

Week of Meetings 03 Christ Today-Yesterday

by David Clifford

David Clifford's sermon emphasizes the importance of sowing the Word of God and the varied responses of people's hearts to it.

Duration: 56:38

Scripture: Psalm 119:9, Matthew 6:9-13, Mark 4:2-20, Romans 1:14

Topics: "Sowing And Reaping", "Gods Harvest"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by discussing the concept of sowing and reaping, emphasizing that whatever we sow, we will eventually reap. He then introduces the parable of the sower from Mark 4, explaining that parables are earthly illustrations used by Jesus to convey divine truths. The preacher highlights that in this parable, the soul represents God, the seed represents the word of God, and the soil represents the hearts of people. The sermon emphasizes that God desires a fruitful harvest and uses his servants to sow the seed, with the promise that those who sow in tears will reap in joy.

Transcript

I'm feeling very much more at home today and it's this, and it's because really, I'm feeling at home because the weather reminds me of home. The prolonged absence of the sun one August in England promoted this letter from a certain Mr. Peter Chapman to the London Times. It may interest your readers to know that on the morning of August 2nd I saw a small area of blue sky which became visible for a few moments over the metropolitan tabernacle in that part of London known as the Elephant and Castle.

Several of my acquaintances were witnesses to this phenomenon and I should be interested to know whether similar sightings were made in other parts of the metropolis. And three days later a certain P. H. H. Moore replied in the same newspaper, the Times. The small area of blue sky that Mr. Peter Chapman saw last Friday over London is known as English Summer.

It is a curious meteorological phenomenon, there is however no cause for alarm as it rarely lasts for more than a few minutes. We haven't seen much sunshine today and I'm feeling very much at home. Well now, we are to read the Word of God together this evening and talk about the Word of God together because we've got as far as Mark 4. Of course we haven't been able to deal with every subject in the previous chapters but we'll read this evening a few verses from Mark chapter 4. Verse 2. And he, the Lord Jesus, taught them many things by parables and said unto them in his doctrine, hearken, behold there went out a sower to sow.

Verse 11. And he said unto them, to his own, unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God but unto them who are without all these things are done in parables. That seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing they may hear and not understand lest at any time they should be converted and their sin should be forgiven them.

And he said unto them, know ye not this parable and how then will you know all parables? The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the wayside where the word is sown but when they have heard Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. These are they likewise which are sown on stony ground who when they have heard the word immediately receive it with gladness and have no root in themselves and so endure but for a time.

Afterward when affliction or persecution arises for the word's sake immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns such as hear the word and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground such as hear the word and receive it and bring forth fruit some thirtyfold some sixty and some a hundred.

So may the Lord bless to us his precious word. The Apostle Paul said I am getter to everybody I am ready to preach the to you who are at Rome also. Talking about I am getter may I remind you that your debts to the internal revenue must be paid by the fifteenth of this month.

And an American was talking with a Dutchman and he said to him what are the stripes in your flag for? What are the colours for? Well he said they are really related to our taxes in Holland. We get red when we talk about them, white when the bill comes in and we pay and pay till we are blue in the face. Well the American said to the Dutchman that's just how it is with us except that with us we see stars also.

Just to remind you that you may be a getter too in another way but if you are a child of God you are certainly a getter to all men to give them what has been given you the word of God. The Lord Jesus himself was our first and greatest example in this when in his high priestly prayer he prayed and said I have given them thy word. Now freely ye have received, freely give.

So right at the outset this evening we see that ours is a tremendous responsibility as children of God with the word, the living word of the living God in our hands. And the Lord God said in the forty, no the fifty-fifth of Isaiah as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven and returneth not thither but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud that it might give seed to the sower and bread to the eater so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth. It shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing where to I sent it.

God is still sending forth his word. Thank God for the sowing of the good seed of the word of God in these days all around the world in a greater way perhaps than has ever been known before. I'm very glad to hear in your prayer meetings and in the general public prayers there are intercessions for those who are taking the word of God around the world.

So tonight with the Lord's help we're going to talk about sowing and reaping. Not particularly you'll reap what you sow but that is certainly true as well. And God has just said that he expects to reap what he sows.

My word that goes forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void and I shall have a reaping time by and by. Somebody visited Bottomley, the John Bull of England some years ago when he was in prison for an embezzlement I think it was, and his friend noticed first of all that he was sitting down there with a mail bag on his lap. He was making mail bags, that's what some of the prisoners used to have to do in Britain.

So his friend said to him, hello Bottomley, sowing? He said no, reaping. And of course this is a law in the world in respect to everything. We sow what we reap and if we sow to the flesh we shall reap corruption.

If we sow to the spirit we shall reap life eternal and we shall reap eternal life and the blessing of others and the lives of others if we sow the good seed of the living word of God. So the Lord Jesus here in Mark 4 commences his ministry by parables and this is the first one recorded in this gospel. And a parable of course is an illustration generally, a kind of explanation in homely, down to earth terms of the divine truth that the Saviour was seeking to get over.

We sometimes say that in a sermon the foundation is the text and the divisions, or rather the pillars are the divisions and the illustrations are the windows and the windows are needed to let the light in. And the Lord Jesus of course was the expert in illustration. A friend of mine in Britain some years ago he was boasting in the fact that he only used scriptural illustrations.

He would never condescend to use one out of his own experience or a story he'd heard or make up a parable like the Saviour did. No he said I only use scriptural illustrations. He was very proud of it but he was professing to be wiser and cleverer than the Saviour himself.

Because the Saviour used Old Testament scriptures it's quite true to illustrate himself and his work but he used all sorts of things as well to illustrate. He spoke of lilies, vines and corn, the sparrow and the raven and words so noble, so simple yet so wise were in men's minds engraven. And a parable is an invented illustration.

It is imaginary, it is invented in the mind. The Saviour made these things up while he went along and the greatest preachers that I've ever heard are those who invent illustrations to absolutely perfectly fit the doctrine or the word that they're getting over. And H. P. Barker, whom some of you might have known, one of the greatest preachers the Brethren ever had was a master in the art of invented illustration.

That's just what a parable is. He said to them once, now you see he wanted to explain something. He was praying and they said Lord teach us to pray like that.

He said alright. Now listen, when you pray don't forget to start by worshipping God. Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Pray for his will to be done on earth, his kingdom to come and pray for your own needs as well. Give us this day our daily bread, intercede for others and so on. And when you finish it Edna Harper that's not quite the end.

One more thing please in this pattern of prayer. And he says now which of you my friend, which of you have a friend, shall have a friend. And shall go to him at midnight and say to him friend lend me three loaves or give me three loaves because another friend of mine who was lost come to my house and I had nothing to set before him.

Give me something to meet his need. This is the story of the three friends and the three loaves made up on the spur of the moment to illustrate the extra point that they needed for their intercessory prayers in the pattern prayer. Now he says when you pray don't only pray for yourselves but pray for others and ask God for what you need for others who come across your way.

So he said in the text immediately afterwards ask and it shall be given you. Meaning according to the context never take a text out of its context. You never get the right meaning.

He said therefore according to the story the illustration in the context ask for others and it shall be given you for them. Now you know the text is ask and it shall be given you. But the meaning is according to the context ask for others and it shall be given you for them.

This middle friend who goes to the friend who has everything for the sake of the friend who has nothing and is lost. This middle friend is you. The believer in between a bountiful heavenly father who has all that he needs not so much for himself but for the man who is lost and out of the way.

So in a marvellous way the Lord Jesus invented an illustration in his mind, in his imagination at the moment a parable about the three loaves and the three friends to say now when you ask don't only say Lord bless me but say Lord give me something for somebody else who is in me. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus and mine for others. And that was his meaning in Luke 11.

But this parable here is a little different. This needed an explanation. Apparently the light did not dawn upon them when they heard this parable.

The people generally know and his disciples they didn't understand it either. And so he put in the application point by point himself when he had the disciples on his own. Well now he explains to them why he did it while they were on their own.

That is give the explanation. Verse 11. He said unto them unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.

But unto them that are without all these things are done in parables lest they might see. Now this was a serious word and it was about the nation who at this point were rejecting him. No message here to any particular individual but the nation having rejected his testimony was now deserted of God and left outside and exposed to judgment.

Sometimes in giving an illustration we need to give a little application at the end as the Saviour did here. But the best illustrations sometimes not always need no special application because they let the light in and the truth dawns. Well now in the message here we find that there is a sower, there is the seed and there is the soil.

And the sower is God and the seed is the word and the soil is the heart of men. The sower is God and he wants fruit, that's what he sows for. The seed is the word and the seed is living and the soil is the heart of men.

And his response as we see in the parable is varied. Now God ploughs and God sows and God prunes. The whole purpose of God working upon his creation is that he might get a harvest.

We read in the parable of the vineyard in Matthew 21 that the householder planted a vineyard and what did the farmer want? He wanted fruit and wine from the fruit as it were to gladden his heart. I used to have on my desk in my study in England years ago a little notice which says, let him plough he purposeth a harvest and let him prune he wants more fruit. And this is why God sows the good seed and gives his word to men that they might be blessed and that he might be glorified through the blessing coming into their lives through his living truth.

So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth the sower is God. In this gospel anyway it's pretty definite here. God sows the seed of his living word.

Now of course he does it through his agents and through his servants and has done it all down the ages. Of course in wanting fruit through his sowing the seed God seeks fruit not from men himself but from the word of God, his own word which he puts into the heart of men through his servants and through the scriptures of truth. Nor was a preacher of righteousness and the righteous standards of God were proclaimed by nor.

But unfortunately the seed mostly fell on stony ground. Then the prophets came and they said first saith the Lord and they gave the people a message from God. You see an Old Testament prophet quite different from the New Testament prophet we were speaking about this morning.

An Old Testament prophet had to have heard something from God so that he could pass on God's word to the people. In some cases he's called a seer. Not that he sees something in the future particularly but he has seen something.

He had a vision of God and he's heard something, he's heard the word of the Lord and it's God's word that he gives to the people and God's word is always powerful. So the prophets came and they said three thousand times in the scriptures it is recorded first saith the Lord. These men were not liars.

These men had seen the Lord and heard the Lord and knew that they were speaking as from God. God chose to speak through his servants the prophets and then later through his son. He could have chosen other ways to declare his will to the world.

He could have done writing in the sky. Far better that you can do it with your aeroplanes. But he sent his servants and gave them his word and they said advisedly they said thus saith the Lord.

And then the Saviour came and in his high priestly prayer he said Father I have given them thy word. It is God who is the sower through his son and through his prophets down the years. And the apostles were special sent messengers.

That's the meaning of the name. And the message was a message from God. A living message from the courts of heaven to the people to whom they proclaimed Jesus and the resurrection.

And the gifts in the church are teachers and preachers and evangelists are those who know the word of God and declare his truth to those who need it so badly. So God's word finds an entrance into the heart of man. God uses his servants to sow his seed but in the final analysis he is the sower.

And some sow in tears but the promise is that they will reap in joy. He that goeth forth weeping bearing precious seed shall doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him. Now he doesn't say when.

Some are seeing great blessings these days and others are waiting till they get to the judgement seat of Christ to see the results of their labours. And one of our coloured evangelists in the Bahamas was invited through one of my graduates Zacharias Zachariassen to go to his country the Faroe Islands, that's near Iceland. And preach the gospel.

And he went in January and he was there February and he continued his stay for another two weeks till about the 15th of last month. And there was tremendous blessing. All that Tom does, this coloured evangelist, is preach the word.

A simple straightforward gospel. And after four or five evenings, ordinary congregations, a few more than usual because they'd never seen a coloured preacher up there before. There was good interest, no results.

And then after five days a couple came to see Zach and they said Zach we feel we really want to know the law. So they told Tom and Tom said very good, get them tonight to come out in the meeting. And that was the beginning of a tremendous break when they stepped forward to own Christ and confess him publicly as their own personal saviour.

And before Tom left, which was only the other day, there were nearly 300 baptised and in fellowship. And there were two or three more baptisms to be had in the last two weeks. And I understand that hundreds and hundreds and hundreds were led to Christ.

Thank God that his word is still as powerful as ever. I don't know whether I ever told you about the Faroe Islands, but the first missionary that went there from Scotland was a Mr Sloan. And it's his son, William Sloan, who is the leading brother there in the islands now and one of the greatest men of God the Brethren have ever known.

I tried to persuade him to come to New York when I was there the other day, the other month, to meet the Brethren. They ought to know Mr Sloan is the greatest man in the assembly that I know. What a mighty word.

What there were twelve and a half percent of the people in the Faroe Islands are born again Christians in the assembly. And my first weekend there, there were 450 in this one assembly to the breaking of bread. There were 800 for the gospel meeting and 500 for the prayer meeting on Monday night.

And when Mr Sloan's father first went he didn't know a word of the language. Faroese is the language, something similar to Norwegian. So all that he did was go round the streets and put his hand of blessing on the children's heads.

Then after some months he learned a word or two, God bless you he'd say. Then he'd say, Jesus said, come unto me. And that sort of thing.

And the thing developed and now there are 26 assemblies there. And two of them have 600 in fellowship. That was before Tom went.

And now one of those that I know of now has about 750 in fellowship. Because 150 there have been recently baptised. That's a clacksvick.

So thank God he is still through his servants sowing his seed and it is bringing forth that which he pleases. Thank God for teachers and preachers and evangelists of his living truth. The sower is God and he wants fruit.

And the seed is the word and his seed is living. This is good seed, tested seed. It is living seed.

The life is in the seed and not in the soil. Please note that. Now some of our neo-evangelicals, and there is a certain amount of this in the assemblies today by the way and there should be a bit of a warning about it from time to time.

Neo-evangelism is alright in part but there seems to be shades of modernist theology in it and it begins with a misunderstanding in my opinion of the word of God, the Bible. And it is said that the Bible itself, the book itself isn't living. The Bible is living but it becomes living seed when it is received into the heart of man and responded to.

But that isn't true. We are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God. Incorruptible.

The life is in the seed and not in the soil. It is a living word of God. When I was in Seacliff in Long Island I bought some seeds.

I'd never bought seeds in America before so I had a look at a packet and I found they were supposed to be good seeds, tested seeds and I chose the best I could find and they were beet seeds. I think in England we call them beetroot. Beet seeds and indeed they were fruitful.

At least to some extent. I put a nice row of them, two rows actually and about five came up and one of those grew into a beetroot or a beet about as big as a pea. But you know God's seed is not like that.

God is behind it. It is his word, it is the living seed when it gets into responsive good ground, there's blessing and glory to his name. I think we must make quite sure that we appreciate the word of God and that we fence off certain hours each week to read the living word.

Blessed is he that readeth and they that understand. We must keep reading to understand it. Now we thank God for all the Bible societies that are around the world, for the Gideon's movement and the distribution of scriptures in the hotels and the hospitals and schools and so on.

For the scripture gift mission and New Testament Pocket Testament League and organisations like this and I think they're just marvellous. Thank God for all those who give so that the word of God can get round the world to those who need it. But you know in some of our countries the problem is to get people to read the living word of God.

They've got it, they have the Bible, they possess the scripture, there it is on the shelf but to read it? No, they read the paper, they read some fiction or other but they'll never get down to read the word of God. I was with one of my students in Eritrea I think it was, or Ethiopia, Eritrea and on one occasion John Hanley and I went out with him and he said I want you to come out with me today and he put a satchel over his arm and he put a lot of Gospels and New Testaments in this satchel and he went to a certain shop and the man said to him what have you got there and he said I've got some New Testaments and Gospels. Oh he said let me see them and he immediately bought two or three.

Somebody looked over his shoulder and he bought some and before three minutes had gone by the shop was absolutely crowded with people wanting the word but they came out reading it and they sat in the gutter reading it. Today in America we get the word of God but we don't read it and it's wonderful to see how they're clamouring in some countries for the living word of truth and how they're devouring it and thy word, no God's word, giveth light wherever it goes and how shall a young man cleanse his way but by taking heed thereto according to thy word. I think we've lost the art of meditation in the word of God don't you? Are you going to confess that? When was the last time you sat down just for half an hour on your own without the television on or the radio on or any noise at all and you were on your own and you read the scriptures and you re-read them and you meditated in them and you communed with the Lord over his word and that became a really living piece of the word to you.

When was that? In Psalm 119 in those 176 verses there, David shows how his delight was in the word of God, he just adored it and you know he'd only got a little bit of it. He had the Pentateuch, the first five books in the Bible and he probably had Job and Joshua, maybe Judges, but he had very little of the living word of God but the bit he had he went through it and through it and he rejoiced in it, delighted in it day and night, when he woke up in the middle of the night he didn't start moaning, he read the word of God. Psalm 119 and see what the word of God did for him and what it can do for you and me as we develop again, gradually maybe, the lost art of meditation in the living sacred scriptures.

Very glad to see you all here this evening, delighting to listen to the preaching of the word. Let us also have concern for those who rarely hear the word. A few days ago my wife and I were in Hopetown, Abaco, that's a little island off the mainland of Abaco, which is an island off the mainland of Bahamas, which is an island off the mainland of Florida.

And Hopetown, a very nice little place is Hopetown for a quiet holiday but the assembly has closed down. There are only two sisters there now who are in fellowship with the assemblies and they rarely get any fellowship at all. And how this dear sister we visited rejoiced in the bit of fellowship that we were able to give her on that occasion.

And there are lonely souls who don't hear much of the word these days and thank God for the radio ministry and those who preach the word of God over the air. And regarding this I often say to myself, Clifford, you must preach the word. Not so much stories, interesting little bits and pieces, but give the people the living word of God.

Now don't get sidetracked, Clifford, into politics. Give them the living word of God. Our politics is in heaven from whence also we look for the saviour.

The people are dying for need of the living word. And I say, Clifford, don't start philosophising in the pulpit. Such a lot of this these days, the reasoning of men's minds apart from the revelation of God, and you get nowhere but the living word of God will reach the heart and very often bring forth a response to the glory of God and the individual blessing.

So the soul is God and he wants fruit, and the seed is the word, and the word, the seed is living seed, but the soil is the heart of man, and his response as we saw in the parable told by the saviour is varied. There was shallow ground and stony ground and spoiled ground through thorns and suitable, solid, suitable ground, and these denote the four types of responses to the word of God in the heart of man. In the shallow ground the seed does not sink in far enough.

In the stony ground the seed does not last long enough. In the spoiled ground the seed does not have room enough. But in the suitable, solid ground the seed is enough to bring the fruit.

Of course the Lord Jesus in speaking like this was talking about our three enemies, Satan, the flesh, and the world. There are always these enemies around seeking to ruin the fruitfulness of the word of God in our lives. In the shallow ground type there is the picture of Satan.

The seed falls at the wayside and Satan comes immediately and snatches it away. The seed does not sink in far enough. There is a lot of shallow evangelism in the world today, and if I may say so, especially in some of these parts and in Britain, a lot of shallow evangelism.

And one writer published a book on Hollywood evangelism some years ago, and I always used to give a lecture on this to my students, to give them a balance, because most of them had been brought up with a kind of shallow type of evangelism only, and they'd never had much of the solid stuff. And this was really a condemnation of shallow evangelism. Shallow ground.

Satan is ready always when there is not the solid, abiding word of God to snatch away the good seed. We are not ignorant of the devil's devices, and thank God we have the sufficiency of the indwelling spirit to overcome the strong one, Satan. And then of course there was the stony ground, and the Lord Jesus was talking about the old nature, the flesh here, the self-life.

The seed doesn't last long enough because it has no root in itself. It's stony ground. He's talking about people who receive the word just temporarily, a little bit of it for a short time.

They endure for a little while. They never go on and enjoy the living word of God and the salvation in its fullness that it can bring. They endure for a little time, and then when a bit of affliction or a bit of persecution comes for Christ's sake, they've gone.

The flesh comes in, and the self-life wins, and they are lost. The heart, in this case, understood the story of love, maybe, but the mind did not understand the cost. The entrance see into God's kingdom they understood to be nothing, and they stepped right inside.

But they didn't understand that the annual subscription was everything. For you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but to suffer for his sake. It's made quite sure we understand the bargain.

It is the way the master went, shall not the servant tread that way still. And when affliction comes, or a little persecution for Christ's sake comes, let us make quite sure the word, the living word of God is deep down in our hearts, and will abide the test. And then there was the spoiled ground he was talking about.

Spoiled because the seed didn't have room enough, and it was choked by thorns and thistles, and things like that. This is the type of person who is interested to a degree in the living word of God and the gospel of truth. But there's so much room in their lives for other things, the word of God does not really find an abiding place.

Room for pleasure, room for business. We sing, but for Christ the crucified, not a place that he can enter in the heart for which he died. Room for pleasure, room for business, but for God's own living word, not a place the seed can enter in the life that's made for God.

Demas was like this, you know, he only believed for a while, and then faded out of the picture. In sending greetings at the end of the Colossian epistle, Paul writing to these Christians at Colossae said, Now Titicus, a faithful minister of Christ, the beloved brother, he sends his greetings to you. And then there's Archippus, you know him, he's one of your city, he's a faithful servant of the Lord, labouring for you in prayer, he sends his greetings to you.

Dr. Luke is here, the beloved physician, he sends his greetings to you. And so he went on, and then he said, and Demas. Now he didn't say, and beloved Demas, or dear Demas, or faithful Demas.

He couldn't say anything like that because Demas was beginning at this time to show his real character. And all he could say, Demas greets you. Because soon after, he had to say, Demas has loved this present evil world and has gone back.

And all those who love this evil, wicked world that crucified our Lord and Saviour, will sooner or later go back, and the living seed will not have its desired effect in their hearts and in their lives. But then thank God for the solid ground, and I hope this ground is a picture of your heart and your life, receiving the beautiful, living, incorruptible seed of the Word of God. You and your heart and life, meditating on the Word, making God's Word your very own by grim determination, careful, prayerful study and meditation, suitable, solid ground, bringing forth fruit in the light by the seed of the living Word of God in the heart continually.

Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Thank God the living seed is enough to meet our spiritual need day by day. God's Word is sufficient.

Receive it and devour it and make God's Word your own, and be fruitful by it in your own life, in the lives of others through you to whom you preach it, and to the glory of God's name. Has your life produced a good harvest through the living Word of God in and through your heart and life? Have you been able to multiply yourself? Some brought forth thirtyfold, some brought forth sixtyfold, and some brought forth a hundredfold. Some of you haven't got a lot of time left to serve the Lord.

I heard a very interesting prayer by one of the Brethren this morning. He was facing the fact that he wasn't going to live down here another forty or fifty years, and he wanted to put his life at the Lord's disposal, that the Word of God should have free course and be glorified through his life in a special way in his later years. And I said, I'll mentor that prayer.

I'm getting on myself. I'm emasculating. I haven't got long to live now.

He spent in the service of Christ preaching the living Word of God, which only is effective in Christian ministry. Philosophizing would bring no blessing to anybody. After all's said and done, this is your idea, and if I philosophize, that's my idea, and together they're no good at all.

The living Word of God is the incorruptible seed which shall abide forever. After a year or two of running the Bible College in England, we bought a trek cart for the students to go a safe trek for six or eight weeks. It was a little cart, about twice as big as this desk.

It had two wheels on it, and a pull bar at the front, and some ropes, two ropes at the back, four ropes at the front. There were eight men to pull this cart. They were dressed in shorts, and they were to walk twenty to twenty-five miles a day pulling this thing in which was their sleeping equipment.

And every town and village they went through, they had to preach the Gospel. I didn't tell them to, just gave them a rough idea, and they just longed to do it. And when they started out, I said, now I'm going to, I must examine your equipment.

And they had to put everything out on the floor before they put it in the old trek cart, you see. And I said, okay, oh, you've got two pairs of trousers there. You just put one of those back in.

And I went through, and I said, now, and what have you got in your pockets? And they turned out everything they'd got in their pockets, and one brother had a ten shilling note. I said, now this is a faith trek, you've got to start with the Lord and nothing. So they handed it over, you see.

And so it was, and some days they starved, they just had nothing to eat. But my, what a valuable experience it was for them. I remember when they were marching through Cornwall on one occasion, they hadn't had anything to eat for two days, and they were pulling this trek cart up a hill, you know.

And they were praying to the Lord to send them something to eat. And lo and behold, a lorry came along, a truck you would call it, and dropped a great big swede. And they cut it up into eight, and had an eighth of the swede each.

The Lord just dropped it for them. My, and they were thankful for that. Then of course on other occasions the Lord gave them a ten pound note.

A friend of mine in a certain town which shall be nameless gave them a ten pound note. Just, well as a matter of fact, what happened was this, he forgot to give them something, you know, and they'd been preaching there over the weekend. And they marched on, you know, and one brother said, oh he said, oh I've left my mac back at the chapel in so and so.

The town shall be nameless. And he said, I have to go back. So he thunder left back, you see, and when he got back this fellow said, oh he said, I forgot to give you a gift to your work.

And he gave them ten pounds in an envelope. So that's how the Lord provided, but I wasn't going to talk about the provision. This is what I was going to say.

The first trek we ever had, the leader of the trek was Peter Wheeler. He'd never preached when he first came to us, hadn't preached at all. And at Moorland he learned to preach the gospel.

He was a farmer by profession, but a very charming and very well educated young man. He was about 23, 24 years of age, and he led the trek. And my brother-in-law said to me, he said, they'll be coming back in a week or two.

He said, shall we drive up to Llandudno in North Wales and see how they're getting on. I said, yes, we'll go up and get there in the afternoon and then come back tonight after the open air meeting. And this is what we did, and we had a cup of tea with them in the school room.

And I said to the leader, Peter Wheeler, who was a missionary in France now, I said, no, you just carry on as though we're not here, just ignore us. Anyway, they did give us a cup of tea and a piece of cake, and I'm very glad they didn't take me too literally and ignore us altogether. And then they had their prayer meeting in the chapel, which was their headquarters, for that weekend.

And Peter Wheeler, he sat at the front and gave them a little word from the scriptures and then encouraged them all to pray. Of course, we took part in prayer as well. Then they got the old treck cart out and they walked down the middle of the town.

We didn't walk with them, we just left it to them. We weren't dressed right for the occasion. Then they walked down to the beach, you see, to the front, to the promenade of Llandudno.

They had permission already to stand there, and they just stood down the steps there on the sands. And Peter, or rather, no, there was another boy named Ray from Coventry, he'd never preached before he came to us. And he got up to preach, first of all, and he preached for half an hour.

And he gathered a big crowd. And then Peter preached after him. Now, there was another one who gave his testimony for a quarter of an hour, and the crowd increased.

And then Peter Wheeler preached for half an hour himself, and then he made an appeal. There was a big crowd of people there. And we, Jim and I, stood right back out of the way, and we were praising the Lord for their ministry.

And Peter Wheeler said, Now, here's a gospel according to St John, the living Word of God. If any of you want to be born again of the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, take a piece of it today and read it. If you want to trust Christ, come forward.

And they kept coming down these steps for these Gospels of John till they ran out of them. And then he closed the meeting in prayer. And after a few minutes, Jim said to me, he said, I think we ought to go home.

We've got a long way to go, you know. I said, all right, well, just say goodnight to the boys, to the students, and then I'll come home with you. But you know, we didn't say goodnight to any of them.

You know why? Every one of these young men were down the steps or along the promenade or in the pavilion there, sitting with somebody, standing with somebody, leading them to Christ from this John's Gospel. And as soon as they got in the car and started driving home, Jim said to me, he said, David, what would you rather be, an evangelist or a teacher of evangelism in a Bible school? Well, I said, now you know what I would rather be. I was seeing myself by the grace of God.

And I say to His glory, I saw Him multiply myself. I taught them evangelism. I taught them homiletics.

I taught them the Word of God, and so did the other teachers as well. And here we were able to multiply ourselves. Now you know why it is I do Bible school work.

And this is very, very, very scriptural. Some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some hundredfold multiply themselves, are thus fruitful unto God. Listen, the things that thou hast heard of me, says Paul in 2 Timothy 2.2, amongst many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Brethren, you've got to find some young men who are able and who are faithful, who are spiritual and who have a certain amount of ability to be developed in the preaching of the living Word of God, the living seed, the Word of the Lord from heaven. And if you can teach them what you've been taught, they'll be able to teach others. Now you know what we're doing in the Bahamas and the Bermuda.

In these countries, while we can, we are doing what we can to give to these young men the Word of God and develop their gift in preaching the truth so that if anything, if a crisis occurs and the doors are closed, they're already there, they are the nationals, they can preach the Word to their own people. Thank God, somebody with a bit of foresight in China a few years ago started giving Bible school work in Christian organisations, top priority, and there were thousands of young Chinese men who learned to preach the Gospel. And that's why the Church of God has been flourishing during the communist occupation.

Let me give you the Scripture again. The Word of God, the living truth of God, the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, which you have received, the same commit thou to faithful young men who shall be able to teach others also. And above all things, may we as servants of the living God preach the living Word of God.

And to preach the Word of God, we must know the Word of God, we must know how to preach it, and we must be filled with God's Holy Spirit. Let us pray. Oh, how we thank thee for thy living truth, Heavenly Father, for the inspiration of the Scriptures, for their preservation through the years, for their interpretation into our own mother tongue, and for illumination by the Spirit on the sacred page from time to time.

Make the Book live to us and live to others through us, for Christ's sake and His glory. Amen.

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