

# (Deeper Waters) Session 2 - the Purpose of God

by David Ravenhill

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*The purpose of God is to have a vast family of sons and daughters, all in his image, all in his likeness, and to ultimately fill the whole earth with the glory of God.*

**Duration:** 1:16:21

**Topics:** "Gods Purpose", "Evangelism"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the purpose that God has given to believers. He uses the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle to illustrate how each person has been given a unique role in God's plan. The preacher also highlights the need for Christians to be a light in the world and to actively share the gospel with others. He references the parable of the vineyard to emphasize the consequences of rejecting God's messengers and ultimately His Son.

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## Transcript

Wonderful to be in the presence of God, isn't it? I am one of those individuals that don't have any musical ability. My wife sings, plays the piano, the kids all took piano lessons, but I'm tone deaf. Somebody heard me singing a number of years ago, and after they heard me, they informed me that I was a prison singer.

I made the mistake of asking what a prison singer was, and they said, somebody who's behind a few bars and missing the key. Any other prison singers here? Okay, a few of us, good. I'm glad the Bible says, make a joyful noise to the Lord.

It doesn't have to be perfect, but I can't wait to get my glorified voice in heaven, sit down at that 1,000 foot Steinway, Bosendorf, whatever it is up there, and I've reserved the music room for the first 1,000 years to make up for lost time. You'll hear me spiraling above everybody else, you know, 100 octaves or whatever you're capable of in heaven. It's gonna be wonderful, isn't it? But anyway, in the meantime, I'm glad the Lord looks at the heart and not the vocal ability.

This morning, we want to look at the purpose of God. I want you to imagine when you came in at the back door that you were handed a plastic bag, a clear plastic bag, and in that plastic bag, there was a jigsaw puzzle. Some of you got a 50 piece, some of you got a 100 piece, some of you got a 1,000 piece, some of you got 5,000 piece, some of you got 20.

And you're asked to put that jigsaw puzzle together. The frustration is that you were not given the box. And so you have all these unrelated little pieces of material, different shapes, different colors.

You pick up the red, you don't know if it's blood or some guy's shirt or a Ferrari. You don't know if the blue piece is the sky or the ocean. You don't know if the brown is the side of a building or somebody's car.

And so you've got all these little pieces, and you think, if I only had the cover to this box, I would know exactly what it was supposed to look like and where the blue went in, where the, you know. And I rather think that's what a lot of Christians like. They get saved, go to church or some home group or church group, and each week, they get another piece of the puzzle.

They come on Sunday morning, maybe the pastor's talking about the family, and so they put that piece of the puzzle in the plastic bag, their mind, so to speak. Come the next week, and he's changed, and he's doing a series on the book of Nehemiah. And so they've got that information.

Guest speaker during the week, he's teaching about prayer, and so they've got that piece of the puzzle. Come the following week, somebody's on end-time events, they've got that piece of the puzzle. And depending how long you've been saved, your jigsaw puzzle varies.

Some of you have only got a 20-piece one because you haven't been saved very long. Others have got thousands of pieces because you've been raised in church, and you've been to every conference imaginable, and you've taken notes, and you've got all sorts of facts and figures and so on. But this morning, we want to try and put the jigsaw puzzle together.

I want to give you sort of the big picture as to what is God's purpose, because I'm convinced, again, a lot of people go to church without any real understanding of what it's all about. If I said to you that I belong to the local country club where I live, there is one, I don't belong to it, you would assume that I, number one, I'm rich, number two, that I play golf. Neither of those is true.

If I said I belong to the local vintage car club, you would assume I enjoy vintage cars. If I said I belong to the local rifle club, you'd assume that I enjoy target practice. If I said I belong to the local polo club, you'd assume I enjoy playing polo.

If I said I belong to the local fishing club that I enjoy fishing, if I say I belong to the church club, what does that immediately sort of conjure up in your mind? Most of us sit there and we try and fill in the blank and say, well, and yet all of us belong to that club. We go along faithfully on Sunday morning to that club. We pay our club fees.

We sing our club songs. We meet other club members. And yet we really don't know what that club is really all about.

Now you would never do that with any other sort of club. You would not ascend four flights of stairs somewhere in the middle of town and meet with a group of people, sing songs and pay your dues without having some sort of understanding why you were there. In other words, you would never walk into some organization and say, what's this all about? And the guy says, you know, I really don't know.

But my parents started coming to this place when I was a kid and I've been coming ever since. And well, yeah, but what's the purpose of this club? And well, come to think of it, I don't know. I mean, we'd never do that.

And yet we do that with church. You ask the average person what it's all about and they sort of stare at you blankly like, I guess I never really thought of it. And so we want to look at God's purpose.

Now there are many, many scriptures and I have left purposely my detail notes and so I've got everything on this little page here. So I won't give you all of them. But my favorite verse concerning the purpose of God is Acts 13, verse 36.

And it says, David served the purpose of God in his generation and afterwards he slept. I like it, it's got my name in it. But David understood what God was doing in his generation.

David served the purpose of God in his generation. You are not responsible for the last generation. You're not responsible for the next generation apart from raising your kids in a godly way.

But you are responsible for this generation and you need to find out what is God doing in our generation and how can I serve the purpose of God in my generation? If we don't do that, we waste our life. I picked up a book many, many years ago by J. Sidlow Baxter, one of his devotional books called *Awake My Heart*. And in one of his devotionals, he makes the statement, you can have a saved soul but a lost life.

You can have a saved soul but a lost life. In other words, you can know that you're born again in the spirit of God but at the end of your life, if you live for 40, 60, 80, 100 years, whatever it may be, your life has been wasted because it has not counted for the sake of God's kingdom. And I think there's nothing more tragic than a wasted life, not being involved again in the purpose of God.

The Bible says we are to be laborers together with him. In other words, God is active, he's laboring, he's doing something. And he is looking again for vessels, vehicles through which he can fulfill his purpose.

And there are many, many scriptures about the purpose of God. Paul says he has saved us and he has called us according to his purpose. If I said how many of you are saved here, chances are that we'd have 100% hands that would go up.

If I said how many of you are called, you'd look around and say, you know, is this sort of some trick question or whatever? Well, if you're saved, you're called, very simply. You need to know, of course, what you're called to, what specific part of God's purpose you're called to. We're a many-membered body, we all have different capacities, different functions, but all of us have a calling upon our life.

It is a holy calling, the Bible says, it is a high calling. And I would hate to miss that calling. Hebrews talks about the unchangeableness of God's purpose.

In other words, God's purpose never changes, but the instruments do, as somebody said. The reason the instruments change, number one, because we don't live forever, number two, because there's disobedience and sin, and so God is always raising up new instruments, but his purpose never changes. If my purpose in life is to build myself a house, at least for the next year, let's say, and in the process of building that house, I'm going to use a variety of instruments.

Let's say I'm using a hammer, the shaft of that hammer breaks, and so that hammer has failed, and therefore I have to replace it with another hammer, but my purpose remains the same. God, I believe, has called many, many people, they have not responded to that call, and so he's reached down into the life of somebody else and given them the calling that maybe you could have had, but you were busy fulfilling your own calling, your own destiny. There's a verse in Revelation that talks about, we beware lest any man

take your crown.

What a frightening thought that is, that one day we will stand before God only to find out that somebody else has got the reward that we could have had if we'd have been obedient to the voice of God. In other words, God called you, maybe in a meeting like this or last night, you refuse, maybe a few months later, because God is incredibly patient. Some missionary comes and gives a plea for people to respond and get involved in the things of God.

Again, you disobey, and over a period of time, there's consistent disobedience. Finally, God reaches into the life of somebody else. They do respond, and they get, one day, the crown that you could have had.

They get your prize. That's gonna be embarrassing, isn't it, to say the least? And so we need to understand, again, God's purpose, Romans 8, 28. All things work together for good to those that love God, to those that are called according to his purpose.

And so I could give you many, many scriptures just with that one little phrase in it, the purpose of God, or God's purpose. God has a purpose to which he is working towards. Now, the problem with most of us is we become so engrossed in the subject matter of Christianity, we lose sight of the object.

Let me illustrate that by, let me introduce an imaginary man here. Here he is, we'll call him Charlie Brown. But Charlie Brown is 100 years of age, and he is the world's leading expert in medicine.

He has studied every facet of medicine that is imaginable. He knows all about the heart, all about the brain, all about the digestive system. He knows all about the skeleton structure of the Bible.

I mean, he knows every Bible, the body, every single facet of medicine he is an expert in. And you ask this man, you say, I understand you know everything about the body, yes. You've been in school now for 80 years of solid training, yes.

Have you ever delivered a baby? No. Have you ever performed an operation? No. Have you ever given anybody sort of a chiropractic adjustment? No.

Have you ever set a broken bone? No. Have you ever treated somebody for this disease or that disease? No, no, no. And every question you ask him, he says no to it.

Again, he's become so engrossed in the subject matter, he's lost sight of the object. He's never even put on a Band-Aid, and yet he knows everything about medicine. Now, there's a lot of Christians like that.

They've got notebooks full of facts and figures, and you can ask them almost any question, and they can answer it. They can tell you who the Antichrist is going to be and who he's going to marry. They can tell you the significance of the third tassel on Aaron's robe and so on and so forth.

They know everything because they've studied everything, and yet you say to them, listen, have you ever led anybody to Christ? No. Ever been on a mission strip? No. Ever counseled anybody? No.

Ever prayed for anybody? No. And they reply no, no, no to everything, and again, they become so engrossed in the subject matter of Christianity, they've lost sight of the object. And that's one of the great tragedies, I think, in the house of God, in the church of Jesus Christ, that we are not doing the job that we should be doing.

And so God has a purpose. Now, God's purpose initially, of course, was to have a vast family of sons and daughters, all in his image, all in his likeness. When he said to Adam and Eve, be fruitful and multiply, he was just not talking about physical reproduction, but he was talking about reproducing his image.

God's ultimate goal is the whole earth is gonna be filled with the glory of God. And of course, he created man in his image, in his glory. Man sinned and came short of the glory of God, and so God's purpose, if you like, was thwarted.

But he begins again in Genesis chapter 12, and that's where I want to begin. And he begins with this wonderful man by the name of Abraham. Abraham, as you know, is referred to in the Bible as the father of all those that believe.

In other words, he is the role model, he is the prototype, he is the example. Fathers have a profound impact on our life, for either good or bad, don't they? If your father was a kind, loving, generous sort of a man, then chances are you have taken on some of those characteristics and qualities. If your father was an alcoholic and cursed and swore all the time, chances are you've battled that in your own life, and so on.

If your father was a doctor, chances are you know all sorts of medical terms. If your father was a lawyer, chances are you know all sorts of legal terms. If your father was a mechanic, chances are you can tinker around with your car.

If your father was a plumber, chances are you can fix the pipes when something goes wrong, because we learn from our father. Abraham is the father of all those that believe. He is the first disciple in the Bible, because discipleship is not just something in the New Testament, it was there contained in the Old Testament, the essence of it.

What was the first thing God said to Abraham? Forsake father, mother, brother, and sister. Oh, he put it a little differently. Get out of your father's house, away from your relatives and your kindred, and so on.

Take up your cross and follow me, in essence. And so much of what you see in Abraham's life, God will take you through the sort of same processes, if you like, but anyway, God comes to this man, Abraham, a Gentile who became a Jew, not through natural birth, but through the spiritual birth. And God says to him, go forth from your country, from your relatives, from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.

I'll make you a great nation, I'll bless you, I'll make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I'll bless those that bless you, the one that curses you, I will curse, and in you, all the families of the nations of the earth shall be blessed. What we call here the Abrahamic covenant.

God's promise to bless this man, to make his name great, to provide for him, to protect him, and so on, but ultimately, that through him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Now, God comes to Abraham on three separate occasions with this identical message, if you like. In other words, God is sort of drumming it in to Abraham.

Now, what is happening here, God is beginning to raise up a people for himself, and in the very DNA, the very genetic code of this nation that is gonna be formed, he is putting in that spiritual DNA, his intention, his purpose, that this people are going to ultimately impact the nations of the earth. So he comes to Abraham three times. Abraham has a son by the name of Isaac.

God comes to Isaac with the same message. Isaac has a son by the name of Jacob. God comes to Jacob with the same message, that in you or through you, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed.

Through your seed, he says, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed. Now, turn with me to Galatians chapter three. Well, you don't have to turn to these, but at least let me give you the reference.

Galatians three in verse eight. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, all the nations shall be blessed in you. So what God was doing way back there at the very beginning, Genesis 12, he was looking for a people that would take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

He was trying to raise up people that shared his heart, his compassion, his love, his kindness, his mercy for the wayward, for the lost, for those that have been abused, again, as far as the world is concerned, and he was looking for a people that would be laborers together with him. And so he is raising up a people that we, of course, know now as a nation of Israel, but basically, the people of God, and in the spiritual, again, genetics of that nation, he says, through you and through your seed, every nation on the earth is gonna be blessed. Paul explains that by saying he was preaching the gospel.

We use the word blessing in a variety of ways. If somebody sneezes, you turn around and say, bless you. You know, the pastor greets you at the door and shakes your hand and says, bless you, because he can't remember your name, one of the tricks of the trade.

But the real definition of blessing is receiving the gospel. Let me prove that to you in Acts, Acts chapter three, verse 25, you are the sons of the prophets of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, in your seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. For you first, God raised up his servant and sent him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.

The ultimate blessing and the greatest blessing is the blessing of forgiveness, the blessing of salvation, the blessing of justification by faith. That is what the Bible defines as blessing. And through you all, the nations of the earth are going to be blessed.

They are gonna have the ability to respond to the gospel, to hear the gospel, to know the greatest blessing, that of being taken out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear son, to have their eyes opened to be brought again from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. So that was God's intention. He was raising up again this nation for a purpose.

He had a single purpose in store for the nation of Israel. Now let's look at some scriptures pertaining to God's purpose for Israel. Psalm 67.

These are just sort of random scriptures that are literally dozens and dozens and dozens. The psalmist is praying here, God be gracious to us and bless us, cause your face to shine upon us. Now nothing wrong with praying for blessing.

The psalmist understood that God was a God that longed to bless his people. In fact, it was God that came to Moses on one occasion and he says, Moses, I want you to assemble the camp. When you've got them all together, I want you to raise your hand and say the Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee.

In other words, God wants to bless us. We need to understand that. And so the psalmist is praying, God bless us, cause your face to shine upon us.

And then he gives the reason that, thy ways may be known on the earth, thy salvation among all nations. And you can read that Psalm, let all the people praise thee, let all the nations be glad and sing for joy. Drop down to verse six, the earth has yielded its produce.

God, our God has blessed us. God blesses us that all the ends of the earth may fear him. In other words, there is a reason behind the blessing that God has placed upon your life.

It is to be a testimony of God's goodness and God's faithfulness to those that have not yet received him. And so the psalmist said, Lord, if you bless us, all the ends of the earth are gonna hear about it. We've had a wonderful crop harvest this year.

The earth has yielded its produce. God, you've blessed us. All the ends of the earth are going to fear you.

In other words, what was to happen, and of course, all of this was contingent on Israel's obedience. But provided they were obedient to the voice of God, this is the way it was supposed to work. The nation of Israel, even though it was a small nation in comparison to other nations, every time they went out to battle, it didn't matter if they had a huge amount of people against them, more numerous than they are, as the Bible says, they would always win, provided they were obedient.

They would not have the same diseases that the other nations had. They would not have the same divorce rate that the other nations had. They would not have the same trouble with their teenagers that the other nations had.

Because if you had to rebel your son in the Old Testament, you rocked him to sleep. Just making sure you're awake. But anyway, but the nations would look on and they would look at the nation of Israel and say, what is it about you people? Your crops don't fail.

We have had three years of drought and you've had plenty. Every time you go to battle, you win. You don't have the same divorce rate.

You don't have the same drugs. You don't have the same this and that and the other thing. What is that? I mean, you guys are blessed.

I mean, what's going on? And Israel then was to respond and say, it's not us, we're no different than you are, but our God is different than your God. And our God is a God that blesses us. Our God has given us laws that if we obey those laws, it will go well for us, the laws of liberty and so on.

And the nations then would look on and say, is there any chance we could join you guys, have the blessing that you've got? And they said, yeah, that's what it's all about. We're not exclusive. What do we have to do? Well, you simply have to give up your gods, turn to the living God and embrace him as your God.

And that's basically it. Oh, the men have got to be circumcised, the women get in free. And I mean, in essence, that was the message that God was wanting to give through the nation of Israel.

And there's many, many scriptures concerning this. Isaiah 42, God says to his people here, I am the Lord, verse six, I've called you in righteousness, I'll hold you by the hand and watch over you. I'll appoint you as

a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring prisoners from the dungeon, those who dwell in darkness from the prison.

I am the Lord, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images. Notice God says, I've raised you up as a light to the nations.

He's speaking to the whole nation of Israel. You are to bring understanding to the blind, to open blind eyes, you're to take prisoners from the dungeon, those who dwell in darkness from the prison. Doesn't that sound familiar? Jesus said, the spirit of the Lord is upon me.

He's anointed me to preach the gospel, to open the eyes of the blind, to open prison doors, and so on. That is the message that you and I are called to bring forth. Over into Isaiah 49, verse three, he said to me, you are my servant, Israel, in whom I will show my glory.

Verse six, is it too small a thing that you should be my servant? To raise up the tribes of Jacob, to restore the preserved ones of Israel, I will make you a light to the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. God's longing always has been to bring back his banished ones. As it says there in the Old Testament, he seeks ways to bring back the lost.

And God was wanting to raise up a missionary nation, a group of people that shared his concern, his compassion for a lost and a dying world, that nation was to be the nation of Israel. You are to be a light to the nations so that my salvation will go to the ends of the world. That's why I've raised you up.

One Chronicles, or second Chronicles rather, chapter six. I want you to see in this chapter the understanding that Solomon had concerning God's purpose and concerning the house of God. This is an amazing portion of scripture to me.

This is the opening day of the temple. As you know, David has died, and David's longing was to build God a house that was worthy of him. He thought, God, you've been dwelling in tents and so on.

I'm gonna build you a mansion, so to speak. And God says, no, you're a man of war. You won't do it, but your son Solomon will.

And so David, in his lifetime, prepared everything, and sort of handed Solomon a Lego kit, so to speak, to put together. And Solomon puts it together, and here is this magnificent temple. And this is the opening day.

Solomon is praying this prayer of dedication. Notice part of his prayer, verse 32. Also concerning the foreigner, or the unsaved, who is not of thy people, or is not a part of the church, if I can use that analogy.

When he comes from a far country for your great namesake, your mighty hand, your outstretched arm, when he comes and he prays towards this house. In other words, Solomon is anticipating something. Solomon is anticipating the glory of God coming into the house of God in such a powerful way that the nations are gonna hear about it.

God's arm is gonna be laid bare, and foreigners are gonna come from all over the world. And so he says, when they come and they pray towards this house, then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the foreigner, or the unsaved, calls to thee, in order that all the people of the earth may know thy name and fear thee. Now, try and understand here what is going on with Solomon.

Solomon is not looking at Israel as some sort of little exclusive nation. He's saying, we have a mandate. That mandate is to reach the nations of the earth.

The way in which we are gonna reach the nations of the earth, of course, is to have such a relationship with God that God is pleased to dwell with us, that he will come down in the house of God in such power and glory and majesty that it's gonna be noised abroad that Jesus is in the house, if I put it in a New Testament setting. And the foreigners are gonna come in. And they're going to pray.

Now, here is the scenario. Somebody is living in a little village, let's say a couple of hundred miles from Jerusalem in some Philistine village, or some Moabite village, or whatever. And they have a baby, this couple, and the baby is born with, say, a clubfoot, cleft palate, and a few other problems.

And they go daily to their God, which is made out of a stump of a tree or something. And they pray to that God, crying out for mercy and compassion for their little baby, who is so terribly incapacitated with these problems, and nothing happens. The weeks go by, the months go by.

They bring bigger and bigger bowls of rice. They become more and more fervent in their prayer. And still, that little one sees no change.

And then they hear that something is happening in Jerusalem, that there is a God in Jerusalem who is doing signs, wonders, miracles. He's stretching out, laying bare His holy arm, and so on. And they are told that this God is the God of all gods.

And so, by this time, they're desperate. So they tell their village that they're going to investigate and see if what the rumors they hear about are true. So they make a journey.

Maybe it takes them a week or more. And they get to this house of God, the temple, and they pray to a God they don't really know. And they say, God, if You are the true God, the living God, the God that made the heavens and the earth, then prove it by healing this little boy.

And suddenly, that cleft palate heals, that clubfoot straightens out, the other problems. Can you imagine when they get back to their village what they will do? You think they'll go to their God that they've made with their own hands and bow down and say, thank you? I don't think so. I think they will tell that village, listen, we've been deceived.

These idols that we worship are not really gods at all. There is a living God, a true God, one God, the God that made the heavens and the earth. I mean, this is the thought behind this particular passage of Scripture.

Solomon wants to reach the nations of the earth, and he knows the way in which the nations of the earth are going to be reached. If the presence of God comes down in the house of God, amongst the people of God, in such a way that there is obvious evidence of God's presence, and that's his prayer. Let me read it again now with that in mind.

Also concerning the foreigner, the unsaved, if you like, who is not of thy people Israel, when he comes or they come from a far country for your great namesake and your mighty hand, your outstretched arm, when they come and they pray towards this house, hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place. Do all that the foreigner calls to thee in order that all the people of the earth may know thy name and fear thee, as do thy people Israel. You see, there were always sort of a remnant all the way through Israel's history that

understood the mind of God and the purpose of God concerning the nation, why God had raised them up.

In fact, let me read to you. I've written down here, and I forgot to read it. A quote.

This is by G. Campbell Morgan, one of the great expositors of our time. Here's what he says about Israel. It cannot be too often emphasized that it was not the election of a nation from among others in order that God might lavish his love upon that nation while he abandoned the others.

The purpose of God was far wider than the creation of this nation. It was the creation of a testimony through this nation for the sake of the other nations. The divine intention was for a people who under his divine government should reveal in the world the breadth and the beauty and the goodness of that government.

A people who gathered in their national life around his throne and his altar, obeying his commands and worshiping him should reveal to outside nations the meaning of the kingdom of God. It was not the election of a pet, but the creation of a pattern. That's an incredible summary, if you like, of the nation of Israel.

In other words, God looks down on all the nations. Let's say every nation in the earth is represented here, Africa and China and so on. This is Israel, my brother here, and I'm God and I lavish all my love upon Israel and I couldn't care less about the rest of you.

He said that was never God's intention. What God wanted to do was demonstrate through this brother to the rest of you the goodness of God, the kingdom of God. It was never, he says, the selection of a pet, but the creation of a pattern.

A lot of people in the messianic realm look at Israel almost as, oh, I wish I had at least a few ounces of Jewish blood in me. I'd be just that little bit better. No, it was not the creation of a pet, but the creation of a pattern.

In other words, God wanted to reproduce, he wanted to duplicate in every single nation what he accomplished or was wanting to accomplish through the nation of Israel. Now, the great missionary book of the Bible, as you know, is the book of Jonah. And you know the story how God came to Jonah, gave him a mandate.

I want you to go to Nineveh, modern-day Iraq. We shouldn't be too hard on Jonah. That would be like God saying to one of you with an American passport, I happen to have a British one, but it's the same.

I want you to go and talk to Saddam Hussein. This is just prior, of course, to the recent war. You know, you say, hey, God, Americans aren't exactly welcome over there in Iraq, so why don't you send somebody else? I mean, that was the situation.

Nineveh, we are told by the historians, they were so brutal that they would literally, when they went to war, they would capture people, skin them alive, and drape human skins over the walls of the city to provoke fear. I mean, they were the most barbaric nation, most terrible as far as the treatment of their prisoners and so on. And it is little wonder then, of course, that Jonah thought, listen, I'll pass on this one, Lord.

And so he goes in the opposite direction. Now, the story is true, but at the same time, the story has got a parabolic side to it, if you like. In other words, Jonah represented in a microcosm the entire nation.

It was God's purpose that every Jew, every child of God, go to the nations of the earth. And so in that sense, he was a representative, if you like, of God's purpose and intention for the entire nation. Jonah refused to go, and so, of course, he got swallowed by a great fish.

Whether it was a whale or not, we don't know. And there he is in the stomach of that thing for three days. There's no way out apart from repentance, and so he repents, and the whale or fish has a Malak's moment, and Jonah comes spewing out.

It's fascinating. If you look at where Nineveh is, I don't know, that whale must have either swum up the Euphrates or had an amazing projectile vomiting from way out there in the Mediterranean, catapulted in a couple of hundred miles, a thousand miles, whatever it is. But anyway, that aside, he goes to Nineveh.

Now, turn with me to Jeremiah, because I believe God was warning the nation of Israel, and he was saying, in essence, listen, what I did with one person I can do with all of you. If you do not get with the program, if you do not obey me, this is what I can do, and of course he did. Jeremiah 51, verse 34.

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured me. He's crushed me. He's set me down as an empty vessel.

He has swallowed me like a monster. He has filled his stomach with my delicacies. He's washed me away.

In other words, God says, I've got a variety of fish. I've got a fish that will accommodate one man, in the case of Jonah. I've got other fish.

This particular fish is called Babylon. Babylon's got a big enough mouth to swallow all of you guys, Israel. Gulp.

And we get washed down into the belly of this monster. We fill his stomach. And for 70 years, Babylon had the nation of Israel in its stomach.

But then notice verse 44, I will punish Baal in Babylon, and I will make what he has swallowed come out of his mouth. So God says, I can open the mouth of a fish. I can open the mouth of a nation.

I can do anything and everything. I'm God. And if you guys don't get with the program, if you don't give up your sin and your apostasy and so on and get with the program, then I will take you into bondage.

I will take you into captivity. I believe that Jonah was a prophetic warning, again, to the nation of Israel. And we need to heed that warning in our own life because God is intent on accomplishing his purposes.

All right, let's look then at what happened to the nation of Israel. Matthew 21. This is a history, a brief history.

Let me give you the setting. Matthew 21, verse 23. When he had come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, by what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority? So here is Jesus now.

He's in the temple. The temple, of course, was the very center of Israel's existence. Everything was to revolve around the house of God.

If you've studied the tabernacle in the Old Testament, it was not out in the suburbs. It was right in the middle and all the tribes were camped around. In other words, God was to be supreme.

He was to be central in their lives. Their lives were to revolve around the things of God. And here is, of course, Jerusalem and the temple.

Jesus is in the temple. And the chief priests and the elders of the people are there. So these are not a bunch of people in training.

These are not young priests. These are the chief priests. In other words, the spiritual hierarchy of Israel is represented at this particular time in the house of God and Jesus is speaking to them.

Verse 33. He says, listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, who put a wall around it, dug a wine press in it, built a tower, rented it out to vine growers, and he went on a journey.

Now, of course, Jesus is referring here to Isaiah chapter 5 and you can read in more detail. The psalmist says in Psalm 80 and verse 8 that God went into Egypt and he removed a vine from Egypt and he transplanted that vine, obviously, in what we call the promised land, the land of Canaan. And in that promised land, he built a wall around it.

In other words, God protected his own people. He removed all the stones. According to Isaiah's record, you can read it in more detail and he basically says, I have done every conceivable thing I can to help you.

I've put a tower in it. I'm gonna watch over you. Again, I put a wall around about to protect you.

I've removed every obstacle to your growth and I've even given you time to bring forth a harvest, but you never have. And then he says in Isaiah, what more was there that I could do for my vineyard? In other words, you cannot accuse me of being negligent in any capacity whatsoever. You guys did not fulfill your calling and your destiny.

I did everything I could. I protected you. I watched over you.

I expected you to bring forth good fruit, it says, but you brought forth worthless grapes. And in anticipation of your fruitfulness, I planted or I built a wine press because there's only one purpose for grapes. So this is what he's referring to here.

So let me read again. Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a wall around it, dug a wine press in it, built a tower, rented it out to vine growers, the nation of Israel, and went on a journey.

When the harvest time approached, so God waits, he's got seasons. When the harvest time approached, he sent his slaves to the vine growers to receive his projects. The vine growers took his slaves, beat one, killed another, stoned a third.

Again, he sent another group, larger than the first, and they did the same thing to them. But afterwards, he sent his son saying, they will have respect for my son. But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir.

Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance. They took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers? So here is

Jesus now telling a story as he was very apt to do and very capable of doing.

And I think momentarily they're caught up in the story as they're listening and they forget that really he's referring to them. Now, here you have a brief history of the nation of Israel because the slaves that he sent were the prophets. He sent prophet after prophet to Israel, and the essential message of a prophet is that of recovery.

If you want a good book on the prophetic ministry, read T. Austin Sparks. It's simply called prophetic ministry. It's not the ministry of calling people out and giving them personal prophecies.

It's that of the office of a prophet. And he says the essential calling of a prophet is that of recovery, bringing back that which is lost. In other words, like Martin Luther, brought back justification by faith, and the Westleys and others' holiness, recovering what has been lost.

Now, the prophet's job in the Old Testament was to try and keep the nation of Israel on track, so to speak. You are called with a holy calling. You are to be a light to the nations.

And they said, listen, get out of here. We don't wanna hear that. We want God for ourselves.

We don't want to associate with the dogs of the nations. We don't wanna get them involved. We are just happy, you know, just leave us alone.

And so every prophet that came that talked about sin and how off the track they'd become, they stoned and they stoned and they stoned. God sent another group larger than the first. Here is God's incredible tolerance, patience, long-suffering with the nation of Israel.

Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years, prophet after prophet after prophet after prophet, and the nation of Israel stones them. Finally, God says, I'm gonna send my son. And they stoned the son.

So it says they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vine growers? And they said to him, these are the leaders now, he will bring those wretches to a wretched end and will rent out the vineyard to other vine growers who will pay him the proceeds at the proper season. In other words, they're caught up in the story and, of course, they love money, the Pharisees.

The Bible says they were lovers of money. And I'm thinking in terms of, I can't believe this guy was so patient. Boy, if that was my vineyard, I know what I would do.

I'd cut off the head of every single one of those wretched individuals and I'd get somebody that would produce some fruit and give me something for my harvest. I can't believe this guy has waited year after year after year, they actually killed his son. Boy, I know I'd bring those wretches to a wretched end and I'd find somebody that would cultivate and bring forth some fruit.

And when the harvest time came, that they could give me what I really want, increase, fruitfulness. Verse 43, therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation producing the fruit of it. God says, time's up.

My spirit will not always strive with man. Time's up, I'm gonna find somebody that will get with the program. I'm gonna find somebody that will fulfill my longing to reach the nations of the earth.

Israel, sorry, time's up. Now let me say this for the sake of the tape. Obviously, God has an end time purpose for Israel.

We're gonna see the restoration of the nation of Israel, I believe and so on. I don't wanna get into all of that right now. But let's go to Galatians for a moment.

Galatians chapter three again, verse 16. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham, enter his seed. He does not say enter seeds as referring to many, but to one and to your seed, that is Christ.

So now, Paul begins to explain, give us understanding, revelation about this Abrahamic covenant. He says, first of all, he was preaching the gospel beforehand in verse eight. And then when God says to Abraham, through your seed, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed, he said he was not referring to seeds, but to one specific seed, that is Christ.

In other words, there's only one way in which you can be blessed, and that is through the Lord Jesus Christ. Now some of you are sighing a sigh of relief and thinking, it's not on my shoulders now, it's not my responsibility, it's all this one seed, Christ. Well, buckle your seatbelt for a moment.

Verse 26, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ. All of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There's neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free man, there's neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ.

And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise. If you belong to Christ, you're Abraham's seed. And if you are Abraham's seed, you are an heir.

What is an heir? He's one that inherits. Let's say that I am the heir of Bill Gates, the only heir, and poor old Bill is 99, and he is in hospital, and I am there with my lawyer waiting for that moment when I will inherit those four billion or whatever it is, dollars. And Dad breathes his last, and we pull the sheet over, and I say, okay, open the envelope.

And he begins to read, and he says, well, I'm afraid I've got some bad news. You know, your dad, most people thought he was a multi-billionaire, but the fact is he made some unwise investments, you know, put a lot of money in Enron. And the fact is, you're down to, let me see here, there's only about 300,000 left.

Not only that, but he made some other wrong investments, and by the time we pay all this off, you're gonna come out with next to nothing. In fact, we may have to sell the big house there in Seattle to pay the debts. You see, an heir is somebody that inherits.

Now, you can't inherit all just the good side of things. You inherit everything, isn't that right? If Dad happened to squander the money and make some bad investments, then you also inherit that. Now, what has happened, of course, in our prosperity branch of the church, if I can put it that way, we want the blessing of God, and they even have songs.

I'm at the seat of Abraham, and his blessings rest on me. But the fact is, you can't divide up the inheritance. God says, I will bless you, that's true, but he says, I will also make you a blessing, and through you, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed.

In other words, with the blessing comes responsibility. So you can't just say, God, make me rich and famous. I just want that part of the will, so to speak.

I don't wanna have to go to the mission field. I don't wanna have to live in Africa or China or India, and I don't like those places. I don't like curry, I don't like rice, I don't like whatever it is.

I just wanna be rich and famous, and I wanna have a fancy house, drive a fancy car, and I want your blessing, God. You promised Abraham your blessing. I'm at the seat of Abraham.

God says, listen, the will can't be divided. There is a mandate that comes with the blessing. And so here again, if you belong to Christ, you're Abraham's seed, yes, God wants to bless you.

He wants to make your blessing as well. And through you, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed. That is the inheritance that we have, see? And so God says, I'm gonna raise up a nation that will bring forth the fruit.

Now, before we look at that, go with me to Romans 15, verse eight. For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers. One of the reasons that Jesus came, among many, but one of the reasons he came was to confirm the promises given to the fathers.

In other words, Israel had long since forgotten their mandate, their calling, their destiny, and one of the reasons Jesus came was to reconfirm, revalidate the promises. Now, notice what those promises are in the next few verses. For the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy, as it is written, therefore I will give praise to thee among the Gentiles, and I will sing to thy name.

Again, he says, rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people. And again, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles. Let all the people praise him.

And again, Isaiah says, there shall come the root of Jesse, and he will arise to rule over the Gentiles. In him shall the Gentiles hope. Notice, it's all about the Gentiles, or if you like, you can interpret that the unsaved or the nations, anybody other than the Jew.

In other words, one of the reasons that Jesus came was to revalidate, reconfirm the promises given to the fathers. Who are the fathers? When the Bible talks about the fathers, it always refers to, when it talks about the father, obviously it's God, but when it talks about the earthly father, it's Abraham. Abraham is the father of all those that believe.

When it refers to the fathers, it always refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When God appeared to Moses at the burning bush, he says, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. So Jesus came to revalidate, reconfirm the promises that were given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and those promises we looked at, that through you all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed.

Time after time, God reiterates that to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob again. As I said, he puts in the genetic code of this nation that he's forming his purpose. You guys are to be a light.

You guys are to be a testament. You guys are to be laborers together with me, so to speak. So God says in Matthew 21 to the Jews, he said, I'm gonna raise up a nation now that will get with the program, basically.

So who is that nation? Is it an ethnic nation like Israel was? Is it the English? Is it the Americans? Is it the Chinese? Well, turn with me to Peter, 1 Peter, chapter two, verse nine. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession. There we have it again, what we talked about last night.

That, underline the word that. You may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. For you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

You had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. In other words, now it is our responsibility. The Jews were to provoke us to jealousy.

We are now to provoke the Jews to jealousy along with everybody else as the people of God. That's what they were supposed to do. They were to have the best of everything, the blessings of God would arrest upon the nation of Israel, blessings in their field, blessing in their home, blessing in their families, and so on, to make the other nations envious and jealous and say, we want what you've got.

What is it that you've got? We've got God. Can we have God? Yes. Now, the issue is on the other foot.

We are to provoke the nations. We now are the chosen race. We are a royal priesthood.

We are a holy nation. We are God's possession, God's people, that we may proclaim the excellency, the goodness of God and what he's done in our life. Just as the Jew was to say, listen, we were in bondage for 400 years.

We were whipped every single day. We had our kids thrown into the Nile. We suffered unbelievable atrocities and so on at the hands of the Egyptians, but God redeemed us by the blood of the Lamb.

And if he can do that for you, if he can do that for us, he can do that for you. He can break that habit of drugs in your life. He broke the taskmaster that was over us for hundreds and hundreds of years, set us free.

I mean, they were to proclaim what God did for them, but they never did. We have to do the same thing. Now, as we sort of wrap this up, turn with me to Luke.

What time is it? Luke chapter 24. You know the story. This is after the resurrection, and two of the disciples are walking along the road there.

Let's pick it up in verse 13. And two men were going that very day to the village of Emmaus, which is about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all the things that had taken place.

Obviously, the death of Christ, the crucifixion, and so on. It came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus himself approached and began traveling with them. Obviously, this was a common thing in that particular culture and day.

They weren't driving along the road in the Toyotas and Hondas and Chevys and so on. They would walk, and people would just saunter up and say, hey, what are you guys talking about? So here are these two guys, and they're talking about the events of the past few days, the crucifixion. Jesus comes.

They have no idea it's Jesus. And he says to them, hey, what are you guys talking about? And their eyes were prevented from recognizing him, verse 16, and he said to them, what are the words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking? And they stood still, looking sad. One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to him, are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things that have happened here in these days? In other words, they look at him and say, do you mean you don't know what's going on around here? You don't ever watch CNN? I mean, don't you know what's, I can't believe it.

Are you a stranger to these parts? You don't know what happened in Jerusalem a few days ago? Now notice here, you get a sense of the humor of Jesus. And he said to them, what things? I don't know, what are you talking about? And they said to him, and I can imagine, you know, a little bit of strength, the things about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, mighty in deed and word, in the sight of God and all the people.

And the chief priests and the rulers killed him, sentenced him to death, they crucified him. And we were hoping he was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, after all, it's the third day since these things happened.

To me, that's quite a humorous little incident there. I mean, they're just animated and he's acting like, I don't know, they're talking to the, you know, leading actor, if you like, in the whole drama. Verse 31, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight.

Can you imagine those guys, I bet they made a covenant. Listen, don't you ever dare tell what happened, boy, if I ever hear you, you know, talk about having egg on your face. I can't believe it, can you believe it? I mean, it was Jesus, and we were saying, you don't know what happened a few days ago in Japan.

Oh, my goodness. Just as well, he disappeared. Anyway, he comes back.

Verse 44, this is what we're gonna look at now. This is, to me, honestly, this is one of the most fascinating portions of Scripture in the Bible, and you'll see why. And he said to them, these are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

So, Jesus here now is about to open up the Scriptures like no other person has ever opened up the Scriptures. No prophet, nobody before, nobody since. He says, everything that is written about me.

Now, keep in mind, there was no New Testament at this time. And so, he says, everything that is written about me. The Bible says, in the volume of the book, it is what? Written of me.

So, everything that is written about me in the law of Moses, that's the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. And the Psalms, those are all the poetic books, not what we just call the Psalms, but Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, were all considered the Psalms. And then the prophets, the rest of the Bible.

So, everything that is written about me is going to be fulfilled. And then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. Now, here you have the greatest revelation from the greatest person in the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who is the Word of God.

The Word became flesh. If anybody has a right to interpret the Scriptures, it is the Scripture himself, so to speak, Jesus Christ. And he now is about to unfold what the Bible is all about, the essence of it.

I'm sure most of you have read Reader's Digest sometime in your life. Every Reader's Digest has a condensed book in it. In other words, they go to the New York Times bestselling list, and they take a book that has been on the list for the last four months or six months or a year, top-selling book, and they condense it down to about 10 or 15 pages.

Jesus now is gonna take the entire Bible, Old Testament, 1,200 pages or something in mind, and he's gonna reduce it now to two verses. That is the ultimate condensed book. This is not Paul's opinion.

This is not John's opinion. This is not Nehemiah's opinion. This is not Solomon's opinion.

This is the Word himself. He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and he said to them, this is what it's all about. Thus it is written, that the Christ, the seed, should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

Can you believe that? I mean, is that the way you would condense the Old Testament? Oh, I thought it was all about the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Hey, that's a great Scripture. But in other words, the essence of the entire Bible is about reaching the nations.

Now, this is not some missionary here with a passion for Africa. This is Jesus Christ himself. You can't say, well, this guy's so biased.

I mean, he just sort of protects his way through, but there's all sorts of other Scripture. No, I mean, you can't argue with this. This professor knows what he's talking about.

You know, he says, I'm gonna give you insight and revelation so you understand the Scriptures. It's all about Jesus Christ's suffering. And he suffered for one reason, that forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

And you are the witnesses of these things. In other words, it's your job. Not you're the witness like a car accident.

Yes, you know, I was standing on the street corner when this, you know, Mercedes drove around, hit this Beamer, and yeah, I can testify to that. No, I am to be actively testifying. I'm not just a witness of what somebody else is doing.

I am to be the witness. You are to be witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you, and you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

Jesus said, listen, you can't do this job in your own strength. You'll fail miserably if you try and do it in your own strength. So don't go anywhere until the power of God comes upon you.

And when the spirit of God comes upon you, you will have power to witness. And you shall witness in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and the outermost part of the earth, but tarry in Jerusalem until. Now there you have, again, the essence of God's word.

It's all about reaching the nations. That is the heart of God. He's not willing that any should perish.

God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son. This is foremost in the mind of God 24-7. How do I reach the nations? How do I reach Iraq and Iran and this place and that place and so on? And how shall they hear without a preacher? Now notice, Jesus is taking 12 disciples here and he is putting in the genetic code of this nation, this new nation, if you like, what he put in the genetic code of the old nation.

Through you, all the nations of the earth are gonna be blessed. He's raising up, again, the church of Jesus Christ, the people of God. And he's saying, listen, work with me.

This is the calling, this is the purpose. Now you see, that's the big picture. You say, well, where does prayer fit into this? Pray the Lord of the harvest, he'll send forth laborers.

Ask of me, I'll give thee the heathen for thine inheritance. They're almost part of the world as I possess you. Spiritual warfare, fighting against the enemy.

Where does the family fit into that? Well, we are to be witnesses as well as witness. In other words, if you're always screaming and yelling at your wife and you're there in Africa, you're not gonna make too much headway. People are gonna say, listen, they're no different than we are.

If you don't pay your bills and so on, I mean, all of that sort of fits in to the picture. But the central picture on the box, if you like, is God's love for a lost and a dying world. And he's appealed to his people to get involved with him in reaching the nations.

That's what church is all about. You see, the church club is a witnessing club. It's a light, it's a testimony.

And when you say, listen, I belong to the church club, immediately you should think, I know what it's all about. It's going to church and it's getting energized and building and encouraging one another and so on and so forth. It's like a spiritual gas station.

But really, it's to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in. It's to let my light so shine before men that they may see my good works. It's to do what Jesus Christ has called us to do.

I must be about my father's business, Jesus said. The night cometh when no man can work. As the father sent me, so send I you.

I am the light of the world, you are the light of the world. Go you into all the world and preach the gospel. And so here you have, again, one of the most incredible summaries that I know of anywhere in the word of God.

Thus it is written, this is what it's all about. That Christ should suffer, rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations. Now, since we've got a few minutes, let's go to the book of Romans for a second.

Romans chapter 11. Let me just talk briefly here about Israel. Verse 12 of chapter 11.

Now, if their transgression, speaking of Israel, be the riches for the world, and their failure be riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be? But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry. If somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them.

For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also. And if the root is holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches were broken off and you being a wild olive were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant towards the branches.

But if you are arrogant, remember, it is not you that supports the root, but the root that supports you. In other words, he's saying Israel, they were broken off. A lot of the branches were broken off and you being a wild olive, you were grafted in among them.

But we became partaker of the root. I think it's important to understand that when we accept Christ, we don't become Jewish. We partake of what the Jews partook of, their life was God.

In other words, we're grafted in and we draw our life from the root, not from Israel. When Christ who is our life shall appear. And G. Campbell Morgan says that the Jews so prided themselves in being the vine that they thought they were the whole thing, so to speak.

And when Jesus came along in John 15, he says, listen guys, I am the true vine. I am the true vine. We need to remember that it is his life that we have within us.

And so it says here, we became partakers with them of the rich root of the olive tree. So it's the root that supports us. Verse 19, but if you say branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in, quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief.

But you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited but fear. In other words, he says don't get proud about the fact that well, you know, let's say these are the Jews.

You guys were broken off and us Gentiles, we were grafted in, ha ha ha, you know, type thing. He says no. He says stand by your faith, don't be conceited but fear.

For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. In other words, don't think it can't happen again. That's sort of frightening, isn't it? Why was Israel broken off? Because every branch in me that bears not fruit is taken away.

Israel never brought forth fruit. Now, you know, we can get into eternal secure and all that and I'll stay away from that right now, but I believe God can withdraw his blessing from a group, from a denomination, from a church because they are not actively involved in what God is actively involved. In other words, they become Jewish in the sense of sectarianism and they pride themselves, you know, us four no more sort of thing.

They enjoy fellowship and, you know, potlucks and so on and so forth, but they have no desire to go on mission strips, reach out to the lost and go into the streets, do any sort of evangelism and so on. And God says, okay, you know, you can have your sort of fun and games, but I'm gonna withdraw my candlestick, so to speak, you know, and so he says, if the natural branches were not spared, neither will he spare you. So don't get proud, he says, but rather fear.

You see, there's a job to be done and I'm convinced my theology of end times is that when the job is done, then Jesus will come back. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness and then the end shall come. My daughter came home while we were living, she's a missionary in China, been there for about 15 years and she came home while we were living in Pensacola and Steve Hill, who is a

good friend and I appreciate his ministry, but, you know, night after night, he would talk about, you know, Jesus could come tonight type thing or are you ready and so on and my daughter was coming to some meetings.

She said, dad, if I hear about Jesus coming tonight one more time, I'm gonna scream. She said, you Americans and, you know, including all of us, she said, you're all wanting the rapture to take place sort of thing and she said, I live in China where there are millions that have never heard the name of Jesus and I thought, boy, she's got a right perspective, you know. I think he's not willing that any should perish and so there is a job to be done.

The Bible says, looking for and what? Hastening the coming of the Lord. You know, you can hasten the coming of the Lord. We hasten the coming of the Lord by doing the job.

Let's suppose this is an old house and I bring in some contractors and I say, listen, as soon as you finish this, I'm gonna move in. Now, if they dilly-dally for two years, I can't move in. If they finish in a week, I'm gonna be in in a week.

There's a job to be done and as soon as the job is done, you know, so this gospel of the kingdom shall be proclaimed in all the world as a witness. Then the end shall come and I believe we can hasten the coming of the Lord by getting involved, by giving our lives and saying, Lord, here am I, send me. Lord, how can I fit in with your program? How can I fit in with your purpose? You see, it's an eternal calling, a holy calling, a high calling.

I think it was Billy Graham, if I remember correctly, some 20 or 30 years ago, somebody suggested that he run for president of the United States and he made a statement, I would not stoop to be the president of the United States. He was not demeaning the office, but he was saying, I've got a higher calling to serve the king of kings and anything less than serving God's kingdom, again, is a lower calling. You may, you know, be another Bill Gates.

Within the eyes of God, it's a wasted life. You may attain great fortune, great fame and so on, but unless it advances the kingdom of God, something is wrong. God has a purpose.

Am I prepared to, like David, be involved in the purpose of God in my generation? Go to my grave knowing, Lord, I've done everything I can. Again, like Jesus, I finished the work, like Paul, I've run the race. Paul says, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

That'd be a great message. I was not disobedient. The heavenly vision is, he's not willing that any should perish.

The heavenly vision is that every man, woman and child from every kindred, tongue, tribe and nation should hear the gospel. And I don't wanna be disobedient. I trust you don't either.

Let's close in prayer. Father, should you tarry, these young people have another 40 or 50 years, 40 or 50 years that can be wasted or 40 or 50 years that can be counted. And Father, I pray even now that you would put a hook in their jaw.

Father, you would show them again the eternal realm. Only one life will soon be passed. Only what's done for Christ will last.

Father, I pray that, Lord, you would apprehend them. Lord, you would claim them again, brand them as your own. Give them a vision, Lord, send them out to the nations of the earth, to this nation, to Africa and to China, to India, to the islands of the sea, to Europe with its incredible need.

Father, give them a vision. Let them know that, Lord, they don't go alone. They go empowered by the spirit of God that all things are possible.

That, Lord, you've given us weapons and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Father, we're able to do exceeding abundant because of what you have done in us and through us. So, Father, we don't have to go fearful.

We don't have to go thinking, I'm not gonna make a difference because, Lord, it's the fact that we are the vessel and we have that treasure within us. We pray, Lord, that we might go and display the very life of God, the very power of God to a lost and a dying world, Lord, like Solomon, but it would be noise abroad again that God is in the house. And so, Lord, do it again.

Raise up, Lord, a new movement like the Moravians of old, young men and women that sold themselves on the auction blocks of Europe in order to reach the colonies. One-way ticket, never coming back. Father, raise up another generation of radical men and women that would be willing to lay aside their own agendas.

So, Father, even now, let this be a moment, Lord, that could turn the tide of history. Another Wesley, another Finney, another Brainerd, another Amy Carmichael. Have your way, Lord.

Let's take a moment just as our brother plays, as Sean leads us, and you respond in whatever way you feel you should respond to what you've heard. If there's a tug going on, you know that it's a tug between your will and the will of God. Give him first place, the rightful place.

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