

The Problem of Unbelief

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon addresses the critical issue of unbelief and its detrimental effects on faith and prayer in the Christian life.

Duration: 53:37

Scripture: Isaiah 1:25, Mark 9:17, Luke 24:25-27, Hebrews 10:23, Hebrews 12:15

Topics: "Unbelief"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of allowing God to refine and purify us. He references Isaiah 1, where God promises to remove impurities from His people like a refiner purifies gold. The preacher also highlights the need for Christians to reflect the true character of Christ to others, especially to their children. He warns against hypocrisy and encourages believers to be loving, kind, and forgiving. The sermon concludes with a request for prayers for someone named Joe, who is going through a difficult time.

Transcript

I think I mentioned in one of the meetings how Abraham was 80 years old before he even began his ministry. So, it shouldn't be unusual, but it has been good. We've been around the world, meeting Christians in many countries, and seeing the hand of God at work again and again.

It's been a real joy to be here. Thank you for praying for us. If you think of us as speakers, G.V. and Joe and myself, pray for us.

We'd appreciate that more than anything else I can think of. I want to read from Mark's Gospel, a few verses, chapter 9. Jesus had been up on the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James, and John, and he came down from the mountain. The other disciples were down below in the valley, and they were having a hard time with a case, a demon-possessed child.

And so I'll read from verse 17. One of the multitude answered and said, Master, I brought unto you my son who has a dumb spirit. Wherever he takes him, he tears him, and he foams and gnashes with his teeth and pines away.

I spoke to your disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not. He answered them and said, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. And

they brought him unto them.

And when he saw him, immediately the spirit tore him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said of a child, Enough times it has cast him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

Jesus said unto him, If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, You dumb and deaf spirit, I charge you, come out of him and enter no more into him.

And the spirit cried and wrenched him sore and came out of him. And he was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He's dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he rose.

When he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why couldn't we cast him out? And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting. As you probably know, there are many things mentioned in three Gospels and some in four Gospels. This story is given in Mark and Luke as well.

Then you get the whole story. And so when they said, Why couldn't we? I think it's in Luke he said, Because of your unbelief. So I want to talk about the problem of unbelief, which somebody has called the deadliest sin of all.

It's kind of a follow through to what I preached or spoke on in the previous session. Hebrews 3.12 says, Take heed, brethren. He's talking to believers.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. I've never counted. Somebody has.

And they tell me there's around 400 prayers in the Bible. There are 1,400 references to prayer in the Bible altogether, including those 400 prayers. There are 229 references to faith.

And there are 32 references to the faith. And that suggests what it stands for the entire Christian system. Why isn't it called the grace? Why is it called the faith? Why isn't it called something else? It's called the faith because faith is at the bottom of everything.

In the Christian movement. There are at least 24 things in the New Testament that happen to us through faith. We all know we're saved by faith.

We're also kept by faith. We're kept by the power of God through faith. We're told that.

Then the Bible says we draw near to God by faith. We stand by faith. We walk by faith.

We run the Christian life by faith. We pray in faith. 24 different things.

All of which happen by faith. So this should help us understand the importance of faith. And then, the problem of unbelief.

I think what Spurgeon has said, that faith is at the bottom of all sin. Because he that believes not God has made him a liar. Because he doesn't believe the record that God gave his son.

Unbelief makes God a liar. He said certain things. I don't believe them.

So God is wrong. I'm not making God a liar. When this sin takes over, many sins follow automatically.

They have to. Because if you don't believe, you have very little. Christ said faith is the soul at rest in the love of God.

So the Bible says faith works by love. Romans 5E. Faith works by love.

So faith is the soul at rest in the love of God. We can believe Him because we know that God is love. We're told that twice in 1 John.

And it's suggested, of course, everywhere in the Scripture. That our God is a loving God. Hereby we perceive the love of God.

Because He laid down His life for us. If you can't believe it for any other reason, believe it for this reason. It's larger than all the others put together.

He is a God of love. So, faith and love together occur over 30 times in the New Testament. Faith and love.

I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and the love you have to all the saints. Things like that are found frequently in the Bible. And of course, they are very closely related.

What is unbelief? Genesis 3.1. Has God said? Did He really say it? Eve, do you think God really said it? You never heard that. You got it from your husband, you know. Well, she hadn't.

God had told Eve, Adam, so she got it second hand. That was the approach. Has God said? Maybe He didn't really mean what He said.

Maybe He got to put a different construction on it. And that's why I say that the Bible often throws a lot of light on some of the books that have been written about it. Unbelief.

Psalms 119.128 says, Therefore, I esteem, that is I count, I believe. I esteem all your precepts concerning all things to be right. And I hate every false way.

Do you live at that address? I esteem everything God said to be right. And because I esteem them to be right, I conform my life to the precepts of God. Luke 24.

Jesus on the Emmaus Road. Two men. He said, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Fools and slow of heart. Kind of strong language.

So if He said it to them, He can say it to us today. When we fail to believe these many, they're called by Peter, great and precious promises. He is faithful to a promise we read in Hebrews chapter 10.

Now if you go back for a moment to that story that we read in Mark 9. It goes like this. Here's this father. He's got this child who's been thrown in the fire, thrown in the water, been knocked down on the ground, foaming at the mouth.

And so his prayer was, O Lord, if you can do anything, have compassion on us. He put a big if in it. And notice how Christ replied.

He started with an if. If you can believe, it's not up to me, Christ is really saying. It's not up to me.

I've got the power to do it. I've done it before. I know how to do it.

I want to do it. I'm waiting for your faith. If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believe.

Many times now we pray that way. Oh, God, can you do something? Hey, God, I've got this big problem. God, can you do anything for me? You put an if in it, you'll get the same thing back if you can believe.

All things are possible to him that believe. Now, unbelief grieves God greatly. We have a simple case back in I Kings chapter 2, I think, where the city was surrounded by an enemy army.

They'd run out of food in the city. And Elisha had the nerve to get up and say, Tomorrow, about this time, there's going to be lots of food. There's a guy standing there on whose hand the king leaned.

And he said, Huh, if God would make windows in heaven, this might be. And Elisha said, You'll see it, but you won't partake of it. And that's what happened.

He was trodden under the feet of the people when they were running out of the city to get to the tents to get food to eat. The Syrians had disappeared because God made them hear a noise as if a great army of chariots coming. They heard this.

It wasn't real. God did it. God does all kinds of things, you know, and can.

And they were gone. And so their tents were full of food. But this one guy, if the Lord, he's got an if there too, you know.

So don't ever pray the way, Oh, God, if you can do something, do something. That's got nothing to do with faith. God is waiting for our faith.

Unbelief denies the attributes of God. I can't believe God will do it because I don't really believe that God is faithful to all he said. Or I don't believe God is really a God of compassion and love.

And you can always argue that way because you see bad things happening all around. I pastored a lady named Wonky in a place called Boziger Manitoba. She was part of my church.

When she died, we had to have a town hall to get the crowds in, and they didn't all get in. What was so remarkable about her? She had a family of four. Three of her children and her husband had been killed in different accidents.

She had one daughter still alive living in the States, married, whom she saw maybe once every three years. She was the happiest Christian I had in the church. You should have seen her.

One day I tried her. I said, Sister Wonky, haven't you ever thought that maybe God gave you a bad deal? I had to dodge. It was almost bricks flying at me, you know.

And she wasn't putting it on to her people, and the whole town knew. Boziger's a small place, maybe 4,000 people. Everybody in town knew.

That's where they all wanted to be at the funeral. I never had a funeral like that in my life. You know what was going on? I would say, Sister Wonky was a real Christian.

The crowd was honored. Amen, preacher. That's right.

Everything I said about her, they were responding. Unsafe people were saying it even, you know. It was amazing.

What a testimony. Had she lived in Winnipeg, her next-door neighbor might not have known her, you know. So she lived in the right place, and she handled it right.

The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Keep that clearly in mind. You know, one minute in heaven will make up for 70 years of trouble.

It says in Isaiah that the former things will not be remembered or come into mind. You look at the context, he's talking about the troubles of this life. You won't even remember them.

They'll all be gone out of your mind. You can't remember them. Great, wonderful, I think.

So unbelief denies the attributes of God. It prevents God from working. Remember in Numbers 14, the Lord said to Moses, How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be before they believe me? For all the signs and wonders I've shown them.

What's wrong with these people? And God is probably saying the same thing to some of us. How long will it be before Peter or James or Helen or whoever will believe me? It grieves God greatly. It says in Psalm 78, they flattered God.

They lied unto God with their tongues. And then it says they limited God. You can tie God up so He can't do anything.

Jesus, remember, was raised in Nazareth. He lived there for 30 years, right? He was a carpenter. Everybody in town knew He lived a spotless life.

But when He came around working miracles, they didn't believe in Him. So it says He could not do any mighty works there because of their unbelief. There is a sense there, people, in which God has limited His activity to the faith of His children.

He's waiting for people to believe and to live and act accordingly. You're not your own. You're bought with a price.

Therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's, and walk in faith. We all rejoice in George Mueller, the wonderful faith he had. He kept a ledger in a book of prayer.

One column, the prayer he prayed. Next column, the date he prayed. The third column, the day God answered.

And he had 30,000 prayers that God had answered the same day he prayed. He had 50,000 prayers that took God longer than a day. Now, he had that list when he was 85.

I think he lived to be 94. So he probably had 100,000 answers to prayer. I've had people tell me, I can't remember when I last had an answer to prayer.

What's wrong with it? Can't we believe after all he has done? People say, well, maybe Jesus wasn't really the way we think he was. Wait a minute. Didn't you know there's more historical evidence for Jesus of Nazareth than there is for Napoleon Bonaparte or Genghis Khan or Alexander the Great? There's more real historical evidence for Jesus of Nazareth.

And Josephus, who was not a Christian or Jew, he said at that time, Now there was among us a man called Jesus of Nazareth, if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a teacher of new truths and a worker of miracles. But our chief priest condemned him and he died on a cross.

But he was raised from the dead on the third day and appeared to many of his disciples, some of whom remain until now. The only extra biblical reference we have to those things, but you see, Christians wrote other Christians. They found thousands of clay tablets, letters that Christians wrote back in those early days.

Certainly he lived. Historical evidence abounds. So don't ever doubt.

Don't ever doubt him. You prevent God from working. I was in a church in Toronto one time.

They had just experienced a revival about a year before. They had traveled 1,400 people. And they told me, now when you walk on my platform, you're going to be floating on the air.

And that's how it was. It was incredible. It's just as if everybody's sitting there saying, circumbilled, circumbilled.

They were so full of faith, they were just expecting God to work. And he worked, and he worked, and he worked. You know, when Finney went preaching, he was going to go someplace, we'll say, he was going to be there two weeks.

There was a man called Abel Clary and another man called Father Nash. It was just a term of endearment, Father Nash. These men would precede him, go to that place and start praying.

They prayed 10 hours a day, and they prayed out loud. They got to a place where local people were afraid to walk by the house where these guys were praying, because that power might fall on them. And Finney said, when I got there, the revival had started.

Because two men had prayed. We know that. We don't do it.

One church in the States, they wanted a revival so badly. You know what they did? They had a prayer meeting three times a day for two years. For two years.

And a mighty awakening came. Hundreds found Christ as their Savior. Sometimes I ask a pastor, I get to a church, how did you prepare by prayer for my coming here? Oh, Brother Bill, we had two extra prayer meetings, you know.

And I just groan. That's all you did? Do you think I bring revival? This is God's business. Here's what God said about himself.

Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place, with Him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the heart of the humble, to revive the spirit of the contrite one. God dwells up there to revive us.

Are we a candidate for that? Are we open to His Word? Willing to walk in the ways of God? We have to be that. And we can help our church more by walking in the Spirit, praying constantly, than probably in any other way. As God leads us.

It prevents God from answering prayers we saw in Mark chapter 9. I just want to remind you again, if, if, if you, if you. That's how it is. He's waiting to hear us pray.

The prayer of the upright is God's delight. I was thinking about that one day, and I thought to myself, how in the world can that be? I wasn't doubting it, but it was such a tremendous thought. The God of the universe, who spoke, and the universe sprang into existence.

You know, there are suns in the universe that are a thousand times larger than our sun is. And our sun is so large, that if you were to hollow it out, and leave a crust all around a hundred thousand miles thick, you could still put the earth and the moon inside what is left. And that, God says, my delight, is an upright person praying.

Think of it. He hates sin. He hates evil.

He loves the upright when they pray. It's wonderful. Now, unbelief robs the word of God of its power, you know.

In Mark, uh, Hebrew chapter 4, it says, The word priest did not profit certain people, because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it. Twin guys, they hear, they sit, they hear the same sermon. One gets saved, the other one goes home angry.

What's the difference? One has faith, the other did not. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to who? To everyone who believes. And Paul said, I thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard of us, you did not receive it as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually works also in you that believe.

It has a profound effect on us when we believe it. Let us speak. I picked up a man in the highway one time, started to witness to him.

I would say he was a man in his 60s. You know what he told me? I don't want to hear anymore. I said, why not? He said, I know too much now.

So he thought, the more I hear, the more guilty I'll become. So if I don't listen anymore, I won't be so guilty. That's what he thought.

He didn't understand. He was going to wind up in hell anyway if he didn't, you know, but he didn't know that. So, unbelief cripples God and his work, destroys the power of the gospel.

Don't have any part of that. You know what robs us of power? You know what it talks about Stephen? He was full, it says, of faith and power. Notice in that order, it doesn't say of power and faith.

Full of faith and power. And he did great wonders among the people. And power and faith belong together.

The power comes when the faith is there. That's God's order. And that's the way it will always be.

So it robs sinners and it robs Christians. People sometimes say, I'm not sure that God really meant that. Well, so I ask them a question, what else could he mean? And it turns out, it's not that they want a different interpretation.

It's just that they can't take the interpretation, the only interpretation there is in that particular text. I don't think we can ever run into a bad experience in life that isn't covered somewhere in the Word of God. For somebody had this before you did.

You know, unsafe psychiatrists, I understand, they often read the Bible because they have discovered it has a tremendous insight in the way people respond to bad situations. That helps them in their work. God understands.

He made us. He knows all about, I have a couple of books in my library on the human mind. It's amazing how little they know.

They're trying to figure it out. You can't figure it out. You know a guy, it was a true story by a medical doctor in France.

A man died. He'd been sick for some months in hospital, but he was quite lucid, talking to people constantly. No problem.

They did an odyssey on him and discovered there was no brain left. It was God. Yet he had been talking.

I think God did that in order to demonstrate to people there is such a thing as a soul. And the soul is the real you. When you die, your brain is no longer of any value to you.

It's gone. But you have another intelligence, which is nothing like the one we have now. It will be pure and perfect in eternity.

The world has a saying, believing is seeing. And sometimes Christians say that. How do I know? Because Thomas said it.

Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my hand into the wholeness side, I will not believe. And Christ came back. He wasn't there with the disciples when Thomas said this.

Wherever he was, he heard it. Because the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. So when he appeared, he said, Thomas, he gave him his hand.

My side? And then he said, well, Thomas' response was, my Lord and my God. And Jesus said, Thomas, because you have seen, you have believed. Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.

And that blessing comes on us. I had fainted, I think it's Psalm 27, I had fainted unless I had believed to see the glory of the Lord in the land of the living. Believe to see.

They threw that out of Christ on the cross. Come on you, Christ, come down from the cross, and we'll believe. So seeing is not believing.

Believing is seeing. In Romans 14, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace. Who knows what the next two words are? In believing, then 1 Peter 1, Christ, whom having not seen, you believe, in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

So Paul says, in believing the power comes, and Peter says, yet believing the power comes. So faith brings the power of God into any picture where it's necessary. We walk by faith, not by sight.

We don't have to see in order to believe. He gave us the promises. He's waiting, of course, for us to believe them, not to admire them.

Sometimes we have a thing on the wall, a bunch of promises on them. Promises which we never keep, or never think are real, never use. God is waiting.

He's waiting for people like George Mueller that would believe. You know, a couple of guys whose business was studying people's heads heard about him. They measured his head.

They didn't get anything out of their investigation at all. And the report went like this. We can't understand this man after examining him and his head.

We do have a problem, though, with those thousands of answers to prayer. They had a problem. There was another preacher I heard in the States.

Oh, it was Gypsy Smith, a famous English evangelist. And some guy came behind him and started feeling his head. So he said, what are you doing? He said, I'm trying to find the secret of your success.

He laughed. Oh, he said, you're looking 14 inches too high. It's down in my heart.

Of course, that's the way it is. Rob's believers then have power, blessing, joy, and peace. I gave that verse, Psalm 27, 13, in case you're taking notes.

I have fainted unless I have believed to see the goodness, the grace, the power of God in the land of the living. It's the core of the Jewish problem. I remember reading a story about a Jew.

He'd been a rabbi. He said, I'm a total unbeliever. I'm an atheist now.

He said, our people in those concentration camps, knowing they're going to die, beaten to death, shot to death, burned to death, whatever, they cried with all their heart to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and nothing happened. There is no God, he cried. I thought to myself, my dear man, if you knew your Old Testament Bible, well, you'd know why God never answered their prayers.

Zechariah chapter 7 tells how God appealed to Zechariah and other prophets to the nation, but they did not listen. It says they made their hearts as an adamant stone. The word diamond and adamant are related.

A diamond is the hardest substance known to man. They made their hearts as hard as a stone, as hard as a diamond. And so what happened? Three things.

God said this. As he cried, he meant himself. As he cried, or maybe he was referring to Zechariah.

As he cried, and they would not hear. So, I refuse to listen. They wouldn't listen to me.

I won't listen to them. The reason why God wasn't answering their prayers was because they weren't listening to Him. Read that, Zechariah 7, 14 to the end.

That was the first thing. The second thing was this. I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations.

And people, they're still scattered today. Four million in Israel. There are 16 million Jews in the world.

There's 300,000 in Canada. There's several million in the United States. There's probably a couple million in Russia, but they're scattered all around the world.

Matter of fact, the scattering of the Jew is mentioned many places in the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy, God warned them, I'll scatter you if you disobey Me. And so, the Jews know they're scattered, but they don't get it.

They don't see it in their own Testament. It's there as clear as can be. Scattered with a whirlwind.

That's the second thing. And the third thing was that their land would become desolate. And you know, it's desolate today.

There's a few places that they've worked on and they can grow tomatoes, huge tomatoes, but it's nothing like it was originally. It was known it was a very, very fruitful land. The whole land was ripe.

God was blessing it. They lost all of that. So it came to pass that as He cried, they wouldn't listen.

So they cried and He wouldn't listen. So that's why. That's their problem.

I've talked occasionally with Jews and they wrestle with this greatly. They can't understand what happened to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Some become atheists.

Some do not. They just wrestle with it. They can't see it.

It says, Paul said, when Moses is read, there's a veil on their heart, but when it, the heart, turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. So if a Jew really wants to find God, he can. And he will.

I don't know if I said this publicly to this group, but in talking with a Jew, I asked him where he stood. I said, you know where I stand. I don't know where you stand.

About Jesus. And here's what he said. I believe Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God.

I believe He died on the cross for the sins of the world. I believe He was raised from the dead on the third day. And so I said, what about inviting Him into your heart? And the temperature just completely turned.

You'll have nothing before that. He was in the house five times. Three hours at a time.

He comes in, Bill, can I have 15 minutes of your time? We're developing to three hours now. Talking from the Old Testament Scriptures. But when I asked him about receiving Christ, he became an enemy.

He wouldn't even talk to me. I tried to phone him. He won't answer the phone for me.

His wife has the phone. He doesn't come. I don't know what happened to him.

How could he believe all that? And act this way? The Lord isn't finished with him yet. Neither am I. We're still believing. One day, there'll be a knock at the door or someone on the phone.

God isn't through with him. But people, it's faith. They made their hearts as an adam and stone lest they should hear the law.

And the words which the Lord of hosts is sent in the form of prophets. Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. That's the problem.

Unbelief again. What causes unbelief? You'll find it's mixed with impurity, sin, hardness of heart. You remember when it says in James 4, draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

But what's the next verse? Cleanse your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted and mourn and weep.

Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He'll lift you up. Draw near to God and He'll draw near to you.

And the first thing, cleanse your hands. Purify your heart. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.

It says in James 1. Is that the problem? For some it is. Cleanse your hands. Purify your double-minded heart by the grace of God.

Let Him have His way. Start believing. Stop questioning.

Walk in faith. How do we handle the problem of unbelief? Well, I say first of all, call it what God calls it. What did He call it? Hebrews 3, we quoted the verse before.

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief. It's evil. It's the bottom line of all sin.

So we have to repent of our unbelief. Treat it the way it is. It's a horrible thing to not trust God.

How would you feel if you had a child that wouldn't believe anything you said? Sometimes we've talked with kids who are at that point. They didn't believe their dad because their dad never kept his promises. That's a very dangerous thing to give your child a promise and never keep it.

Do that a few times. He won't trust you about anything and may grow up that way rejecting your God as well as you. So we have to be very careful.

The remedy then is evil. Repent of this evil. Seek to be emptied by God.

You can't empty yourself. You can search your own heart. It says so in Lamentations 3, but you can't do a thorough job.

Only God can do a thorough job. Sometimes, you know, we're afraid because we have a shelf behind the door. We used to sing a little chorus.

The shelf behind the door. The shelf behind the door. Just tear it down and throw it out.

Don't use it anymore. For Jesus wants His temple clean from ceiling to the floor. He even wants that shelf removed that's in behind the door.

And we may have a pet sin. A missionary in Africa told me we have much demonism. We're casting out demons quite often.

And we tell them this. Now, you'll be free providing you don't have some secret sin in your house. And sometimes, people would hide.

They'd destroy all the gods they had except one. Hide it under the bed in some secret closet. And they would never get free.

And when they weren't free, we'd just simply say, what secret thing have you got hidden? What is it? And sooner or later, they'd break down and bring it out and destroy that. Then they would be free. And sometimes we, it may not be an idol, but some secret thing we're hanging onto that we love.

Don't want to give up. God is waiting. I never forget one man.

Forty years, he told us in his testimony, God had asked him to do a certain thing. He didn't do it. And he said, for forty years, God has been hounding me about this.

And I just dealt with it yesterday. Forty years. That's a long time.

It may be true for some of us here. Repent. Seek to be empty.

And when you seek to be empty, then seek to be filled with the love of God. Because remember, faith works by love. Oh God, empty me.

Fill me. He knows how to do both. And he'll do it for you.

Gordon Bailey, he was a member of my church in Saskatoon. Six years a Christian. Always in church with his family.

Never said anything about the Lord really, but he was always there. Prayer meeting. Never prayed.

He told me later on, I used to sit there in a cold sweat. I was afraid you might call on Gordon Bailey to pray or something. He said, I'm going to drop through the floor.

He was a cattle inspector. His job. During the revival days, see Sunday mornings, the churches were all in their own church.

The rest of the time for those seven weeks, we were in larger buildings elsewhere. So one Sunday morning, he walked to the communion table and our churches sat right there. He turned around and said to the church, I have been backslidden for two years.

I've always sat in the back pew because I hate some of you people, and I've been shooting arrows at the backs of your heads, and I want to be forgiven. Can you forgive me? The people were nodding their heads up and down, and he said, I want to be everything God wants me to be. I had my deacons take him into another room, and they prayed with him, and he went home.

He told me later, it was the hardest thing I have ever done in all my life. He got his wife and his three kids or I'm not sure if they had three or four, and he put out chairs for them, and he put a chair out here so he could sit facing his kids and his wife. Then he talked to each kid personally.

Beginning at the end, he asked his child to forgive him for being such a poor daddy, such a poor Christian. She was a bad example. When he got to his wife, he asked her to forgive him for being such a rotten husband.

And this is what he said. It almost killed me to do that. It was the hardest thing I ever did in all my life.

But twice the Bible says, James 4 and verse 35, if you humble yourself unto the mighty hand of God, He will what? He'll exalt you. He'll lift you up. So what happened to Gordon Bailey? That same day, he was in the barn.

He had a herd of black angus cattle, about 50 cattle bees. He was in the barn working, and here's what he said. Suddenly, God filled me with the Holy Ghost from top to toe.

In the next nine months, he led 30 people to Christ. Then he began getting invitations from churches to come and speak. And he did.

And revivals began erupting. He only had grade 8 education. But he was filled because he had emptied himself under God's hand by humbling himself before his family.

And this went on and on. His boss, he was a cattle inspector, his boss told him when he found out what he was doing, his boss was a Roman Catholic, not a born-again believer. He said, listen Gordon, if you have to leave on Friday to get where you're going for Sunday, he said, just take Friday off.

We want Dr. Page. And if you have to get back late a couple of days, don't worry about that. We want Dr. Page.

He preached one weekend 105 times. Led many people to Christ. Did he read a book on how to do it? No, he didn't.

He wasn't a great reader. He just had a meeting with God. Then he was down in the States.

It happened he was getting, I think maybe he would have been in full-time work, but he didn't feel led to do that at this point. And he had a trouble, a problem. The doctors misinterpreted it, sent him home.

He died. He got home. He's sitting here.

His wife was sitting there talking. He just said, I feel awful, and he fell over dead. She's a great Christian.

If you ever think of her, Edna Bailey. She's still carrying on with God. A great gal.

Anyway. Gordon Bailey. So it's always a faith walk.

2 Corinthians 5-7. Did you ever link Abraham with Zacharias, John the Baptist's father? They were both old, you know. They were both childless.

They both wanted a child. They both got a child. But Abraham got it freely.

Zacharias had to pay for it. How's that? He didn't believe. When he was told, he doubted.

And here he was struck deaf and dumb until a child came 9 months later, you know. So he had the same answer as Abraham had, but it was a little tougher for him because there was some unbelief there. So, trust Him.

It says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean to your own understanding. Don't always try to figure out what God is doing. His footsteps are not known, it says in the Old Testament.

The New Testament says, His ways are past finding out. So why waste time trying to figure out what God is doing? He's working. Whether you can see it or sense it or not.

He may be working deeply in a life where the person shows no signs of it, whatever. It's not your business to try and figure out. Two of us sat in a car in Port Javion, Winnipeg one time.

We were waiting for our wives. They were shopping. You know how it is.

The wife says, I'll be gone 15 minutes. When she gets into a store, it's two hours, you know. Anyway, we started a game.

And the game was, watching people go by and he'd say, I think that guy's a Christian. What makes you think that? There's something in his faith. We never ever inquired.

We're just having a game, you know. So we got a few people into heaven. Most of them didn't go to heaven.

We had to do something to fill in the hour, you know. Hour and a half, whatever. Anyway, we can't know.

I say a game. His ways are past finding out. Job knew that.

He talked about God working on the right hand, the left hand behind him and all of this. But he said, really what he was saying was, I don't have a clue what God is doing. But he knows the way that I take.

When he has tried me, I'll come forth like gold. He's just taking care of the drops so we can be pure gold. That phrase is used a number of times.

Isn't all gold pure? Not necessarily. You have to melt the stuff and take off the junk that comes to the surface to get pure gold. And God has to do the same.

He sits, it says in Malachi, as a refiner and purifier of silver. Do you know how he does it? He's got this silver that's bubbling here now. He's got a ladle.

He sees something on the top. He scoops it off and throws it aside. And he keeps on doing this.

He keeps on doing this until what? Do you happen to know? He keeps on doing this until when he looks in, he can see a perfect replica of his own face. And he's doing that with you and with me. He's a refiner and a purifier.

We were predestined, according to Romans 8, to be conformed to the image of Christ. So that's what he's working at. To make us a kind, loving, forgiving person.

Be kind, it says. Tenderhearted. Forgiving one another.

Even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you. So he's trying to perfect. Isaiah 1 says, I will turn My hand upon you and purge away your dross and take away all the tin.

Pure gold. So I don't know what he's doing. He knows what I'm doing.

That's enough. I think I'm through. And when a preacher is through, it's time for him to quit.

Sometimes we don't know when to quit. We, you know, in revival circles, we frequently have testimony times. We had a good testimony time here.

They were wonderful. Praise the Lord. But sometimes we had 40 people.

Sometimes there were so many testimonies, we had no preachers. That never happened often, but it did happen. And people were simply relating.

But we used to tell them, listen, don't take longer than two or three, four minutes. If you can't find the landing field, we'll help you come down. And sometimes we had to help people find the landing field, you know.

Just one thing, and I'll close. A lady came one night to share. I didn't know a thing about her.

They called her Mrs. Bible. She knew so much about the Bible. People used to phone her long distance and short distance and come and see her and talk to her after church.

She always had snappy answers. And then she heard they were calling her Mrs. Bible. You know what happened? She swelled up with pride.

So this night she was sharing. Now she knew what the rules were, but she forgot them and she started preaching. And so my helper went over and suggested kindly to her that maybe she should sign off.

So she smiled so sweetly. I'm sitting over here. And back to her seat.

We found out later on what happened. She went home and told her husband what happened. He wasn't a Christian.

And she was angry, really angry. She said, I'll never go back to those meetings again. I'll never give my testimony in public again.

I had so much to teach those people, and they wouldn't even let me. But she had a problem. You know what it was? She had several teenage kids and her husband.

Not one of them was a Christian. Now, she had dumped Chuck Lowe's Bible on them, but none of them ever responded. And then she found out why.

God dealt with her. She was back Thursday night. This was Monday night, if I remember rightly.

She was back on Thursday night, thoroughly humbled and chastened. She gave her testimony, but she told us the truth, how wickedly proud she'd been. She told the whole story and just wept as she poured out her soul.

Do you know what happened? In one week, all her family got saved. See, they were not rejecting the Christ or the Bible. They were rejecting the kind of Christ they saw in her, and that was the problem.

So what kind of Christ do our kids see in us? You want to be truthful, non-hypocritical, loving and kind, not just on Sunday. Kids have sometimes said things like this. My mom and dad at home, they fight like cats and dogs, but in church they sing so sweetly you'd never know it.

Don't be like that, whatever. It's hurtful to the children. Well, I said I was going to stop, so I'm going to stop.

It's so good to be here. Do you think of us? Pray for us, for TV, for Joe. Joe's going home.

His mother's dying, and he has a 10-hour trip, I guess, by car. Pray for him. It's so good to see you.

Maybe someday we'll meet again. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word so clear, so simple, and so plain.

Thank you. This evil thing called unbelief, probably all of us at some point have fallen into it. Maybe some of us are walking in it today.

Oh, God, we pray, forgive us, empty us of sin and self. Teach us to lean, and not lean to our own understanding, but to lean as we sing. Leaning on Jesus teaches how to be in tune.

So thanks, Lord, for your great love, your understanding. You're shining on us right now. With the eyes of our soul, we can see it.

Thank you. Thank you. In Christ's name.

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