

# Provision of the Covenant - Part 1

by Bill Stafford

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*Bill Stafford's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of understanding and living out our covenant relationship with God.*

**Duration:** 58:15

**Scripture:** Numbers 22:28, Matthew 26:34, Romans 6:6, Romans 6:11, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22-31

**Topics:** "Covenant"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of having an abiding relationship with God. He shares his personal struggles with temper, jealousy, gossip, and greed, highlighting the need for God's power and patience in overcoming these sins. The preacher emphasizes that victory can only be achieved through putting on the new man and living in covenant agreement with God. He references the story of Jonathan and David, where they exchange robes as a symbol of their covenant relationship, and encourages the congregation to put off their old behaviors and put on righteousness and holiness. The sermon concludes with a reminder that breaking covenant with God will not lead to prosperity, and disobedience to the word of God indicates a lack of covenant relationship.

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## Transcript

And it's always a delight, any time, to be in the service and to be with God's people and to be with so many of God's men. I don't think that we're hearing any greater preaching in any generation I have heard in the generation past as to what we're hearing now in Holy Ghost preaching. I'm talking about in general, of great preachers, great men of God, preaching the word, preaching, textual preaching, right out of the word of God.

I believe that our problem is, like Amos said, there's no problem in the preaching of the word, the problem is in the hearing of the word of God. Amen? Am I not on? Can you hear me? Yeah, I'm on. Okay, they're not hearing me too good.

Turn me up a little. Give me some volume, my fellows. Let me hear me on the monitor.

Okay, better. If I can hear me, it'll be a lot better, because I like to hear me. I love myself.

Love my preaching. I love my singing. I'm going to start singing again.

I quit singing because I didn't like it, but I love it. Now I'm going to sing some more. Amen.

In fact, I'm going to hug more. I love me. Amen.

Boy, that's a great truth, folks. That's a great truth. That relationship with Jesus, and he's controlling our lives.

Of course, when he's in control, you can love everything, everybody, and be in the right attitude and the right relationship. Hell raging and heaven in the middle of it. That's the victory, and God helped us to learn it.

In 1 Samuel 18, when you open your Bibles from the word of God, and let's talk today about the provisions of covenant relationship. Thursday night, and by the way, Sandy will be singing Thursday night right before I preach, and probably in the morning right before I preach. I'll make sure before we leave in the morning, she's got her tapes.

I promise you. Every time I say the word tapes, I remind her of Vance Havner that said, Baptist people used to be bookworms, and now we're tapeworms. Everything's tapes.

Amen? That's right? Amen. Everything's tapes, tapes, tapes. But Orange, isn't it a miracle? Cassette tapes are a miracle, boy.

Carry them with you, listen to them going down the road, and hear them just all the time, jogging. Hear them, listen. If you do that, and if you don't, you're in good shape.

All right, but we want to talk some more about covenant relationship, and when you talk about covenant, you're talking about two becoming one. And when you begin to preach these principles and preach this truth, we begin to find out that the whole realm of the Christian life is wrapped up in God's faithfulness to us, not my faithfulness to him. However, when I enter into covenant relationship, not only does God make agreement with me, but I enter into agreement with him.

Any time that I don't live up to obedience to that relationship, I must pay the consequences. And we'll be talking about that probably in the morning, because God being faithful does not remove me from responsibility. And the greatest joy in the Christian life is when a person enters into that agreement with God that he controls my life, and I agree with him, and since he's always right, and I've lost my rights, he becomes my right, and I walk in that relationship, all of God becomes mine.

All he is becomes mine. I don't walk in my ability. I walk in his ability.

I mean, Brother David having cerebral palsy does not in any way hinder him from being totally everything God wants him to be, because the body is merely an expression of the indwelling Christ. Some fat, some skinny, some ugly, some pretty, some tall, some short, some crippled. But what matters is not the body.

It's that expression of the life of God through that body controlling me in the totality of all that he is. Amen? You see, the big problem is we're all trying to let ourselves become the ruling factor in our walk with God. But ladies and gentlemen, God has crossed you out, resurrected you to a new life to where Christ is my life.

Oneness, union, communion, and it's all him. I've been preaching for 35 years, pastored one church 12 years, and I guess I've encountered about any problem any man could have with people. And some of the biggest problems you'll have in your walk with God is keeping relationship with others, because people are

so disappointing.

But the only reason why they're disappointing is because I expect more out of them that they can produce, because I want them to be something I can't be, so I can have confidence in them. And the reason why Jesus was never disappointed, he never did trust us. Because he knew he was getting nothing when he got us.

And whatever we are, he'd have to make us through loving us, because we didn't have any love. Amen? See, now that knocked you out of the ballpark. Amen? Because everything you are, God had to initiate, because you didn't have anything to work with when he started.

I mean, God started from deadness. I mean, when we realize that, we'll quit trying to be something and wake up to what we are. We are because who's in us.

My importance is not Bill Stafford. My importance is God lives in me. The devil's not bothered with us.

He's bothered with who lives in us. Amen? All right. In 1 Samuel 18, and it came to pass when he had made the end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

Here's the hint of oneness, union, knit together, tied together. Look at this. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

Then Jonathan and David made, there's the word karath, k-a-r-a-t-h, which means to cut. And David cut a covenant. What is a covenant? It's agreement by passing through sacrifice, laying flesh aside, and walking through that sacrifice and making agreement.

And you know what you do when you walk through that sacrifice? Here's what you're saying. I am loyal to you, I am committed to you, your life is my life, your will is my will, I am letting you become me, and me become you. And we're tied together in total agreement never to break that relationship.

We're tied to the end. And they covenanted and sealed it with sacrifice, because the word made and the word covenant means that there was bloodshed, a sacrifice was made, they walked through that sacrifice in agreement, and David and Jonathan became one. Now, the whole secret of salvation and the whole glory of walking with God hinges on covenant relationship.

And covenant means I am no longer mine, I am his, I am one with him. His blood, I have entered into the relationship of life in his blood, because my life is his life. I have no life except in him.

Boy, when we learn it, it sets us free. Most of our hang-ups that Brother David was talking about it because we're trying to make people like us. I don't have to make anybody do anything.

Let Jesus live through me and it becomes a Jesus issue. Then the only enemies I have are Jesus' enemies. The only friends I have is Jesus' friends, and that's the only one that counts anyway.

Amen? Let me go back and clear up something I just said a while ago. Jesus never trusted us. You say, how do you know? Because he said in John chapter 2 and verse 24 that Jesus committed himself to no man because he knew him.

Now, didn't Jesus say that? Why? Because he knew unless he could impart to us his love and his life and indwell us, he wouldn't have anything to work with. Because all God can work with is on God's level, God's quality, God-initiated, God's ability, God's power, and God-centered. He can never take flesh and use it.

God hates flesh, and that means anything man can originate. I'm going to tell you something. Most of our churches are full of the devil.

They can't even have a decent conference anymore, and you bring up a preacher, a raise, and you've got a fight on your hands. Huh? We're nitpicking over junk when we ought to be walking in the glory. Man, we'd rather have a vote in the conference and stand up and say, Bless God, I stood for that.

I expressed my convictions. No, you didn't. You expressed your self-life, what you like and your opinion.

If it had been right, we'd have been in the lordship of Christ, and everybody would have been in the will of God, and there wouldn't have been no disagreement, because you can't disagree with the will of God. And every church fuss is because flesh, flesh, what I want, what I say, my opinion, and everything I want, I'll get my way. And people stand up and say, Bless God, I've got convictions.

No, most of them are preferences, not convictions. Amen? A conviction is something you die for. A preference is something that you like because it fits your lifestyle.

Sin to most people is what they don't do. It's not what the Word said, it's what they don't do. Amen? If I don't do it, then it's sin.

If I do it, then it's got to be right, because I'm always right. I never know myself to be wrong. If you don't think I'm right, ask me.

I've told my wife that 500 times, and she still says I'm wrong. And I can't believe a Stafford's ever been wrong. I don't know why God made Easterwoods when we're so great.

Verse 3, Then Jonathan and David cut a covenant, cut an agreement, because he loved him as his own soul. Now then, after that happened, look what starts taking place. And Jonathan stripped himself of his robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his girdle, and that word means belt, and it's that that they used to pull all of their garments together and carry on it what they needed for the journey, a type of strength.

They traded everything. All right, verse 5, And David went out with a severed soul, sinned him, and behaved himself wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

Here it is. Here is Saul and David expressing covenant relationship. Here they are entering into an agreement where both become one.

They they lose their right to independent living. They lose their right to independence. Why? David no longer lives for himself, he lives for Jonathan.

Jonathan no longer lives for himself, he lives for David. Can you not see the unity that bring in the body of Christ? Can you not see what God did to you at Calvary when he brought you into oneness with him, and then brought us into oneness as believers in the body of Christ? Why? So we could spend more time agreeing than disagreeing. Did you know most people are just plain disagreeable? You know why?

They're not in covenant relationship.

They don't understand covenant. And when Jonathan and David saw that they needed, that they loved each other, and here is Saul, Jonathan's father, and Saul turns against an earthly relationship and makes covenant with David. Why? He loved him so much, he wanted him to share in everything that he was and ever hoped to be.

Now folks, I want you to know, seeing this earthly relationship just takes me back to all I've been saying about my relationship to Jesus. Listen, whenever God cut covenant with man, started with Adam in the Garden of Eden when he killed the lamb, and even though the covenant is not mentioned, there it is beginning the bloodline that will start a blood covenant relationship to where God in his faithfulness agrees with man to bring out the purpose of God on this earth. And ladies and gentlemen, I don't care what happens, I don't care what takes place, the will of God will come to this earth.

Hallelujah. And no communist, no homosexual movement, and no immoral, ungodly, no devil, no demon, no angel, no power will stop God's Son from setting on the throne of David and ruling on a kingdom of peace for 1,000 glorious years. Nobody God is faithful.

Above all, but not pushed up, under all, and not pressed down, around all, and not pushed out. He is central, he is basic, and he is preeminent. He is God.

Amen. Now then, the first thing I want you to notice in what happens at this covenant is, first of all, they exchange robes. They exchange garments.

David and Jonathan put on a brand-new dress, a brand-new robe, a brand-new behavior, a brand-new lifestyle. Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen, when I started to study covenant relationship, I made up my mind that if we ever understood covenant relationship, we would have to get committed and loyal and obedient to the cause of Christ, because you can't get into covenant without staying loyal. If you don't stay loyal to the covenant, he'll deal with you in chastening.

You can't break covenant lightly. It is a binding, it's a knot-tying, it's an eternal relationship. You can't break covenant and prosper.

No way. And that's why I'm telling you, listen to me, when people come to church and will not obey the Word, will not submit to the Word, will not start living like Jesus and behavior their lifestyle like the Lamb of God, and their same old temper and jealousy and gossip and greed prevails, mark her down. They're not in covenant relationship.

Because when you cut covenant, you take on new robe. Amen? All right, let's go to Ephesians 4 and verse 20. And look at this, Ephesians 4 and verse 20.

Well, let's read the verse preceding, "...who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ. If so, be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." Look at this, verse 22.

Watch it now. "...that you put off concerning the former conversation," the word conversation, behavior. Put off your former behavior, pattern of life.

Who are you going to put off? The old man. That's not your husband. Here comes something that God says, I'm responsible for.

There's something, well, I thought when I got saved, I got changed. Well, that's what you get for thinking. You didn't get changed, you got Jesus.

The change is still taking place. That's why some of y'all are so disillusioned with your Christian life. You're worse now than you were when you started.

You've got a worse temper. You're more greedy. Why? When you first get saved, you obey.

Then you get spiritual and settle down and get dead. That's why when a man gets saved and full of God, he's got a backslide to getting fellowship with the church. Why? Brother, we have nurtured and kept the old man on.

Don't you think salvation remedied anything but your destiny? The rest is your choice. Why? God don't want robots. He wants, I'm saved, I'm saved.

Can't help it, I'm saved, no choice. I'm saved. That ain't what God wants.

You know what God wants? I love him. I don't want the old man to rule. I want to put on the new man.

I'm putting off the old man. I can't let the old man rule. Why? I am inconvenient.

I belong to another. I'm in agreement with God. His life is my life.

Two becomes one. That's why I'm, listen, I'm going to tell you, I'm going to, listen, Sunday mornings, you know what I do? I preach principles just like this. Why? We're preaching evangelistic sermons so that crowd can stand up and watch them old sinners run down the aisle and get saved.

Why? They stand back there with the old man all over them and never get right with God. That's why they don't come back. Why? You've loaded their wagon.

They've had all they can handle. In fact, if we'll preach right, they might never come back. Amen? Here, here Paul says, I've got to put off.

Why? I'm to be dressed in another behavior. I'm not to act like Bill Stafford with my temper and my jealousy and my gossip and my bitterness. I'm to put on the new man.

Who is the new man? Jesus Christ. I'm to put off. You see, that's my responsibility.

That's my, well, I knew this was going to be hard, but I don't care. Because you see, most of us, now see what brother David said is not easy. You know why it's not easy? We don't know what to do with the old man.

We've tried to pamper him. We've tried to deodorize him. We've tried to make him better.

We've tried to improve him. But the next thing you know, we've bloated again and we've been to the altar 50 times and run back and still fall in the same old man trap. Rededication.

How can you rededicate flesh? I can't rededicate nothing. It's either dedicate or nothing. While people go out and live full of sin Saturday night, come in, walk down the aisle on Sunday morning and even hold up her hand and say, Jesus is Lord.

And in two weeks, right back in the same garbage. Why? They have never dealt with the old man or else they're not saved. Why? They don't know covenant relationship.

Did you know salvations are walking to death? You can't get saved without dying. Galatians 2.20. I am what? Oh, I don't hear that prayed. Come on down the aisle and accept Jesus.

Do the best you can and he'll love you. And you know what we got? We know what we got sitting on our pews? A bunch of people that thinks God's obligated to them because they accepted Jesus. But they never were told covenant relationship.

Amen? Some fellow introduced me the other day and said, Brother Bill is the only man I know that doesn't preach for a return engagement. You see, Jesus did not save you in order to improve you. He saved you to replace you.

Amen? Hey, if God had wanted to use something, he'd have chose something besides man that couldn't rebel so. He could have chose a donkey with Balaam, rooster with Simon Peter. I mean, God would have chosen something a lot better if he wanted to deal with somebody just as robots because man ain't worth it.

Amen? So, what we've got here in the text is that the moment that Jonathan and David cut covenant, they exchange robes. They put on different, a different garment, a new behavior. Let's read the rest of this.

Put off concerning the old behavior, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Verse 24, and that you put on the new man which is, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Well, how do you put on the new man? Put away lying.

Speak truth with his neighbor. We're members one of another. Look at verse 26.

Be angry but sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath. Verse 27, neither give place to the devil.

Verse 28, let him that stole steal no more. Let him labor, working with his hands. Verse 29, let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.

You say, brother Bill, I know all that. Verse 30, stop grieving the Holy Ghost. It's the way it's written.

It's supposed to be. Stop grieving the Holy Ghost. You're sealed.

Then verse 31, let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, evil speaking, but be what? Put away from you with all malice. You know what malice is? Malice is not only not liking somebody, it's wishing them hurt because they hurt you. That's why my preacher preached one Sunday morning, when there's a fungus among us.

And you know what that fungus is? Malice. You know, I know it's real because even when I pastored, I had some deacons that I wondered why God didn't kill them. Now, don't y'all look so pious.

I get so sick of y'all trying to look like you've never done that. Some of you women has wished your husband was dead at a certain moment. Amen.

If y'all get honest, we could have a count meeting and you wouldn't have to have a special song or a special sermon. You'd walk in this meeting in a count meeting. If you're rightly related to a Holy God, you don't need anybody to stir you, nobody to shake you.

You wake up to the fact that Jesus Christ is in you and that's all you need to have a spell 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Don't even have to feel good. Have it anyhow.

Why? Your feelings are lying to you. Only God tells the truth. Hallelujah.

See, when I say things like that, there's some of you been mad enough at somebody, you wonder why God didn't deal with them. Come on. What'd you say, David? It's this way? Well, man, I had a couple of fellas at Lupton Drive when I passed it there.

I still don't understand why God didn't deal with them until I found out he left them around just to keep me trusting God. And if it hadn't been for them, I wouldn't be near the preacher I am now. Why? Because he taught me how to just keep on preaching and come to the point to say, Lord, I accept them in you.

And if that's what it takes to drive me to Jesus, I accept them in the Lord and have victory. Shouted it out. God didn't remove the problem.

He changed me. That's why some of you think a divorce will help. You think if you just get rid of your wife and find somebody spiritual.

No, you're just trying to pamper the old man. God said, put off the old man, put off your old behavior, put off your old lifestyle, put off your old ways and put on the new man. How do you do that? By choosing not to let the old man rule in your life.

Well, how can you do that? Romans chapter 6 says, I died. Said the old man's been crucified. Then if I've been crucified, why am I alive? You say, but I'm not.

I'm alive in Christ. But you say, why do these things come up? So you can practice what you are. Nothing wrong with a man losing his temper, as long as you get sick of it, as soon as it happens.

Nothing wrong with having an impure thought, if it drives you to Jesus and confession. So y'all trying to be holy and trying to hold on the old man. You say, well, I got to get that lust out.

Oh, I got to fight it. You don't fight it. You let Jesus rule.

You let Jesus run. You let Jesus dominate. You're in covenant relationship.

His life is my life. I'm one with him. Well, how did I, how did I keep that? Day by day by day, choosing his life, his presence, his rights, his Lordship.

Hallelujah. Ron Dunn gives the best illustration of this I've ever heard in my life. When he talks about going to bed one night, had on those silky pajamas his mother-in-law had given him, about six inches too long.

And they hung way down below his feet. And he said that my wife punched me and said, Ron, I forgot to tell you, we don't have any bacon for breakfast in the morning. And you know how you are about your

bacon and stuff.

And so we, you've just got to go to the store. And he said, honey, she said, you've got to. He said, you won't want to go in the morning.

I can't get you up. You've got to go now because you won't be asleep for three more hours. He got up and instead of taking off his pajamas, he just put on his trousers over them and just slipped on a jacket and rolled up those pajamas up to his knees and said that way they won't be hanging out below my pant leg.

So I walked in this 7-Eleven store and I was looking up and down, seeing where the meat was. I hadn't been there enough to know. And so I finally got over there.

And by the time I got to the meat counter or wherever it was, he said the lady was behind the counter giggling. And he said, I was the only one in there. She had to be laughing at me.

And he said, when I walked up to her, I said, what, what's funny? She said, your pajamas are showing up under your pants. And he said, those pajamas had unrolled and six inches, they were hanging below my pant leg. And she was having a time laughing at my stupidity.

And he said something hit me so profound. Most believers have never put off the old man. They've just tried to cover him up with some new principles.

I'm going to do better. I'm going to give. After hearing David ring, bless God, I'm going to get dedicated.

If David can do it. Hey, David can't motivate you to it. I'm sorry.

And every emotional story I can tell you about George Mutabuga, will not motivate you to a spirit field, godly, crucified life. You can't get it on emotional stories or by seeing people that you think if they can do it, you can do it. They're, they're not your motivation.

You've got to wake up to come to relationship. I'm one with Jesus. I love him.

He's my all. I'm putting on his behavior. It's his life.

Amen. I keep you from going two weeks and fizzling out, but that's why we can't get nobody older. Now they've been 500 times and they're sick of it.

Let me tell you how it is. Roman seven jumps, you know, Roman six is for the bad man. Roman seven for the good man.

Both of them are rotten inside of God, good or bad. You said no goodness. You can do that.

God will accept, accept Jesus Christ through you. Amen. Roman seven, Paul asked a question.

He said, but how, but how, but how, if you read Romans chapter seven, he says, I want to do good evils present. He gives that great comparison. When I, when I, when I don't want to do good, when I want to do good, I do bad.

When I don't want to do bad, I do good. It's just that constant conflict of warfare in his life. He says, but how can I, and he's sort of like me saying, you know what, I'm going to hold that watch up and I will to do it.

And I'm going to do it. I don't care what you say. I am much greater than that watch and I'm going to hold it up.

And I can do that for a little while. And even though that watch is not near as strong as my arm, after a while I run out of will, because I'm weakening, because willpower doesn't strengthen me to perform beyond what my arm can do. And after a while I start wearing out.

And what I thought I could do, I can't do. What I thought I had victory over, I don't have. And even though I went along for a while and it looked good, now I'm weakening.

I'm tired. I'm struggling. I'm sick.

I don't like what I see. I don't like what's in me. I can't do it.

I brag beyond my capacity. I mean, already my arm is tiring, right in here. And that watch is very light.

And after a while, I have to admit to you that I do not even have the strength to keep that watch up. I don't care how hard I motivate, how hard I try, I can go to every seminar in the world and have to hold up watches and it won't work. And what we've laid down, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, do, do, do, do.

Principle, principle, principle. None of it will work. They'll all run out.

Get to Him. He's your power. He's your patience.

He's your joy. And you can't do it without an abiding relationship of covenant agreement, not only in your salvation, but a day-by-day choice to let Him be your life. You know how I can preach like this? You don't know what a battle I've had with temper and jealousy and gossip and greed.

Do you think I give because I want to give? Do you think when I gave the farm away, I wanted to do it? Bill Stafford, bless God, that Bill's something he likes to give. You're lying. I never have liked to give.

I was born to keep, and so were you. So don't look so cocky. That's why you won't tithe now.

You know why I give? Bill Stafford don't count. Jesus counts. I got crossed out.

I died. Well, Brother Bill, why am I having such a battle? You ain't reckoning of what you are. You're reckoning over your old man.

If you'd quit reckoning on the old man and reckon on the new man, you could live a new man life, and your behavior would be like Jesus. That's why Romans 6 says, Reckon the old man dead. You know what that means? Draw on what's already deposited.

If God said, I died, I died, and He deposited that, and if so, then how do I live it? I draw what God said. If God said, I'm dead, I'm dead. Well, how do you stay dead? I let what God says rule.

Don't worry, I am. I was hanging in, and keep hanging in, whether liking it or lumping it. This ain't shouting ground, but I'll tell you what it'll do.

It'll give you consistency in victory, and you can shout in the middle of hell. What we do need is you believe, but why don't some of us come full of one? Why do you need a jubilee to get you up in the air? Why don't we live in it? Why? We've got Jesus. I don't need something outside of Jesus.

If I need a jubilee, I've got an extra. I can't get a grunt out of some of y'all. I'm telling you some of the greatest truth you'll ever live.

You say, you don't know what you're talking about. Let me tell you something, ladies and gentlemen. I never face a day that I don't have to practice what I'm telling you.

The woman at the well, did Jesus give her an improvement in the water pots? He replaced them. She didn't run down the road saying, boy, look what better water pots. I got a bigger water pot.

I've never seen such water pots. Oh, glory to God, water pots. Nothing like water pots.

Hallelujah for water pots. Did she go down the road hauling water pots? No. She went down the road saying, I've met a man.

I've met a man. I've got a replacement. I didn't get improved.

I got replaced. Let me tell you about it. Here he is.

And the whole city come. Why? There was somebody in her. Spray it up.

Spray it up. She got replaced. She didn't quit drinking.

She changed. I'm convinced we preach salvation so deceptive. It's no wonder we've got a generation of Ephraims.

Amen? You say, well, Brother Bill, why does God put me in trouble? So you can make what's positional become practical. You say, well, boy, I am positionally in the heavens. I tell you what, you ain't going to live the victorious life until God puts you in whatsoever is necessary to get that position into practical reality to where you can live out down here what the book says you are there.

And that brings heaven to pass on earth, and you got heaven on the way to heaven. That's practicality. That's living out the Christian life.

That's why he said put on a new behavior. And everybody's running around saying, I've got change. No, you've got Jesus.

He started a change that's going to keep on changing, and you'll have to convert till the day you die. That's why we're proud and egotistical and can't repent and don't know how to love. We don't know how to convert.

And bless God, I've got to say, hey, that's just getting in. That's just teaching you how to repent so you can keep on repenting. Amen? That's so you can tell your wife you're sorry and not worry about the outcome.

That's how you can forgive them. Amen? Look at people who have kept the old man alive in their life. Look at them.

Look at them. Watch them. Look at how miserly, self-centered, touchy, proud.

And they're usually the ones that walk out on you about 12 o'clock when the service goes to 1215, because they have built a tradition of leaving at 12. And instead of being the pillars in the church, they have become the pillars. Let me tell you something.

I want to grow in Jesus, and I want to walk with God, till where my last days will be times of just pouring out to preachers and to Christians. In my old days, what a joy it's been to walk with Jesus, and to live in oneness and covenant relationship that I am in agreement with Him. I'm bound to Him.

I'm knit to Him. He cut covenant with me. I've got a new behavior.

I'm not my own, you say, Brother Bill. I know you made some awful blunders. Oh my God, I wish you hadn't have brought it up.

But through every blunder, there have been schemes and reasons to drive me to His sufficiency, to where now I can be honest with you and not worry about my reputation or care what you think. All I can say is, I want Him and walk with Him and love Him, and I want Him to live through me Himself. Have you ever been helping your wife do something around the house, and you know you can't do nothing? And she does, too.

I was trying to fix a lamp one time, Brother Randy. I tried to fix a lamp. I was going to show my wife I can do something besides preach.

I was on a proud binge. I wanted to prove myself. I got down there with that lamp, and I had to put in a brand-new little socket that the bulb screws into, you know.

So I went down there, and I took that socket out, and it had two terminals, but I had three wires coming up out of the lamp. I said, Well, that's all right. I'll just tie two wires together and put them around one of the terminals, and then put one around the other.

I don't know nothing about electricity. I said, Well, it's got to work, you know, because if there's only two terminals and three wires, you've got to stick it somewhere. I mean, I'm going to show her I can do it.

Man, my wife and I, I went over and flipped the switch, and everything in the house blew. My wife comes running and looked down, and this is where Danny lives right now, looked downstairs and says, Are you all right? I said, Yes! I said, God, don't come and ask me if I'm all right. You know I'm going to do it.

You think I'm a dummy or something? You ever had that happen? And the more you fail, the more you blame it on them. Bless God, leave me alone. If it wasn't for you, I could do this.

You all ever done that? Boy, I went back down there, flipped off the light switch, went out and flipped and turned off whatever I needed to that was on that circuit, and I went back to work on that thing again. Roger, I pulled those wires back up. So I said, Well, I had the wrong two together.

So I tied this one to the next one. I put it around that terminal, and I went back over there, and I flipped on the switch, and it burnt the prongs off of the thing that goes on the wall. Melted one of them come off! And my wife came around there, Honey, I said, Don't honey me! What kind of battery do you have in Stafford? I'm putting on the old man.

Bless God, I'm a Stafford. Leave me alone. I'm not a dummy.

I'm somebody. Bless God. I'll show you.

You ever been driving down the road, and your wife, and you get up on interstate going the wrong way? Your wife said, Honey, I believe you're going the wrong way. Shut up! I've been on this interstate 500



And I don't have to let the old man rule. And when he does come back, I know how to deal with him in Christ Jesus. What time is it? It's quarter to twelve.

Give me just ten more minutes. Then they exchanged robes, they exchanged weapons. What does that mean? I take on a new defender.

It's not my battle anymore. It's the Lord's battle. I've exchanged my own swords.

I don't have to fight. I can switch. Amen? Why? He's my battler.

He's my warrior. He's my defender. Why? When I trusted him, I took on all of his warfare.

I took on all of his weapons. I took on all of his power. And you know what? The devil don't stand a chance against me.

When I come in the name of Jesus Christ. Why? He is my defender. Hallelujah.

Amen? And I have a weapon. You say, well, Brother Bill, how do you come against the devil? With the word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit. I have a new defender, Jehoshaphat.

You remember the story of Jehoshaphat? When Mount Zir and Ammon and the Moabites came against him and surrounded him. And finally Jehoshaphat said, my God, they're trying to take what God gave us. It's God's inheritance.

It's what he's let us possess. And Jehoshaphat said, wait a minute, fellas, back off. It's not our battle.

This is the Lord's property. Let him defend it. Do you know all the times I get into trouble? It's when I start defending myself and fighting my own battles.

A lady walked up to me last week. The way I've been preaching lately, I have gotten into some conflicts. A lady walked up to me.

Honest now, if you don't call the preacher, we'll call him. A lot of times people think you just tell these things, but we'll call the preacher and verify it. You say, you think people think you're lying? I said, no, but they've heard so many, they don't know who's telling the truth.

But anyway, I finished preaching. And while I was preaching, she hollered out at me. Hate you! Screamed.

Well, I just let her pass. I just stopped and rebuked the devil. I said, devil, you're a liar.

We accept nothing from you in the name of Jesus. You should have every mouth that's against the cause of Christ. This is God's territory, and we accept nothing from the devil.

And she didn't open her mouth the rest of the service. I had to stop and do that. We're in a war.

But I'm a right kind of warrior. I've got victory over that rascal. While I was standing down there after it was all over, Brother Roger, there was a bunch of people standing there trying to talk to me.

And boy, she come pushing through that crowd and looked up at me and said, I hate you. I said, sister, join the club. There's a long line like you.

She said, I ought to slap your face. I said, well, that wouldn't make the first one either. I've been hit before by bigger folks than you.

She said, what did you really want to do? You don't really want to know. You know what I wanted to do? I wanted to knock a little sense into her. I feel like I'm not God, but I'm his right-hand man once in a while.

You ever feel that way? You ever feel that way, that even though they need it, God's a little slow, and you feel like you could get a little faster than God does? And Roger, to tell you the truth, in my spirit, the old man said, jerk her up by the collar and carry her out here. He said, you wouldn't do that. Oh, you don't know my temper? The old man's tough.

He'll do anything. If you don't believe it, look what man's doing now, going his own way. Hey, and let me add something else while I'm here.

Let me just add something else. This kind of preaching will keep you from criticizing Jim Baker. Some of you are tickled that Jim Baker failed.

Hey, I'm not, even though I didn't agree with PTL and wouldn't go on PTL, would not go on PTL, because there's such a difference. And I think it was a soap opera, I think, and too much, there's not enough seriousness about the holiness of God and sin, amen? But let me tell you something. Now, listen to me.

It's going to knock you out of your seat. Five minutes away from the hand of God is your victory. You'd do the same.

Why? You don't have any victory. I don't have any victory. He's my victory.

And the only victory I have is when I'm putting on the new man. If you're putting on the old man, you don't have any. You broke covenant agreement.

You're on your own. God's not covenanting you except in your salvation anymore. He will get you to heaven, but you'll arrive ahead of time if you don't get back to the covenant relationship.

Why? God didn't make covenant with you to lose you. He made covenant with you to keep you if he had to take you ahead of time. Hey, you're in a covenant, buddy, and when God makes a covenant, it's everlasting.

Well, don't tell me you'll do as you please. Don't tell me you'll do what you want to, only if you keep the old man on and you will pay the consequences of harboring the old man. Jehoshaphat said, Lord, it's your battle, not mine.

He backed off and said, Lord, you take it, and the Lord fought the battle. Now, just let me give you a couple more things, and I've got to wind this up. Listen.

Do you remember when Saul was persecuting the church and God was chasing him down? Do you remember when God met Saul on the road to Damascus, what he said to him? You know what he said to him? He said, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Well, Saul wasn't persecuting Jesus. He was persecuting the church. But you see, when you're in covenant relationship with the Father, and you're one with Him, whatever happened to you happens to Him.

Boy, can you see the oneness? And when he said, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And Saul didn't know he was persecuting Jesus. He thought he was just killing the saints. No! You can't persecute one of God's people without persecuting God.

You see, the covenant relationship brings real fear on you when you think of what the psalmist said when he said, Touch not mine anointed, and do my servants no harm. And you let a church member rise up against one of God's anointed men, or anointed women, or anointed singers, or anointed people, and I promise you there'll come a day when they'll answer to God for touching one of God's covenant relative, related, one people, and God will bring them into judgment for you. It'll happen every time.

Amen? Boy, this is a serious thing. Covenant relationship, you'll watch how you treat each other. Then they exchange belts, which means strength.

Boy, I hadn't got time to develop this, but anyway, the belt means that that pulls together and holds it, strengthens and really seals it. And boy, I like the secret of the Christian life is this, and that is that I don't have any strength to live the Christian life. The Christian life is beyond my capacity, but I want you to know I can do all things through Christ who daily infuses me with his own inner strength.

The moment I choose to let the new man rule, God strengthens me beyond my capacity and lets me enjoy a supernatural strength. Brother Roger, Brother Ralph and Brother Randy and Brother Danny, Brother, what's your name? Oh, David, yeah. Amen.

Thank you, David. I was kidding. I was just aggravating you.

Listen, every one of us knows what it means to come to a point in your life when you can't go another step further, but you've got an appointment to meet. You ever been there? Last July I went to Pagosa Springs, Colorado and flew out there just to preach a Friday night and a Saturday morning and a Saturday night session to a bunch of preachers. And then they drove me back to Denver, which is a six-hour drive, and we got into Denver at five-third in the morning.

I slept an hour and a half and then went to the airport and called a plane to Evers Markham Church in Morganton, North Carolina. And when I sat down on that plane to make that flight to Asheville, North Carolina, to Atlanta first and then on to Asheville, do you know something? I said, Lord, I've got to get some rest. I've got to get some rest on this flight, because I'm not getting any younger, folks.

The schedule I'm keeping this year is more strict and rigid than ever. So I sat down on that plane and I said, Lord, just don't let nobody sit by me so I can rest. Do you know who sat down by me? One of the jabberinest, talkinest fellas that you've ever seen in your life.

He felt that the world was losing if the air wasn't filled with the fragrance of his conversation. And I got so tired of hearing him, and finally I said, Lord Jesus, if you don't help me, I am going to go sit in the bathroom. Help me.

I just got uptight. I got nervous, I got defensive, I got mad. And I finally wanted to say, shut up, and in a moment the Holy Ghost said, why don't you let the new man rule? He may not be a Christian.

I may be wanting to express myself through you. But I'm tired. But Jesus said, I'm your strength.

Did you know in just an instant I was able to pick up the conversation and he blew the door wide open to where I had the opportunity to walk right in and confront him with the gospel of Jesus Christ. And did you know when you do that, you have the conversation going your way, because they don't know what to talk about. But they do have questions.

But let me tell you what he said to me. He said, how can you go on saying that you're a Christian and living for God when you see so many hypocrites? I said, I haven't seen any. He said, you mean you've been in a church and haven't? I said, I haven't seen any.

You've got to. I said, I haven't seen none. He said, well, let me tell you about some.

And I let him go. He named every hypocrite, I think about five or six hypocrites. I said, well, now then, let me tell you why I haven't seen any.

I've been so busy walking with Jesus, and he's been so busy showing me what I needed in him, that I hadn't had time to look for hypocrites. You see, sir, if I look at hypocrites, I'll miss a time with my King. And who wants to argue with paupers when you can walk with a King? Amen? Hallelujah? And did you know by the time we got to Atlanta, Georgia, he didn't make a profession of faith, but he took a track, and he took a Christian worker's New Testament that I had, that I didn't want to give up.

Somebody had given it to me and I signed it, and I'm not going to tell you who it was, but anyway, and I gave it to him, and I said, you take this, and when you get saved, write me. He never has written, but let me tell you one thing that I appreciate. I did not have to confront him, nor defend him.

I did not have to agree with him. All I had to do was put on the new man. And Jesus ruled and reigned.

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