

The Great Need of the Hour - Rolfe Barnard

by From the Pulpit & Classic Sermons

The great need of the hour is a sovereign God who can intervene in human affairs and bring about revival and salvation.

Duration: 33:04

Scripture: Psalm 74:9, Psalm 102:13, Psalm 110:3, Acts 16:16-17, Acts 16:25-30

Topics: "Radio"

Description

In this sermon, Rolf Bernard emphasizes the need for God's intervention in the current state of the world. He references the 16th chapter of Acts, where he finds inspiration in the psalmist's plea for God to work in a time of moral decline. Bernard highlights the importance of getting involved in the issues of the day, even if one disagrees with the methods used by others. He calls for men and women to be willing to proclaim the message of salvation and to seek God's power to bring about revival and transformation.

Transcript

Welcome to From the Pulpit and Classic Sermons. Each week we bring you a different message from some of history's greatest speakers in the Christian faith and powerful sermons from modern preachers too. This week we have Rolf Bernard with his message, The Great Need of the Hour.

In the 16th chapter of the Book of Acts, I read just a few verses. Verse 25, this is the account of a moving, of a living God who did something that only God can do. And I love to read this chapter again and again and again, because we are dead sure come to the place now when man's best didn't get the job done.

Our best service is failing, looks like now. Our best consecration isn't enough now. This is a time the psalmist had in mind when he said it is time for thee to work, O God, for they have made void thy law.

This is the hour when nothing can save us from any direction you want to talk about, except an intervention of a God that the Bible talks about, who can do that which would get the attention of people today, when nobody's interested in eternal things. Only God is the answer for this hour. And here we encourage ourselves as we read again into an old, old time where a sovereign God, and by a sovereign God we simply mean no God who's an absent monarch, who created a world and people and gave us some rules and hoped we'd stumble along and do the best we could.

But when we mention the word sovereign God, we mean a living God. Greatest illustration of what we mean by the word sovereign God is the sermon Jonathan Edwards preached on the center and the hands of an angel God when he so preached that men actually believed that God held them in his hand. And that's where he does hold men.

He said that God could just drop them into the pack. Now you can get that word sovereign in your head and use it as a club, but if you get it in your heart, God knows it's the need of the hour. That's the human being be conscious of the fact that they're in the hands not of a creed or a machine, but a living God who gives them the very breath they breathe.

Now this generation don't know anything about that kind of a God, do we? And here at one time he intervened in verse 25, Paul and Silas got put in jail. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and a great earthquake took place.

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And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them. And at midnight and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved in thy house." Beginning in verse 16 of this chapter, we're introduced to some Christians who were witnessing, and then went to praying, and were introduced to a living, miracle-working God, and it resulted in a trembling sinner, screaming for life as to how he could be saved.

We could reproduce these characters. I say that not blasphemously. In any church that's as far as a half an inch from hell, we could have a measure of glory and blessing and revival that would spread to bring living water on parched hearts all about.

As I said this morning, it's been 226 years since revival has come to America. We desperately need it. Apart from the return of the Lord, we desperately need God to come on the scene, until men would become conscious that they are in the hands of a living God.

And I think the pattern, since God always uses means, is brought out in this chapter. First, we've got some witnessing. A fellow by the name of Paul and Silas are going around, and a little girl, possessed of powers of divination and the tool of the devil.

She followed these men, verse 17, and she paid them a tremendous compliment. These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation. These men were engaged in the best business between the eternities.

I've been preaching quite a while, and I resign from the ministry about every Monday, or at least every time I close a meeting. Don't do it publicly. But I don't know I'm living in a world where everything else is important except to find the way of salvation.

And I'm sometimes tempted, I really am, to go into the improvement business. We could just improve the lot of mankind. That'd be good, wouldn't it? Or we get into politics.

This nation of ours is rotten governmental and political in every other way. I said, well, I believe I'll go into that sort of boring in me. I trained to be a lawyer, for God's sake.

But Paul and Silas were going about in this city of Philippi, sticking to just one thing. They thought it was the most important thing that any human being ever be called upon to consider. And this little demon-possessed girl said, These be the servants of the Most High God, who do show unto us the way of salvation.

And she just followed him around until Paul got tired of it. He turned and rebuked the demon on her and set her free. And that's where he got in trouble.

Oh, that's the kind of trouble I wish we could get in again. We get into so much trouble trying to do something that isn't the main thing. But wouldn't it be Christ's blessing of God if he'd anoint a preacher and a church together, and we'd get in trouble with the spirit of this ungodly age? Because we were pressing with Holy Spirit power the way of salvation.

Paul and Silas got in trouble with this little girl's masters, because the demon's gone. She could look into the future now and make money for them. So they went to the powers that be.

And the next thing you know, Paul and Silas Dunn got arrested. Beat half to death for putting stocks way down in the cell of prison. And there they are, in jail, for the simple reason they'd been going about showing people the way of salvation.

But say, Brother Barnes, they got in trouble with casting the demon out of that girl. But blessed God, Satan's got to be locked before sinners can be loosed. That's right.

That's a part of it. The power of hell's got to be backed up before the glory of the living Christ will be revealed. It's always that way.

And there isn't an issue before God's people now. Why is it so fascinating and so challenging and so all-important as to learn how not to split hairs over doctrine or anything else, but to build up on the forces of hell and get on the offensive and quit tucking our tail and turning this generation over to the demons of hell? Yes, sir, they cast this demon out. It's always been true that everything God's done, He's done by the word of command.

He speaks, and a world is created. He speaks, and He hangs out the sun. He speaks, and He divides the land and its water.

He speaks, and the man with a widowed hand is able to stretch it forth. He speaks, and a dead lasher has come from the grave. And God taught God's people to begin to speak the word of command in the name, in the power, in the authority of the living Lord.

Come to take our stand and occupy some territory for King Jesus and spit ambidextrous in the devil's face and tell him to go back to hell where it belongs, that we're going to occupy some land and capture some men and lock the jaws of hell and find the power of Satan. And that's how salvation comes to men. That's right.

And we got in jail. We got in jail. There are two people, most of us nice church members.

We're nice. We wasn't hurt a flea. We weren't hurt a flea.

We're the nicest folks here. We got our doctrine all straight, and it's ossified and dead, and it's killed us, but we touched. Amen.

And we got all our convictions. We got pockets full of convictions. Got this pocket full of this kind, and this full of this kind, and this full of this kind.

And we're out here trying to wish our convictions off on people, and that ain't even nice, much less Christian. And we don't know much about a living God or a personal devil. It's because we've been so nice we haven't been invading Satan's territory.

Amen. Did you know, ladies and gentlemen, the whole generation of people, grown up, grown up, why don't we have two stars? We've lost them. We can't catch them.

We've got to separate it. We can't catch men with a cap on and a marionette rope. And we need to get involved.

You've been criticizing these colored people having those demonstrations. I think they're going at it wrong, but they're getting involved, brother. You've been criticizing these beatnik students out at the University of California at Berkeley.

They've been telling the governor and the faculty and everybody else how to go. Well, they're all wrong, you say, I know, but they're getting involved in the issues of this day. You've been criticizing the communists that have taken over a third of the world in a little while, you know.

Well, brother, they've got the most flaming religion this side of eternity, and they're getting involved. I stand here before and tell you the greatest evangelistic force in America now is the Roman Catholic priest. You go to your hospitals on Sunday morning, you can't get down the corridors.

The prominent Catholic businessmen passing out tracts. And next time you see a priest walking down the street, he's got a scuttle of coal and a loaf of bread, and he's heading down some back alley to do what he calls evangelism, to keep somebody from freezing to death and starving in the name of the Church. What you talking about, brother Mark? I'm talking about it's time that we woke up to the fact that we hadn't rolled up our sleeves and got out here in the thick of the battle and got involved in our day.

That's what I'm talking about. Don't you get mad at me that this world don't give a hoop if you are sound on doctrine? Does it? They don't care. They don't care.

But if you get involved in what's eating up the souls and bodies of men today, you'll find out there's a living God, and you'll find out there's a personal devil. These witnessing Christians, they just had to go praying. I don't know what it'd take to get old Ralph Barnett and Paul Kirkman and you folks to pray, but I guess if we got involved and got about half our ribs caved in, all our teeth knocked out, we might either tuck our tails and quit, or we'd learn how to intercede at the throne of God.

Oh, this generation going to hell in it's jet leg and jet airplanes. We don't know how to intercede at the throne of grace. I want you to hear my message on sinful praying.

I'm going to tear up your little old praying. God knows it's a disgrace, and we got to get to where God could still be God and listen to us when we pray. I'm for your passing out circles.

God bless you. I'm for your lip testimony. God bless you.

But ain't none of it going to do much good now, and you just well face it. We are up against a praying situation now. That's right.

You tell me one thing we could do now that would make a dent on the anti-Christian climate in spitting distance of this little church house. We can't do that. This is praying time for the saints of God to learn how to wrestle with the powers of hell and lock the devil's jaws and loose the power of God.

But old Paul and Silas, they put them in jail, and they began to pray and sing songs. I think old Paul said, well, I guess we better get in touch with the headquarters. It looks like we're sort of a mess down here.

And he got on the telephone, ring, ring, he rang number one of the end of the line and said, this is the living Lord talking. And Paul said, this is Paul and Silas, your bond slaves, and we're down here in Philippi, and we got our feet in the stock, and our backs are bleeding, they beat us about half to death, and we're cold and hungry and lonesome, and kind of got the blues just a little bit, and we thought we better report to headquarters. And Jesus said, well, how come you got down there in jail, Paul? Well, he said, we were going up and down the city showing men the way of salvation.

They all got religion, but they don't know how to go to glory, and we're showing them the way. And he said, in order to do it, we had to cast out a demon and loose a little girl, and a master reported us, and they beat us and put us in jail. And Jesus said, well, just hold the phone, I'll be right down.

And pretty soon, bless God, he intervened. Now, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them pray and heard them praise God, but they felt it when God came on the scene. Paul didn't bring an earthquake to living, Lord did.

Silas didn't bring an earthquake to living, Lord brought the earthquake. They did the praying, they did the praising, they did the witnessing, and God Almighty did the confirming. That's right.

Oh, boy, that's what we want. I'll fight you to get a good doctrinal base. I will.

But I'll fight you if you always want to think that that's it, brother, that's just something to stand on to resist the devil and proclaim Christ. To invade a heathen world with the demand that men and women give a listen to the claims of Almighty God for the Son of His love. To die with the authority of the Holy Ghost coming down from heaven sweeping over your soul.

Listen, listen. It was God that brought the earthquake, and men felt something when God came on the scene. A miracle working, God.

A gospel confirming, God. I'm crying to God as I grow older. I didn't need the Lord much when I was 30 years old.

I thought I could make it all right, but I'm 62. I'm not as old as I hoped to be, but I'm older than I was 30 years ago. And as the years creep in on me, I won't be here forever.

Oh, my soul, how hungry I'm getting. How desperate I'm getting for the confirming work of Almighty God on the preaching of the gospel in my day. I'm so tired of preaching nice little sermons that people enjoy and it doesn't disturb anybody.

I'm so tired of being alone as if God Almighty had gone off on a fishing trip and left it with us. Brother Kirkman, I'm so tired of preaching the gospel of the grace of God that shuts me up to God doing something for them. When I haven't got God doing something for them as I preach, I'm hungry for the confirming work of God Almighty.

And old Paul and Silas, they witnessed and they prayed and they sang praises to God. And then they got in touch with the headquarters and headquarters didn't pull its arms and say, well, but you've gotten a mess by yourself. Get out the best you can.

No. God sent an earthquake and he rattled the locks off of the doors. And the prisoners were gone.

You don't learn salvation. You catch it. You feel it, brother.

That's right. We can explain God's alive. This generation is not paying any attention to us.

This generation needs an earthquake. God won't have to send an earthquake, won't have to start now churches, won't have to shake us up, won't have to turn us inside out, peel us gut, put salt in our wounds, break our hearts and set us on fire to invade this generation with the claims of Jesus Christ. We can't do it.

We can witness. We can pray. We can praise God until God begins to answer and sends his bolts of lightning to split the hearts of men and confront men with Jesus Christ.

Now this miracle working God got something done. You know what he did? He got the attention of that jailer. He came running out about half scared to death.

And he said, what must I do to be saved? Be ready. Be ready. Men's hearts have to be prepared before they'll ever ask that question.

Oh, aren't you sort of tired of witnessing nobody paying any attention to you? I'm tired of preaching. Nothing much happened. I'll tell you that right now.

I ain't preaching down to nobody, but you've asked me a pill, you sick bastard. And I appreciate you asking me. The stage would play out.

I have revival and I haven't taken an engagement for a long time. You can close it in the night, but I've honored you. I honor the pastor.

I love to see some people get in this thing and pray down and weep down and sob down and act up. Till somebody would begin to listen to the gospel of the glory of God. This old trembling sinner, bless God, you didn't have to slip up on his blind side.

You just had to get out of the way. He's undone having to hear God shook him. God shook him.

He is ready. He is ready for the civil war down the state of Georgia. He's having a revival meeting, the colored people, slaves on one of the big plantations down in Georgia.

And the white owner, the boss, one night he decided to go down and attend the meeting. A few minutes, he and the slaves were behaving themselves. He stood on the fringe of the crowd and listened to the old colored preacher preach.

And the old colored preacher didn't know much, but what he knew was sold. He's preaching hell hot and eternity long and judgment sure in Christ. The only hope, but he is the hopeless sinner.

And the next day, the white man was going across the plantation and ran into old Sambo. Sambo was sort of the straw boss of all of the colored people on the plantation. And the white man stopped old Sambo and said, Sambo, I was down to the meeting last night.

Sambo said, yes sir, boss man, we've seen you down there. We're sure glad to have you with us. He said, you know, you've got quite a preacher down there.

He said, yes sir, boss man. He said he preached the gospel without fail or favor and declared the whole counsel of God. And the white man said, you know, Sambo, I listened to that preacher a little while last night and he scared me.

He said, I've been so busy running this plantation, making a living, keeping you colored people straight. I never had thought much about where I'd go when I die, but according to what your preacher said, when I die, I'm going to go right straight to hell. Sambo said, yes sir, boss, that's exactly where you were.

Well, he said, you know, I never had thought about it, but he said it bothered me some time last night and I couldn't go to sleep very well. He said, Sambo, he said, I know you, you are my friend. He said, I want to ask you something.

Sambo said, ask away. He said, could you tell me how I could get God Almighty to save me and not send me to hell? Sambo said, yes sir, boss man, I can sure tell you. Well, he said, I wish you would.

Well, he said, boss man, you see that hog pen right over there? He said, you go over to that hog pen, you climb up on that rail fence and you climb over and get over in the northeast corner where the hogs got their wallow and you get out on your knees in that wallow and close your eyes and ask God to have mercy on your soul for Jesus' sake. And he said, he's liable to do it. And the boss man gave him a little curse and said, ah, Sambo, I didn't want you to jump up.

And he walked away. But that night, strange that drawn, he decided he better go down and see if the colored people behave in themselves. And he stood again and listened to the old preacher preach.

And that night he went home and he tossed and tossed and tossed on his bed and he had a terrible time. And the next day he met old Sambo again. He said, Sambo, back down here, the preacher last night said, yes sir, that's the answer to the prayer.

He said, those colored people have been praying. You'd better get under the sound of the gospel. Maybe God's going to save your soul.

He said, Sambo, he said, I couldn't sleep a wink last night. He said, I'm scared. I'm afraid I'm going to die and go to hell.

He said, Sambo, don't joke me today. He said, joke me, yes, but don't joke me today. Can you tell me how I can get God Almighty to save me and not send me to hell? Don't joke me, Sambo.

And Sambo said, boss, I go and tell you. He said, you see that hog pen? He said, you go over there at that hog pen, you climb over the rail tracks and you go over there and get in the northeast corner where the hogs got their water and you go in on your knee and close your eyes and ask God to have mercy on your soul and save you for Jesus' sake. He said, he's liable to do it.

And the boss man gave him an oath and went away again. But that night he decided he'd better go back and see if the colored people behaved themselves, and so he did. And he listened to more of the sermon that night.

And he tossed and tossed and he got up and he tried to pray and he didn't know how. And he tried to read the Bible and it was a closed book too. And the poor old fellow was in a terrible, terrible shape.

And at three o'clock in the morning he got up and got a lantern, put his trousers on, his shirt tail tucked in, his hat on, yay! Knocked on old Sambo's cat door. Sambo, all bleary-eyed and sleepy, came out and said, boss man, what on earth are you doing this time of the night? He said, Sambo, I'm desperate. He said, I can't sleep and I can't pray and I don't know what to do and I feel like I'm going to slip into hell before morning.

And he said, I've asked you to tell me if God would save me and you've joked with me. Sambo, please don't joke with me tonight. Tell me how I can get God to save me and not send me to hell.

Sambo said, boss man, I can't tell you. He said, you go to that hog pit and you climb over the rail fence and you get over there in the northeast corner where the hogs got their wallow. And you get on your knees and close your eyes and ask God to have mercy on you and save you for Jesus' sake.

He said, he's liable to do it. And the white man just started walking toward the hog pit. And old Sambo got in his trousers right quick and followed him.

And the white man got over there and he stepped over the old rail, the old rail fence and straddled it and started down. He got his right foot on the last rail just before he got in the mud. And old Sambo said, boss man, wait just a minute.

He said, have you asked your God to do that? And the white man said, I don't see a better sense on earth. I don't know why a man got to get on that hog pit for God to save, but said, I want to be saved. I don't want to go to hell.

And I've asked him, that's all you'll tell me. And that's what I'm going to do. And he started to step down.

And old Sambo said, wait just a minute, boss man, you don't have to actually do it. You just got to be willing to. You just got to be willing to.

Oh, if men were willing, it's so easy. And that's what we want to see here. And that's what I want to hear.

Men and women willing to be saved by the foolishness of proclaiming a man hanging on a cross. God taking him out of the grave, putting him on the throne, turning the destiny of men over to him, bloodstained, enthroned, the living Lord of glory. My people shall be willing in the day of his power.

I'm going to challenge my heart and yours to be in the place where God will listen to us. Keeping all the glory to himself, he'll come and send an earthquake. Get the attention of men and women in your day and mine.

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