the greatest thing you and I need to have is what I call

blanket victory I have an alarm clock but I never use it because I don't need to the Lord wakens me in the morning every day without failure but he never gets me up he awakens me I have to get up oh I have to take care of my body this body which is the temple of the Holy Spirit and yet which is the source of all temptation I have to guard it and keep it in subjection by the power of the Spirit of God in my life day by day well brethren these are just some of the thoughts that the Lord put on my mind to bring to you this morning I'm sure there's nothing new in them they're just a reminder and may I say that I speak to you not as one who had already attained or were already mature but one who presses on toward the mark for the prize of his high calling and one who if I had kept these rules

five years ago God would not have had to flatten me out and put me on my back with a cerebral hemorrhage when I imagined that all my ministry was finished I was unable to talk unable to move unable to think for about well seven or eight months and you know what my first reaction was Lord you must have made a mistake you can't do without me isn't the humiliating thing to find that when you are laid aside the Lord gets on perfectly well without you and the work goes just as well if not better oh but in those dark days when I went very very far down into the valley when it seemed that in my mid fifties everything was finished the rug had been pulled right up well I just thought I don't understand it but what on earth is God doing to me in those days how well I remember that I reverted

exactly to type and found all the old temptations and all the old sin coming back at me low boiling point resentment and everything and my wife and children oh what a time they had with a husband and father who was just reverting to type and the bible meant nothing and prayer meant nothing couldn't read couldn't pray and after about seven months of this I remember one day I said oh God please get me out of this can't stick it anymore just take me right to heaven I don't want to end to be that my wife and children remember me as a man who was a sort of cabbage I just want to go home to heaven right now I can't stand this attack of the devil any longer and it seemed the Lord drew very near to me didn't give me a vision but he came very near and he said to me you know you've got this all

wrong you're blaming Satan for it he hasn't a thing to do with it I've done it I had to do it to you because nothing would convince you nothing would convince you that the only good thing about Alan Redpath is

So hear our prayer and grant us thy blessing in all the days to come until Jesus comes again. For his name's sake. Amen.

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