

(Forging the Vessel of Recovery) 3- a New Beginning

by B.H. Clendennen

God must raise up a new vessel for recovery, one that represents His mind and will in the world.

Duration: 57:21

Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:15

Topics: "Recovery"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for the church to return to the basics of the gospel and not be swayed by tradition or worldly influences. He warns against the dangers of following gimmicks and false teachings that border on witchcraft. The preacher highlights the fact that preaching the true message of Jesus Christ may not always be popular, but it is necessary for true discipleship. He also criticizes the current state of the church, stating that it is more focused on success and image rather than being dedicated to Christ.

Transcript

Now, we're dealing with the forging of the vessel of recovery. In every situation when God's people, with the Old Testament, New Testament, in New Testament times, whenever that church has moved away from the thought of God, God has always reacted to bring it back into line. God has never failed to react.

When the church moves away, or His people move away from that which represents His mind, then God always reacts to recover those spiritual grounds. And in every case, it has been a vessel formed through which God can react. We must understand, and understand well, that God's Spirit from heaven is poured out on the church, never out on the world.

It flows through the church to the world. From the throne to the church, from the church to the world. There has to be a vehicle prepared for that outpouring.

In every situation, in all times, there has to be a people formed, a vessel raised up, that God can put into that vessel what is needed that He may recover His testimony in the earth. Now, as we've dealt with this, we asked the question on a Monday, Can we once more see repetition of the first century of the church? Can we achieve the success spiritually that they achieved? And the answer is a resounding yes. Not only can we, but somebody is going to, because the Bible said, What has been is going to be.

There is going to be a revival in the end of this age, equivalent to what we read in the book of Acts. As we brought it down then, that for this to be, that there had to be a vessel raised up. And that vessel, we demonstrated yesterday, are in less than last, as we've dealt with the new cruise in the prophet Elisha at Jericho.

When problems had come with the water, he said, Bring me a new cruise and put salt therein. Not just throw a handful of salt into the river, but a new cruise, a vessel that could contain that. Now, in the further consideration of the vessel, I want to talk to you today about a new beginning.

It always represents a new beginning. God always brings about a crisis where everything else seems to be as nothing. That there has to be brought back to zero.

And the basics recovered in that vessel, all the hodgepodge, the mixture, and the confusion must be dealt with. And that vessel brought back to zero, so that God can once more move back to the fundamental basis of Christianity. I want to read to you in the first chapter of the book of 1 Samuel.

The first chapter of the first book of Samuel, reading verses 15 through 20. Then we're going to turn to the third chapter of the same book. Verses 15 of the first chapter of 1 Samuel.

And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I'm a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have not drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

And there rose up in the morning early, worshipped before the Lord, and returned and came to the house in Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived that she bear a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I ask him of the Lord.

Now in the third chapter of 1 Samuel, I want to read verses 1-4. And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli, and the word of the Lord was precious in those days. There was no open vision.

And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see an ear. The lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of the God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep. That the Lord called Samuel, and he answered, Here am I. Now there are many features, which make Samuel's day very much like our time.

When you read back and see the spiritual conditions of Samuel's time, and if you have any spiritual perception about it at all, to be able to see the spiritual conditions of the 20th century, you'll recognize that there's a lot of familiar features between the two of them. Here, Samuel's was a time when the people of God, and the work of God was not upon God's essential basis. It wasn't moving according to the mind of God.

It was not upon that essential basis. There was a secondary line and basis which was only accepted by divine sovereignty. It was being governed, ruled, and blessed as far as possible by God's divine sovereignty, but it was not the thought of God.

It was not the thought of God. Now, I'm going to say to you without fear of apology or contradiction, that what we have today in religion, in this 20th century outpouring as we call it, we have a secondary line. We do not have the essential thought of God.

God is doing the best He can with what He's got, but it does not represent the mind of God. It calls for a prophet standing in the midst of the stream, saying that it's moving in the wrong direction. It does not represent the basic thought of God.

You cannot read the book of Acts and then look at what's happening today without recognizing that this is not the mind of God. Some constituent is missing. Some things are added that need to be eliminated.

Well, it was that way in Samuel's day. Taking Saul as an example, it is very obvious that Saul was not the thought of God. He was not the right king.

He's in the wrong place. In fact, the king wasn't the thought of God. God eased the conscience of Samuel by saying, they have not rejected you but me.

That wasn't God's thought. It was God's thought that they live under a theocracy, God to be the head, the prophet to be the guide, but they had chosen a king, and God was blessing that secondary deal as the best that He could. Now, it does not take a lot of spiritual enlightenment to see that that's the picture of our time.

You travel this country, you see what's taking place, all the mechanical pretending that's going on today, never having seen the gold they shat over the brass, and we're seeing today God having to do the best He can with a secondary situation. The church as a whole does not represent the mind of God, and this in itself imposes a limit upon God. God is limited because the church is not the vehicle that it should be.

Now, we are the vehicle of expression, and whether we like it or not, that world perceives God to be what they see in us. They look at us. We're the epistle that's known and read.

We're the vessel of the Lord, and the only knowledge they have of God is what they see in the church. And when you look at the church with all of its selfishness, 2,700 million people live on this earth that never heard the name of Jesus, and 90% of the church is not even interested in missions. They perceive that this is what God is.

This imposes a limitation upon God Himself. Now, God has His own thought, but the church as a whole is not in the good of that thought. Now, if we are at all, you and I, the church, if we are at all concerned about the situation that exists in the world today spiritually, that is, about the effectiveness, the fruitfulness, the permanence, the purity of the church, then the power of what's related to God on this earth, if we're concerned about this, then we should look into it from the standpoint that God is having to operate with a secondary situation, that the church does not represent Him in its totality.

That's the reason for the loss. A river doesn't have any trouble flowing. All it has to do is be released.

You see, the church has come a dead end street. It takes in, doesn't put out. You have a little outpouring of the Holy Ghost in the church, and it's drunk up by the half-empty vessels before it ever reaches out to the community.

All we are doing is like an emergency room or intensive care, sustaining a little life. We're pumping into saints that are about dead a little life, sustaining life, and not giving life, because we do not represent that healthy body that the river of God can flow through. Now, the Bible said whatever that river touches, it will heal.

You don't have to beg the Holy Ghost to heal. It will heal whatever it touches. Now, we act like we've got to persuade Him to heal.

That isn't the trouble at all. The problem is getting Him to flow, giving Him something to flow through. Most of the time it's a little trickle.

You take, it's pretty dry around here. You get a half-inch of rain, it won't touch anything. This earth will just drink it up.

Isn't that right? But you get a 16, 18-inch rain, and they'll have boats down there in Greensboro. It'll touch everything in the city. Well, the church got a little trickle coming out.

It touches one here, and it's healed. One there, and it's saved. But it touches very little, because there's not much flowing out.

And the reason is the vessel needs those spiritual arteries opened up from that spiritual cholesterol, so that it represents God. And then we'll heal our communities. And if we're concerned, then we have to look at it on this line, that God is having to work with a secondary situation, that it does not represent His mind.

Now look at this. Samuel came in at a time like that to stand in the midst of it. On the one hand, Samuel came in to stand against that, which is secondary, and to stand for that, which is primary.

Now that's not a very popular place to stand. Everything's afloat. Everybody's happy.

Israel gets all mixed up with Baal, so the Philistines will leave him alone, and they're mad at Samson, because he won't cooperate with them. We have this. We look.

It looks like everything is wonderful. People are flocking into religion. But when you look at them, they're still flocking to Las Vegas, Hollywood, and everywhere else.

They're sipping Saints, theater-going, all kinds of situations. They haven't changed nothing about their lives. And then people get angry when you say that does not represent the mind of God.

Listen, faith doesn't change you. It doesn't mean nothing to God either. It's always that way.

They want to kill Samson because he won't join in with their compromise. I want to tell you something, folks. Mixing Judaism with Baalism destroyed both of them.

It didn't lift Baalism up. It just destroyed Judaism. And to mix the pure gospel of Christ with a lot of the tripe and nonsense that we see today doesn't do anything to either one of them, but destroy them.

Destroy them. When that church is that pure vessel of God, representing God, it will be effective in this world. And once more, the politicians will look over their shoulder and won't know what that pulpit has to say.

Oh, Lord, I'll tell you what, there ain't nobody on this earth who wants prayer in the school anymore than I want it in school. But I don't believe we'll ever get it back in the school until we get it back in the church. We're trying to get unsaved people to do what we won't do.

You call a prayer meeting in the church, you won't have 10% of your congregation there. I mean, you call a prayer meeting, you're going to be the loneliest preacher in town, Brother Williams. You can mark that down.

We'll go to hear the good men sing, and we'll go to dinner on the ground, and we'll go if you've got a big enough name that offers them a personal prophecy. But you just call a prayer meeting saying, nobody's going to be there but God, and you'll be lonesome. Oh, listen, folks, I'm telling you that there's got to be something sad in this hour.

A lot of people get awfully upset with it. But get upset at whatever you want. That vessel must be brought back into line.

Samuel stood there in the midst of that fast rushing stream against that secondary situation and standing up for that which was primary. Samuel did not wholly accept Saul. You know he didn't.

He didn't accept Saul. He was inclined to regret the idea of a king. So God came to the man of God and said, Samuel, go ahead and sleep, son, because it isn't you they've rejected, it is Me.

It is Me. This is what's rejected all along. Man has decided he knows more about it than God does.

We've reduced salvation to a little sit up, bolt up, write like a post, repeat a little phrase after Me, put a little literature in their hand and send them home, tell them they're saved. You have no right on this earth to tell anybody they're saved. That's a mark of a false prophet to give assurance to salvation to somebody who hasn't been saved.

This Bible says, if you belong to God, you have the witness within yourself. And if you don't have the witness, then get back in the altar and stay there until you do have the witness. The fellow said to me, I'm taking it by faith.

I said, well, when are you going to get it? Amen. I took it by faith, but I got it. I know I'm saved this morning.

The Bible said, hereby we know that He dwells in us by the Spirit that He's given us. I'm a totally changed man in my attitudes after I've come to know God. We've sold a secondary situation and God is not happy with it.

Samuel wasn't going along with Saul. Samuel was there to hold things for God's primary thought among his people. That's what Samuel represents.

He was God's vessel of recovery. It's always had to be that. Somebody, a Jeremiah, has to live the most unpopular life.

His own family kicked him out. His mother and dad threw him out. Or he had no success at all.

If you wrote him up in the religious annals today, I promise you, he wouldn't be invited to any of the meetings to discover what's wrong. You know, we had a meeting in Dallas and they invited only the preachers that had a thousand in Sunday school. Amen.

Just only the preachers that had a thousand in Sunday school. Jeremiah wouldn't have got in on that, folks. No, no, he wasn't invited.

But I'm going to tell you one thing. He was the only man living that knew what was wrong. He may not have had a thousand people in Sunday school, but he knew what was wrong.

He never had much success on this earth. But I can promise you, he is successful this morning. He's having a lot of success this morning.

When old Neb's crew got to Jerusalem and sacked it, they put everybody else in jail, killed, slaughtered, took them captive. But when old Nebuchadnezzar came around, the sergeant of the guard to the man of God, he said to him, if you want to go to Babylon, we'll treat you nice. Do you want to stay here? The devil knew better than to fool with him.

Religion didn't. But hell knew what to do with him. We've come to judge everything by the size of it.

I'll tell you one thing. You can get caught in the cause of bigness. Jesus wound up with 120 out of all of the thousand.

And it is a known fact, ladies and gentlemen, you can't read this Bible without recognizing one truth. The closer you get to Calvary, the less they are hanging around it. Yes, sir.

The closer you get to Calvary, it becomes less and less popular. They followed Him. They watched Him break the bread, feed the thousands.

They watched Him raise the dead, open the eyes of the blind, unstop the deaf ears, cause the lame to walk, shout, and run. But when it came the time, and He said to them, you'll either eat My flesh and drink My blood or have no part of it. They said, we didn't come for that.

We come for the show. And they went over the hill. When it comes to deal with the heart of a man, I said, when it comes to deal with the heart of a human, we don't want to be dealt with.

We don't want to be dealt with, but Samuel was there for that. I want to break that up here this morning with you a little, just what I've said. When there's a lot of history and tradition in the background, the people of God have become mixed and confused.

If God is true to Himself, He must react against that. He must react against that if God is true to Himself. Now, listen.

How will God react in such a day as ours? I'll tell you what He'll do. He'll do exactly what He did in Samuel's day. He will raise up a vessel, a new cruise.

He will take something back to zero and let them see where they come from. Let them see that they're not saved because they're Baptists or Pentecostal. Amen.

They're not saved because it's baptized face down in the name of Jesus, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost. That there was a Calvary, there was a juncture in history. There's a watershed where everything moved in one direction.

Bring them back to the bases, wiping out their traditions of men and the creeds of men, bringing them back to a new beginning where it's Christ and Christ alone. And always He'll react, listen, with a new vessel. Now, God must raise up a new cruise, a vessel of recovery.

And Samuel was that. I'm using him this morning to show you. Now, the first thing we saw in Samuel is Samuel was a new beginning in himself.

His mama can't have no babies. That's the reason she's over there crying. She's not a part of the religious system of that day.

No, no. Hannah had no part. In fact, she's in revolt against it.

God took great care that Samuel wasn't a part of that mess. Yes, sir. He is a new beginning.

And God took care of the very fact of the miracle of his birth. Amen. Brought him into being by a miracle.

So Samuel was not a child of tradition. He didn't come from a long line of priests. God pulled him up out of travail of a mother to be a vessel that could stand for something that's God, that doesn't have to look over his shoulders and to see what headquarters is saying about it.

What's the Pope going to think about what I'm saying? He'd come in as a brand new beginning. Let me tell you something, folks. I sense in my spirit God is talking in this hour.

And there's some folks rising up that can say, Thus saith the Lord. Not an echo. There are voices in this awful wilderness we live in.

And they're saying, Thus saith the Lord. There's a lot of people who don't like it because it cuts across the grain of what we have today. The big problem is the church is no longer dedicated to Christ.

It's dedicated to success. Whatever, whatever will it succeed, we'll put in that pulpit. If you've got a new idea, if you've dreamed up a new game, Amen.

Just bring her on in. Bring her on in. If that'll do the job, that'll raise the money, that'll cause people to come in.

And so we've moved into the same thing the world has, image advertising. You know the world learned how to sell things. They don't ever tell you the product.

You never would sell Geritol by just setting a bottle of Geritol up on the counter and saying, You women ought to take this. What do they do? They put a woman out there that looked like she could throw a bale of hay 20 feet. I mean, you just never saw anything.

Such a beautiful woman. I mean, she may be middle-aged, but everything about her is perfect. And the implication is, I've got this way taking Geritol.

Oh, so they sell it by the barrels. May not do you any good, but they buy it. Well, the same thing is true.

Amen. We don't present Christ and Calvary. I want to tell you something, what I believe.

You can believe it what you want, but the only attraction of that church is a cross of Calvary. Amen. They should be no other.

They shouldn't be induced in with some toe-tapping quartet. Whatever that singing is, brothers and sisters, ought to be there to worship God. Amen.

We have no right to attract people like the world does to the church. If they come on any other grounds but Calvary, they'll destroy that church. Talk to men with all of this, all this stuff you see on the TV.

You see those young ladies in beautiful evening clothes and men and young men in tuxedos and the orchestras are playing and they've been properly choreographed. Amen. And they're jumping and dancing at our kind of smile.

Everything is beautiful. They look rich and wealthy. And the implication is, if you want to sing like this, dance like this, be on TV like this, then get Jesus.

That's the attraction. I'm telling you, that isn't the attraction of that church. The attraction is Calvary.

He said in the book of Deuteronomy, he said, don't you plant no groves. You know what he was saying? Don't you perfume the path to Calvary, mister. Don't you go planting any lilacs.

The heathen planted their groves to hide the severity of that altar. Amen. That altar, you could smell it.

You could smell that old Jewish altar a long time before you saw it. You know why? It is a place of death. God is saying, if you want in here, you are going to have to die.

If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation. There is no place in here for Adam. No place for Ishmael.

No place for human reason. This is God's house. It starts at zero.

Oh, that's not a popular message. That's the reason it's always been a remnant. You know what the word remnant means? Survivors of a crisis.

When 600,000 men left Sukkot heading for the promised land, when they got there, only two of them made it. The rest of them of that generation died in that wilderness. The only ones who survived were two, two, Joshua and Caleb.

They were survivors of a crisis. I'll tell you one thing, it's remarkable to see the survivors today that have survived the deluge of religion, the terrible dilute, is the word I want, the deluding of the gospel, just to make it successful and appealing. But there's been those that have survived that said, thank God that's not the way.

It may look right. It may be attractive to the carnal. You can make an instant appeal to the flesh, but that's not the way.

This is the way, said the prophet. Walk in it. Oh, listen, listen.

The church, the church of this hour, must be brought back like Samuel. He was not a child of tradition. A miracle from heaven had to be worked to bring him into the world.

This is not then a succession. Not a succession. You know, today's ministers raise up the successor.

God called one, but after that we just put them in place. That's what happens to organizations. I know you have to have organization, but the organization must be kept in place.

If you're not careful, the organization exists only for itself, whether it be a corporation or whatever, or religion. And it's not interested in producing men and women of God. It's only interested in producing little cogs when some of them wear out to keep the machinery rolling.

That's all. That's all. It isn't interesting.

Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen. If God calls a man, He can call another one. This is not a thing of succession.

Samuel hadn't been handed this down by his daddy. He didn't come from a long line of priests. It's not a thing of succession.

This is God reaching down among the people and picking up the most unlikely one and set them in a place to become one of the greatest prophets of history. It's not a thing of tradition and it's not carrying on what has been. You know the most difficult thing for you? The most difficult thing for any human being, me, you, all of us, is to think outside of that bracket we've been raised in.

It's the hardest thing in the world for a Catholic to think anything but Catholicism. Terrible thing for a Baptist to be forced to think anything but Baptist doctrine. Horrible.

Pentecost, try to think out of the vein that they've been set in. Well, there's 29 or 30 different kinds of Pentecost. Amen.

Some of them will sanctify you instantly. Some of them will take a while. Some will baptize you in Jesus' name.

Some of them will baptize you backwards. Some forward. Amen.

They've got all kinds of situations involved in it. And there's just about that many kinds of Baptists. And if you've been raised in it, the hardest thing on this earth is to break that bracketed thinking.

Amen. So that you just carry on with the form of things. That's what I'm saying.

A vessel has to be brought up. Brought back to zero. Behind all that tradition.

Behind all that succession. That sees the Lord Jesus for what He is, and is not afraid to stand up and to break the mold. Let the church out! And let it be the church.

Let it be the church. Samuel represents that. Brand new beginning.

Whoever heard, hear this young lad being raised up. He's not a carrying on. This is a new beginning right from zero.

Right from death. He's a new beginning in himself. Now God takes great precaution against Samuel picking things up with a background of inheritance.

The impossibility of Hannah having a child was God's sovereignty in all of this. No, it's not going to be something influenced by past traditions of religion. There is no carry over from the past.

No link at all. It is a clean cut new beginning. Glory to God.

Clean cut. Right back down to the basics. No bickering around saying this is not what John said.

This is what God said. And when he rose up and began to speak. Listen.

In this dispensation, the vessel that is going to bring God's full thought into view and recover it must be taken back behind tradition, behind a lot of history, behind much that has become common and acceptable in the church. It frightens people to death when you talk about some of the things that they've made the golden calf having to go. But you know, when you realize how quickly the church can be turned aside when the truth is not held before them.

When they are not held by strong preaching of the gospel. Do you know it took Aaron less than 40 days to get God's people knitted dancing around a golden calf when Moses was out of sight? Less than 40 days. That is the terrible situation we face.

Yes sir. That is exactly. And that vessel that will be the vessel of recovery is going to have to be carried back beyond a lot of tradition, a lot of things that have become acceptable are not going to be acceptable.

A lot of these things, listen. I've watched the gimmickry. Amen.

I've watched. I made mention. I don't want to go through all that again.

But there's a lot of things that borders right on witchcraft coming into your home. Amen. You'll get pink prayer clothes and you're ordered to get one of these magic billfolds.

Amen. That you're never going to be poor again. Got red strings to make you lose weight.

Green ones to make you gain it. Amen. To send you the hand imprinted on a piece of paper.

And you just lay this on you and something is going to happen to you. Oh, ladies and gentlemen, the whole thing is that today's religion is no longer preaching Jesus Christ as the way. They're preaching a set of principles and belief.

They've made Him a Buddha. That's only telling them how to get there. He didn't come and say, I want to show you the way.

He came and said, I am the way. Much of today is just ideas and principles and belief that they say come from Him. It's a tragedy.

You know what? I used to think, I was born again at 27 years old. Heathen. We didn't go to church.

Good folks. Didn't know anything about God. Papa was a good man.

I'd give a thousand dollars to talk with him this morning. Amen. He, as far as a man was concerned, without God, He raised us in this world.

And what He believed you had to do, He believed the survival of the fittest. He taught me nobody owed me anything. You make it, you're going to make it.

His whole line was, He used to say to me, don't start trouble, but don't let trouble run over you. That was His whole line of thinking. He didn't have no turn your other cheek theology because He didn't know God.

But we were heathen. We didn't know anything about God. Nothing.

Then I got saved at 27 years old. Didn't know John 3.16. And I used to think, oh, I just used to think it had been wonderful. Amen.

If I had a long line of godly folk behind me birth-wise, let it be an asset. But you know, I've changed my mind. I'd like to have been born again when I was six or seven years old.

But just to have a long line of religious folks behind me, I've changed my mind on it. Listen, I am finding a lot of folk with a second-hand religion that's become a straitjacket to them. They're linked to the past and can't hook up with the future.

Had a woman get the baptism of the Holy Ghost at home watching our program on television. And she had got 21 other women in that church filled with the Holy Ghost. And now the priest clamped down on them and said, you're not going to talk about that no more here.

We don't believe that. She was in another church and they didn't believe that. And you're not going to talk about it.

And she came to me and said, what should I do? I said, get out. That's what you should do. Oh, but she said, I'm a charter member.

Straightjacket. All her folks, all their life had been there. I mean, bound up, go to hell, hanging on to that.

I preached a message on the television years ago when it was on all over. And I preached in spirit and in truth. Jesus said that.

In the Gospel of John, the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, He said, the time is coming now is when they that worship Me will not worship Me in Jerusalem in the temple or in these mountains of Gerasim, but they that worship Me shall worship Me in spirit and in truth. I said, He did away with all the molds of religion. Amen.

He's saying, He did away with the temple and all of its vestments and priests. He did away with all the Samaritan religion and said, you can find Me anywhere you want to. He did away with all of their traditions.

And He invoked the wrath of a nation upon Him when He said that. I preached that. I said, today we've moved back into the same rut.

I said, we've made a God that we dole out the priesthood, the preacher, and religion has created a God that they can handle and you'll have to come through them to get saved. I said, the Protestant church, some of them, have put Him in the baptistery. Amen.

You can't get saved unless you're baptized and you must be baptized by that organization. So that means that I control your salvation. You're going to get saved.

If you come through Me, that's more lucrative than Orwell. But I said the Roman Catholics have put Him in the Mass. You can't go to Heaven unless you take the Mass and the priest's got to teach you that.

And a woman wrote me and said, I was a Roman Catholic 42 years before I got saved, and said, I want to tell you one thing, I don't appreciate at all what you said about it. I said, my God, held her in bondage, sent

her to hell for 42 years, then got mad at me because I said what it was. I'm telling you, tradition and background of religion has become a straitjacket to folks that they can't break out of.

Jesus can't even break them loose from the former past that's got them locked in. They can't go on with God, amen, because they don't believe in God in that degree. And they can't get out because they're bound up with it.

There has to be a clean cut between what is merely traditional and what is experience of God. It has to be. I want you to notice the truth in the Apostle Paul.

Look at the inheritance, history, tradition, packed into that line. He said, as touching the law, I'm blameless. Pharisee of the Pharisee.

Circumcised on the eighth day. Stock of Benjamin. He's a part of the Sanhedrin.

Religious-wise, nobody has a richer past than does the man of God. But look at the break. I count it all done that I may gain the ecstasy of the knowledge of Christ.

When God was going to pick up that vessel, He knocked him down on the road to Damascus on his way to persecute those. Emptied him. Turned him against everything that he was.

Spent all of his life getting to a place religiously. And it all went down the drain right to zero. Always that way.

That vessel that he'll use today is going to have to do a lot of rethinking. Ladies and gentlemen, God will never let that revival come until that church purges herself of the false. Until he can find that vessel.

Not enough just to see it. I must reject it. No matter what the cost is.

I must reject it. When Elijah challenged Israel on the Mount of Carmel, challenged Baal rather, had Israel come to witness, they all gathered there. And the challenge was the God that answers by fire, let him be God.

Now that won't allow any compromise. All he's saying is we're going to quit marking time. You've got a mixture of this mess and it's going to clear it up.

If Baal is God, if he can answer by fire, we're all going to walk away from this mountain with Baal. But if God is God, we're going to leave Baal here every bit of him. There's none of him going with us.

Well, you know the story. They went all day long. Cut themselves, chant, went through all their little deals, sprinkled holy water, done everything else they did.

No fire fell. Nothing happened. Finally the man of God said to them, time for the evening sacrifice you've had your due.

Get out of the way before it's dark. They got out of the way. He fixed the altar, put the sacrifice on it, covered it up with water, prayed a six to three word prayer.

And fire came from heaven, consumed the sacrifice, burned up the rocks, set the water on fire. And Israel fell on her knees and said the Lord is God. That's repentance.

They turned from Baal to God. That's repentance. But no rain came.

There ain't one drop of rain come. It hadn't rained. The man of God knew it wasn't going to rain.

After he got them up off the knees, he said now you go among them and kill every one of them. Get rid of everything that's false. You kill it all.

It isn't going to rain till you do. Amen. He took his sword and went out there among them, slaughtered those false prophets and priests, went to the top of the mountain, blood dripping off that camel's hair, and prayed God's heaven open for rain.

Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, we won't have to beg it to rain. Just find a vessel purged of the false. Thank God, get the conditions right, and it will rain.

It will rain. Yes, sir. We cannot tolerate and be acceptable just because others do, just because others do.

It doesn't make it right. Listen, it doesn't make it right. The vessel of recovery must have it from the beginning in itself.

God needs men and women. A vessel not constituted on something second-hand, thought that something may be good and right and good, it is not good enough. It must have it in itself from the beginning.

It must be that. Listen, the most paralyzing handicap in the church today is a full-fledged system of Christian doctrine, which is taken up in a second-hand way and propagated. Bible schools are turning our students like ax handles or biscuit cutters with a little knowledge of theology in their head, but they're not what they say.

They haven't become truth. Amen. They're just learning to say, Amen.

They are educated in opulence, and it's a difficult thing to move them out into India or Africa, I'll tell you that. But the most paralyzing thing on this earth is to have pulpits full of preachers that only got a little theological knowledge about the doctrine, yet their heart hasn't become what they preach. I was in Africa last year in Zaire, had 500 preachers in a seminar representing 500 churches.

I used to go out there for crusades, and I found the secret is the pastor, the shepherd. Stir him. I touched a half a million people maybe.

Amen. You know, tens of thousands of people by touching those preachers. And while I was there, the man over at the Bible school had 70 young students in the Bible school, and he asked me, he said, If you're in charge of this Bible school, what changes would you make? I said, Well, sir, I'm not in charge of the Bible school, and I'd just rather not enter into it.

He said, But I am, and I respect you very much. I would love to have your views on it. I said, Well, I'll tell you the first thing I'd do.

I would make the discipline and the curriculum such that if they're not called to preach, they'd go home. Every morning at 4.30, they'd be with me in a prayer meeting. They had no ifs and ands about it.

You'd be here in a prayer meeting, and the discipline and curriculum of that school would be such that when they got through, if they stayed, it wouldn't be what they said, but what they were that would be the

attraction. If you make truth one thing and the church something else, sister, then we've missed it a thousand miles. I must be what I'm preaching.

Oh, but we turn them out today. We turn them out. I run across a thousand little shambocks.

They want a tent like this one, but they want to start with it. They don't want to hear the story how he was in the trailer house and forty dollars a week. They don't want to hear the story how he liked to have a hamburger to split six ways for his wife and three children.

They don't want to hear the days of fasting, praying, laboring, struggling, seeking for an answer, hearing from heaven, and moving on out into it. No, no. They want to move out of this Bible school into that.

Yes, sir. They don't want to be on the street corner somewhere. They want a pulpit and five hundred dollars a week staying in a Holiday Inn.

They don't want to sleep in no Sunday school room. That is the most paralyzing thing to the church today. They're not driven by life within them.

They're driven by a job. I'm not putting everybody in that, but I'm telling you for the most part. People call me wanting to have a revival.

Wanting to hope you have it all the time. Want to know what to pay. What difference does it make? Do you feel a burden for this place? Do you feel a burden? I'm going to come to Brother Williams and say, there ain't no way on this earth I'd go preach for him unless I had a burden for his church.

I'm not in there to say to get something out of the church. I'm in it to give something to it. The Bible said He gave evangelists for the perfection of sense and the finding of the body of Christ.

When folks are running around looking just for a payday, then all they're going to do is propagate their own little program. I don't want to be critical. I do want to be truthful.

A man come along wanting me to guarantee him a thousand a week. I said, guarantee me a revival. I said, sir, guarantee a revival.

A man asked me, what would it take to get you to come to my church? I said, a round-trip ticket. That's all. Whatever else you do, fine.

But just make sure I can get back home to Mama because I get awful lonesome after five or six days. Just give me a round-trip ticket. Get enough money to pay my way back home.

When I get there, whatever else you do, fine. Amen. But let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, there's more to this thing than a payday.

I must be driven by burning desire to touch men and women for God to edify His church. Young people go through the schools for the most part. They just learn how and never really become.

Know something about the ways of God without knowing the acts of God, brother, without knowing the real ways of God. Yes, sir. Just so all of their life they have to pattern after something else.

Always have to pattern. If I know the ways of God, then I move with God. Yes, sir.

There's a lot of people excited about miracles that are dead, never been alive. Yes, sir. Anybody get excited over that? You're sick and thought somebody could heal you.

You don't care about God, but you'd come try to get that answer. It's a paralyzing situation. Yes, sir.

The weakness of the church today is the inability of men to come and say, Thus saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord. The inability just to stand up in that pulpit.

I'm tired of hearing preachers say, I believe, I think, I hope. Ain't that? I can do that. I want somebody up there that says, Thus saith God.

Amen. I didn't come here to Greensboro, North Carolina to argue about God. I come here to talk for God.

I believe He'd give me a message to say. I come to say it. I'm going to say it to whoever's under this tent.

The vessel of recovery will have to be taken back to the beginning. Now, it may have behind it a Christian life. It may have much of Christianity.

But there'll come a crisis when it will seem as though there have been nothing. Yes, sir. There'll come a crisis.

Because you know, everything that lives inside of God has to pass through death and resurrection. Everything that lives has to pass through death. At church, you start at church.

I'm not knowing my brother here. I understand he's got a great church here. I don't know how long he's been here.

I can promise you this. There's been times when he went to bed and didn't know whether there'd be anything there the next morning or not. I've been in Beaumont 28 years.

I've laid down. I said, I don't know whether there'd be one thing left here in the morning. Amen.

Yes, sir. Passed through death. One time, 60 people got up and walked out at one time.

I had to keep smiling and preaching. Yes, sir. Just keep smiling and preaching.

While I was preaching, a voice back here said, preach on, son. If it had been of you, they wouldn't have left you in the first place. Thank God.

Let me tell you something. I learned. I learned.

That it's not my church. It's His. If He's through with it, so am I. I just stand there with my lawrence girt about with truth, knowing that if any increase of Christ in me, something in me is going to have to become that burnt offering on that altar.

Something must die of me if there be an increase of Him. And whether it be ministry or church, it'll have to pass through death and resurrection to live in the sight of God. And that recovery, that vessel of recovery, will be carried back behind the tradition, back behind all of its religiosity.

Amen. And there'll come a crisis when everything will seem like as if not, and the only thing you'll have to hang on to is Jesus. Jesus.

That's all that's left. I've been there, folks. Listen, I've been there.

Four years ago, when I shut down that religious machine, I was on television one time. I was the third. Rex Humbard, Oral Robertson, myself, NBC, come down to Beaumont to talk to me.

I was number three on the number of stations that you were on around this nation. I woke up one morning, and I'm not saying anything wrong, we're just talking about me, that the only way I was keeping that machine going was just letters, letters, going out of business, if you don't help me. I woke up, I said, I just can't see God up there wringing His hands, wondering whether I'm going to make it or not.

And when I shut it down, I was a half a million dollars in the hole. And ain't nobody but me and Mama knowing all of what's going on. I traveled this nation.

God helped me to pay them stations. They wrote me and said, you're the one preacher that paid us, that left us. You don't want back on, you can come back on.

Listen, I rode them airplanes, and I bought enough insurance to pay it off, and there's a many a time I said, God, if it wasn't anybody else on here, we should let it fall. I'm so tired. It looked like I'd never... I'd get a letter from one, and he says, I'm going to shoot you.

And I never did. But I went through. I died.

I'm telling you, I died. I came out of it impervious. Amen.

One man got upset with me at the church at home. I said, let me tell you something, son. If you raised my pay or fired me, it would be exactly the same emotions.

I'd just believe it's the will of God and would move on. Now, don't bother me. I'm not being facetious.

I'm just telling you there's a place in God. Amen. Well, you're dead to all the little eddies that stir up a little storm on the outside.

I've got the long look. I'm seeing Him that's invisible. There's a church that's the answer to everything on this earth that somebody's got to dress himself to, whether it's a multitude or one along by the river.

The message must be the same. It must be returned to the mind of Almighty God. There can be no substitute for truth and reality.

That vessel is a break in history. Always has been. When John Wesley rose up to preach his message, the Episcopal church wouldn't let him in.

The religion of his day wouldn't let him in. And he preached on the tomb rock of his granddad in a graveyard to multitudes. It was a break in history.

But that Methodist revival affected that age and changed the tide of history, saved all the rest of Europe from the same fate of the French Revolution and came to America. And the circuit rider Methodist preachers done as much to shape this great land as any president there ever was. Amen.

Born out of a break in history, here's a man saved by the grace of God, rejected by religion, but rose up under God single-handedly to disturb a nation for Christ, a world for Christ. Luther, passed through the cloister, all in the will of God, to discover that discipleship isn't the meritorious work of saints, but it's living

for God in the midst of the commerce. Thank God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in a midst when religion has gone crazy and called you fanatic to say that holiness hasn't gone out of style with God, to stand up and proclaim Jesus as the answer to everything.

A break in history. If we're not prepared for the Lord to bring us to such a place, we cannot be that vessel. We cannot be that vessel.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that God is speaking today to hearts. There's a strange heart-warming hunger coming to people all over this land. At close this morning, I believe what I'm seeing, the fulfillment of a vision, a prophecy given in 1922 by one of the greatest apostles of faith of this century, Smith Wigglesworth.

I was in a little town of Dilley, Texas. Sister Bannings had started the church there. Now she's retired.

Pastry, meatless. But she had built the first Assembly of God church in Cook County in Los Angeles. Had nine children.

When God called her to preach, had nine children, living on a farm. Husband wasn't saved. She was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Said she got out every morning, she'd pray, Oh God, why don't you call Brown down there? He's a man and he don't have all his kids. How can I go preach with nine children? And she said, I prayed that every morning. Until one morning, said I knelt at that altar.

Her name was Alice Banning. And said I knelt at that altar. Husband had gone to the field and I started that same prayer and the voice behind me said, Alice.

I thought it was my husband coming from the field. I turned around, but it's not him. And I turned back to pray and the voice said, Alice.

She said, I knew it was God. He said, Alice, are those children in your way? Oh, she said, No, Lord. What he was saying to her, I can get them out of the way if they're going to keep doing the will of God.

I can move them. I gave them to you. No, Lord.

And she went to Los Angeles and began that church. She's pulled in before judges and courts. One of them treated her one time, almost spit on her.

But the last time she stood before him, she said to him, You've treated me so unkindly. I don't have a husband to be here with me. They said she's making too much racket as they worship God.

I don't have a husband. I don't have money for an attorney. I've been down here.

You've insulted me these three times. But, she said, I want to tell you in the name of God there's coming another court scene with another judge, mister, and you're going to give an account of what you've done to me. And before she came back the next time, he did.

She called Mr. Wigglesworth in for a meeting. She said, We roped off a city block. Ten thousand people came every night to hear the man of God.

She said, Brother Clinton, in one of the greatest moves, said people ten miles away would come outside of their houses just in the evening to mow the lawn and would fall out. They thought they had a heart attack. They'd call, try to get them to a hospital.

They'd come to screaming for mercy. The power of God ten miles out there. Oh God, do it again.

I said do it again. But she said, in the midst of that, reliably stood up one night and prophesied. This is 1922.

1922. You know what I'm saying. He said the present revival, that's the one that began in 1906, will die.

It'll die and become just death. But in the mid-forties, he's talking 1922, in the mid-forties, there'll be those raised up with great miracle ministries and said there'll be a great activity and stirring. But in the late fifties, they will have become so involved in the physical.

You know that's right. If you didn't need healing, wasn't no need in going, that God will withdraw himself and the sixties will be marked by such political and religious confusion as this world and this nation has never known. But he said in the final end, in the late seventies, the early eighties, they'll turn back to hear the word of God.

I must see him, that sister Houcher. I must see him there. They're turning back to hear the living word of God.

What does God have to say? Let's stand and worship him here this morning. Oh, hallelujah. Carried back behind tradition.

Hallelujah.

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