

The Heart-Cry of Paul

by Glenn Matthews

The sermon emphasizes the importance of being awake to righteousness and living a life of godliness, as it allows us to experience the blessings of God and avoid hurting others unintentionally.

Duration: 1:29:54

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 15:34

Topics: "Biblical Preaching", "Righteous Living"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of staying rooted in the Bible for sermon preparation. He shares that he has been preaching for 46 years and believes that by living in the Bible, one will never run out of material. The preacher also highlights the significance of certain verses in specific chapters, such as John 3:16 and Romans 8:28. He encourages young preachers to avoid artificial attempts at alliteration and shares a personal anecdote about a nightmare involving ninjas. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need to stay awake to righteousness and to prioritize the word of God in preaching.

Transcript

I want to say tonight that are on my mind that have absolutely nothing to do with the message, but what a blessed privilege to be here. It amazes me that people who cannot sing at all come to these meetings and sing. Say amen.

And they sing on pitch. I mean, guys at church can't sing, yet they come here and they can sing. It's phenomenal.

I just love the singing. Just enjoy it so very much. I have a friend named Ed Johnson who can't carry a tune at all.

If he would just sing one note and stay there, we'd find him and get to him eventually, but he never does. Just jumps off. He was always singing about a fifth above or below where he's supposed to be.

He wrote the lines, and he quoted them one night in a testimony, and it struck me so well, I decided to ask him, and he said, sure, use it. So it is this. I can't sing like the angels, but oh, how I love to try.

Someday I'll sing much better than they when I reach my home in the sky. When I'm with my precious Lord over by the crystal sea, angels will gather on either side just to listen to me. Isn't that good? I love to sing.

It's the one thing I do on earth that I will do in heaven. I don't think I'll preach in heaven. If I do, I'd have to wait a million years before it's my turn, and I don't have that much patience, but we'll sing in heaven.

No doubt about it. Such a good experience to be here. I have said nothing about my ministry, but I would want to say two things.

One, March the 14th of 2000, that's, what, ten months from now, Fleeta, that's my wife and I, will be taking our 21st trip to Bible Land. We take a group of folks about every year and have been doing so since 1980. This one is going to be a humdinger.

We are going to Damascus, Syria. You know that little town where Paul was en route to arrest Christians and the Lord arrested him? We will go there and then down to Jerash and to Amman and down to Petra, where I believe the Jews will flee during the tribulation, and then over into Israel. It's an 11-day trip, marvelous experience.

Where's Larry Henderson? Would you stand up? Ask Larry after church what it's like to go to Israel with us. We have a great time, and we don't just tour. We study the Word of God.

God said, four things are mine, my word, my land, my son, and my people. And it's a wonderful thing to go in his land among his people and study his word about his son. So if you would like to get a brochure rather than putting them out there and you pick them up just to look at my wife's picture, I would rather you'd see me and I'll give you a brochure.

I'd be glad to talk with you about it. We already have over 25 people who have paid their deposit to go, and this is 10 months before the trip comes up. Second thing I would ask of you is that you would remember to pray for this.

Request in September of 97 and again in September of 98, I was privileged to go with International Board of Jewish Missions to the Ukraine for two weeks of mission work. My wife was with me this last time. What a moving experience there.

There are four Ukrainian pastors of Baptist churches who sang as a quartet. Their knowledge of English is minimal, but there is a fifth one who is an interpreter, excellent English command, and we're trying to bring them to the States for a month. Brother Henry Binnick of the International Board of Jewish Missions and I are working on it, a businessman in Knoxville, Tennessee, a Christian businessman has agreed to pay the flight for all five of them and to help with the expenses while they're here, and Henry Binnick of IBJM will keep them busy two weeks, and I will keep them busy two weeks in one-night services in West Virginia, Ohio, Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia.

The problem is the United States Embassy has not yet given them a visa, and I don't know what the situation is. They were to have reapplied the day before yesterday, and I have yet to hear. But I will want these men to come so we may get their work before people, and each night in a different church let them sing, give testimony.

I will preach. We'll take up an offering for their work in the Ukraine, poor and needy, and we with such affluence in this country could be such a help to them. But somebody in the embassy is not saying yes.

It's the United States Embassy in Kiev, the Ukraine. So make that a matter of prayer that the Lord would work on the heart of whoever, and we'll get those men over here. I have cleared my schedule for the first

two weeks of July.

They're coming the last two weeks of June, the first two weeks of July, and I can put them in churches and raise a lot of money to help them in their ministry if we get the visa. So I hope you will pray regarding that. I have been blessed by coming, and so many of you have said you've been a blessing, and that's what my blessing is.

If I can be a blessing, then I am blessed. That's far better than being blessed is to be a blessing. God said to Abraham, I will bless thee, I will make thee a blessing.

It's good to be a blessing. I've enjoyed the ministry of Brother McLeod. I'd love to just travel around with him and learn.

I marvel at the quality of the timbre of his voice, and you did not tell us your age, but you said past 70. I didn't know which way you passed it, going up or coming back down. But the voice is that of a 40-year-old man.

You must smoke something with a good filter tip on it or something, because it's marvelous. And what a memory. I started the first message to try to just make a check mark for every Scripture verse, and I ran out of room after 56 verses, and he was only about 15 minutes into the message.

You see, you can do that when you live in the Bible. And people, I'm sure they've asked him, they say to me, how long did it take you to prepare that message? And I say, 46 years, because that's how long I've been preaching. And you stay in the Bible, and you will never run out of material.

And God does not promise to bless my word, but he does promise to bless his word. There are certain passages of Scripture, chapters, that are known for a particular verse. The chapter is full of good verses, but it's just known for one verse.

For example, if I say to you John chapter 3, you will think of verse 16. Romans chapter 8, you will think of verse 28. Well, there are 38 other great verses in Romans 8, but we just focus in on one verse.

Well, by the same token, there are chapters that are known for the subject matter. You may not be able to quote one verse accurately from 1 Corinthians 13, but most of you will know that the subject of 1 Corinthians 13 is love. Similarly, with Hebrews chapter 11, the theme is faith.

And with 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the theme is resurrection. The whole chapter, with the exception of one little segment. Open your Bibles, please, to 1 Corinthians 15.

Now, yesterday I spoke from a whole chapter, and this morning I spoke from a whole chapter. Tonight from only one verse, but don't think tonight will be any shorter than the other two. And the first two messages, the points were sentences, and there was no alliteration.

And some people just love alliteration, so you will like the message tonight because the points have alliteration. Let me give some advice to young preachers on this matter of alliteration, all right? This I have entitled An Attempt, Essaying Advice About Addresses Advocating Alliteration. Aggressively, actively, ardently, albeit adroitly, avoid all artificial attempts at alliteration, always and always, and anon, amen, amen, and amen.

If it's there, use it. If it's not, don't force it. Paul is writing 1 Corinthians 15.

The whole chapter deals with resurrection. The first part of the chapter, the resurrection of Christ. The second part of the chapter, the resurrection of believers.

But if you read Paul, you know he has a way of all at once just leaving the subject, touching something and coming back. And whenever a man leaves his prepared text, be it a politician, a preacher, a lecturer of any kind who is speaking from a manuscript from a prepared text, whenever he leaves that, watch what he says, hear him, because he is more likely than not to really tell you what's on his heart. When he starts speaking, as it were, extemporaneously, where his heart is, it's going to come out.

And so the title of the message tonight is The Heart Cry of Paul. All of these verses on resurrection. And stuck down in the middle of the chapter, verse 34, and it is a passage of scripture that our brother alluded to quite much today, and I tried to convince the Lord that I should go elsewhere, and he said, no, you come here.

And so with apologies to him, to Brother McLeod, verse 34. Here is the heart cry of Paul. Awake to righteousness, and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God.

I speak this to your shame. Since 1.30 or so yesterday afternoon, for the majority of you, your focus has been inward. A lot of self-examination, introspection.

Many of you have met with God in the meetings, outside the meetings. And had we taken time tonight, many of you could have given testimonies of what God has done for you and in you since this prayer advance began. I want to turn your attention now from inward to outward.

I want you to think of other people. Anybody here ever hear Jesse Henley preach? Anybody ever hear Jesse Henley? Oh, you are poor. A Southern Baptist evangelist, I think he is now dead.

He was in his late 80s from last I heard. He's one of the few men I ever heard preach on hell, who constantly wiped tears. It bothers me when I hear somebody say, you're going to hell, and it sounds like he's almost stifling a laugh.

And Jesse Henley could preach on hell with tears. Only I saw a couple other men who could do that. Joe Henry Hankins, Hyman Appelman, George W. Truitt, I saw him do that.

But Jesse Henley, as an old man in his 70s, sitting in a restaurant in Atlanta, and a preacher friend with him, and they were having lunch. And the pastor friend went to the restroom, and when he came back, Jesse was sitting there looking through the glass out to the sidewalk, and people walking up and down, and Jesse Henley was crying. Tears.

And the pastor said, Brother Henley, what's wrong? Are you ill? He said, Oh, no. Well, why are you crying? He said, You see them? They're going to hell. That's a man in his 70s, 50 plus years of preaching, and he still had the burden.

Can I confess to you that the older I get, the harder, the more difficult it is for me to be burdened for unsaved people. Evangelism is not just my livelihood, it is my life. How long do you want to preach? Long as I live.

How long do you want to live? Long as I can preach. This is what I am. It's not just what I do, this is what I am.

But I must confess to you, and if you haven't experienced it, you will. You get age, you get years, you get miles, and the body gets tired, and you're a young man, and the body's old. And somewhere along the line, you begin to say, You better take care.

Slow down. You better begin to prepare for that awful word, retirement. You can't always run around the country.

You don't have much laid away. And pastors are better taken care of in retirement than evangelists. You're going to have to put something aside.

And the older I get, the easier it is to become concerned with my comfort, and my security, and my future. And so I preach to myself as well to you. The first statement in the series of five is the condition inferred.

He infers a condition, and he says, Awake. Now you do not say, Wake up, to people who are awake. You say, Wake up to people who are asleep.

Awake to righteousness, which is to say they are sleeping. I have had the privilege in the sixties of participating in some sleep deprivation studies at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, and watch what happens to people who sleep and to people who are deprived of sleep. Do you know, it's a marvelous thing to study sleep.

It's more exciting to study it than it is to do it. What time did you get up this morning? 625. What time did you go to sleep last night? You don't know.

I could ask each of you, and you would tell me about so-and-so. Or the last time I looked at the clock, it was. It was a little bit before, or it was a little bit after.

And you can tell me when you woke up, but you cannot tell me when you went to sleep. In fact, you have to wake up to know you've been asleep. You don't lie there asleep and say, Man, this is great, it's 525, I've got another hour.

No, you don't know that. You don't know you're asleep when you're asleep. You don't know you're asleep when you're asleep.

You don't know anything when you're asleep. The majority of Christians who are asleep don't know they're asleep, and they don't know when they went to sleep. When did you go to sleep, spiritually? It may have been, and people don't fall asleep, people drift to sleep.

I can help you if you have trouble sleeping. I mean, really, I can help you if you have trouble going to sleep. Really, there's a technique.

I roll and toss for 15, 20 seconds, and then I go to sleep. And I never lie awake unless the Lord has kept me awake, and most often if I go straight to sleep and the Lord needs to talk to me in the middle of the night, he wakes me up after an hour, hour and a half. But when I go to bed at night, that's the shortest prayers I pray.

I mean, I'm sleeping either by myself or with my wife, and I don't have to spend a lot of time in prayer. I just say, Good night, Lord, and go to bed, and take three deep breaths and practice a little thing of how I position my eyes, and 15, 20 seconds, I'm gone. But I don't know the precise moment, because if I begin to analyze it, I wake up through it.

You don't know when you went to sleep spiritually. It may have been when you, hear me now, it may have been when you started reading more books about the Bible than you spent time reading the Bible. It may be that you went to sleep when you stopped spending regular time in the Word and in prayer.

You drift to sleep. People who are asleep don't know they're asleep. They don't know when they went to sleep.

Third, people who are asleep don't know that time is passing. You go to sleep at 11.30 and suddenly it's 6.30. Boy, that was a short night. Noah's just regular.

The clock beat at the same pace while you were asleep as it did while you were awake, and you don't know the passing of time. I was in meetings in Sanford, North Carolina some years ago, and the television weather boy said, Tonight is the best night of the year for the meteor showers. I mean, tonight is going to be spectacular.

You will see 60 or more in an hour. And I said, Wow. He said, The best time is between 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock.

I said, Great. I don't have a clock. I've got a watch, but not an alarm clock.

I went to the office. I said, I need an alarm clock. They said, Fine.

There was supposed to be one on the television, but it didn't work. And so they gave me an old wind-up Big Ben. I mean, one of those things.

It ticked, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. And even with my tinnitus, I could hear that tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. So I set the clock.

The news went off. I went to sleep, and I set the clock for 1 o'clock. Get up in the morning, walk out behind the motel.

Black sky, I'm going to see all of those meteor showers, the shooting stars. And when I woke up the next morning and the sun was coming through the blind, it was 6 a.m., and I said, That clock didn't go off. And I checked the back, and it had wound down, and I had slept through the alarm.

Can you imagine sleeping through that Big Ben sound? I had, and I missed seeing the splendor of the creation of God. When you are asleep spiritually, you don't know what opportunities you're missing. The tragedy of being out of the will of God, the tragedy of being out of fellowship, the tragedy of being asleep spiritually is twofold.

Number one, you miss all the blessings that God intended you to have. And number two, you miss being the blessing that God intended you to be. Here is a condition inferred awake.

And do you know that when you are asleep, you can hurt somebody without knowing it? Now, my wife and I wasted a lot of money when we bought a king-size bed. The truth is, we could sleep both of us on an army cot. I mean, we sleep like two spoons lying in a drawer.

You know, if I'm on my right side, she's on her right side, I'm up against her back. If I'm on my left side, she's on her left side, up against my back. We just, you know, just turn like that.

And we sleep on a tiny section of the bed. And one night, I was on my right side, and I am left-handed. And she was right up against me.

And I know just enough karate to be dangerous to myself. And I was having one of my Cecil B. DeMille widescreen, full-color, stereo-sound nightmares. And I was walking around.

Listen to me. I was walking around this hill on a path that was hardly any wider than the top of this pulpit. And it was one of these things like you see in the cartoon, going up the hill.

And there was no room for people to pass. And as I came around the curve, suddenly coming at me were at least four ninjas. I don't mean mutant turtles.

I mean Japanese legal weapon hands, just the slit of their eyes in the black. And it was obvious that we were going to meet. And they weren't out to do me any good.

And there's no room for me to go back. And there's no room for us to pass. And I knew they were going to kill me.

And I said to myself, they may get me, but the first one won't. I guarantee you that. And I went, yah! And I came across with this arm and just about split the pillar.

And I hit my wife with the back of my arm, my tricep, right in the side of the head. And the first thing I really know is we're both sitting up in bed yelling, screaming, why'd you hit me? I didn't hit you. Yes, you did.

Where are those ninjas? And there was a knot that came up on the side of her head. It was horrible. Hard to explain.

When she goes to church and she's got a bruise on her head. My husband abused me. No, in my conscious state, awake, I would never hurt her.

But in my sleep, unintentionally, I hurt her. Do you know that in your spiritual sleep, you're hurting somebody? Just as sure as you cast a shadow, you carry an influence. Somebody is watching you.

Alright! That's the condition inferred, your sleep. Second, a criterion identified. A standard, a criterion identified.

Awake to righteousness. To righteousness! Not to doctrinal purity, as important as that is. Not to faithfulness in church attendance.

Not to tithing, but to a standard of godliness. Don't get hung up on the word righteousness. Just knock the E-O-U-S-N-E-S-S off the end of it, and you got right, and you got the word.

Is that quality or state of being morally or ethically correct? Right! It's an attribute of God! Can I give you my definition of the righteousness of God? As you go down the list of the personality traits, the characteristics, the attributes of God, you will say God is love, and you think of that as flexible. God is merciful, God is forgiving, God is gracious. God is patient, God is... and you think of those as being flexible.

On the other hand, God is holy, and you think inflexible. Rigid, God is just, God is jealous. God is a God of wrath.

God is a God of judgment, and you think of those as inflexible. And you think mercy and truth have met together. And here is the inflexible and the flexible and the rightness of God is the ability of God to act toward Himself or to all of His creation without any one of His attributes ever working in violation or conflict with any other of His attributes.

That's the rightness of God. God says through Paul, Awake to this criterion! Rightness! Godly living! What is righteousness? Attribute of God. It's imputed to us upon believing.

It exhausts a nation. It's one of the things that the Holy Spirit reproves the world of, saying, righteousness and judgment. What are the things that will meet at the judgment bar of God? Righteousness! Godly living! In the world, not of the world.

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, for God translated him. But before his translation, he had this testimony. He pleased God.

Isn't that amazing? I have buried, had funeral services for rapists. Two of them. Different times.

Two different rapists. Didn't bury the same man twice. I've had a funeral for a murderer.

I have yet to say, we come today to have a memorial service for this murderer, for this scum rapist. I never said that. We tend to speak well of people after they're dead.

It was spoken of Enoch while he was still living. Second thing, even more striking, the testimony was not Enoch. The testimony was described to Enoch by those who did not like Enoch.

We don't like Enoch. He reigns on our parade. He's weird.

He's got this standard. We're all going one way and he's going the other. I can see all of society going down, down, down, down, down.

He lives in those days before the flood when the thoughts and intents of men's hearts and every imagination of man's heart was only evil continually and he grieved the Lord, he had remained man, and he said, I'll destroy man. That's the day of Enoch. And as all of society is going down, down, down, I see this lone character going up.

Hey, you're going the wrong way. You better turn and walk this way. He had the testimony ascribed to him by people who did not live like he lived.

What has happened to the church in America is that we have bent over backward to get the world to like us and in so doing they've lost their respect for us. And if we could only have one, we would be better off having their respect than their like. I don't know your testimony and I don't come to your church to find your testimony.

If I want to find your real testimony, I go to the place where you work and ask people who don't believe what you believe, what is this guy like? That's where your testimony is. Godliness, that's the criterion. Awake to righteousness.

Okay, Brother Matthews, I'm with you on those two, but not the next three words. Here is the challenge issued and sin not. It is literally, and stop sinning.

Well, wait a minute, preacher. That's the challenge issued. Stop sinning.

Everybody has to sin a little bit every day. Who said? Where did you get that? Verse, please, chapter, book. Everybody has to sin a little bit every day.

Who said you had to? When Adam was created, he was created with the potential to sin, but without the necessity of sinning. And when you were created new in Christ Jesus, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, you were created with the potential of sinning, but without the necessity of it. Think about it.

You believe in living above sin? Sure, move into the second floor above a bar. That will be good. That's living above sin.

You say you believe in eradication of all sinful nature. Yeah, when the Lord comes we get a new body, but not until. But I am telling you, the Lord does not eradicate your nature when He saves you.

He gives you a new nature, indwells you with the Holy Spirit and says, now, you in the new nature, deal with and keep down the old nature. Don't blame the devil. You cannot say the devil made me do it.

Now, we have socially unacceptable sins and socially acceptable sins. We do. We don't get them out of the Bible, but we get part of them there.

But we have an unacceptable sin. Homosexuality is unacceptable. The Bible says so.

Drunkenness, so on and on and on. Fornication, immorality of all kinds. Right.

But how about pride? How about prejudice? How about an unforgiving spirit? Those are socially acceptable. We take a brother who falls once and we bar him for anything else. I mean, if he's divorced and remarried, God bless him, he can go to heaven and the only thing he can do in our church is tithe.

That's all we're going to let him do in most places is give his money. But we take a guy who's got an ego as big as the Empire State Building and his prejudices all get out and we let him pastor a church for 50 years and then put a big picture of him in the hall. Go figure that.

Sin is sin. You can sin three ways. You can sin ignorantly.

You can sin ignorantly. Paul said that. 1 Timothy 1, I who was before a blasphemer and a murderer but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

You can sin ignorantly just not knowing about it. My mother's daddy, William Christopher Milam, chewed tobacco and smoked cigars and smoked pipe all at the same time. He chewed so much tobacco that even when his jaw was empty his right jaw hung down lower than his left jaw.

And I saw him. He had a chewed tobacco mail pouch in his mouth. He had a pipe that he was smoking and he laid down his pipe, reached in his bib overalls, took out his cigar, took the wrapper off, licked it and lit the cigar.

I said, Poppy, what are you doing? He said, What? I said, You've got your mouth full of tobacco. Your pipe was burning. You're smoking it.

You laid down. You lit the cigar. He said, So? That was the only explanation I ever got.

He did that all his life. His wife, my mother's mother, started chewing when she was three. It was a pacifier.

Her mother gave it to her. And my grandfather, he killed him when he was 86. I mean, he really suffered.

But when he was old, he got cancer of the mouth. All these years he had been smoking and chewing ignorantly. Nobody told him it would kill him.

Nobody told him. And he grew up in a culture where it was accepted. He asked he, my mother's father, William Christopher Milam, asked my dad's dad, Henry Clay Matthews, Henry, you think it's a sin to smoke? He said, Of course.

Anything that tastes as good as biker ought to be chewed, not burned. And he chewed. He never smoked, but he chewed.

And when he got to be 83, he got cancer of the mouth from chewing the tobacco. All these years, sinning against his own body. But he did it ignorantly.

He didn't know better. The fact that he didn't know better doesn't exempt him from getting the mouth disease, right? You can sin ignorantly. Second way you can sin is inadvertently, accidentally.

That's why you have cities of refuge, number 35. You've got three on the east side of Jordan, three on the west side of Jordan. Just think of a suit, a double-breasted suit, and three buttons on each side, and there's the cities of refuge.

The Jordan River coming right down the sternum, and on the east side three, and on the west side three. And if a person, unaware, unintentionally, accidentally kills somebody, he can flee to a city of refuge. You can do that.

You can sin inadvertently. Not knowing that you've hurt somebody. Offend somebody.

And with the tinnitus, the crickets, the roaring in the ears, I don't hear everything that's said. And some people may say, by the Master's glance, I don't hear them. Boy, he's snotty.

In fact, one fellow said to me here, the first time you were here, I thought you were stuck up. I said, stuck up? I'm stuck? Yeah, but not stuck up. How did you think? He said, I spoke to you, and you were going down the stairs, and you didn't even turn around and answer me.

Truth is, I didn't hear him. He was offended. I didn't intend to.

Accidentally. You can sin ignorantly. You can sin inadvertently.

Third, you can sin intentionally. And about 99.9% of our sins are intentional. And Paul said, stop it! If you don't like that, argue with the Holy Spirit.

Why do I sin? Because I choose to sin. Why do you sin? Because you choose to sin. Stop it.

That's what Paul is saying. The challenge is issued. Number four, the crisis identified.

Some have not the knowledge of God. Many have not the knowledge of God. Most have not the knowledge of God.

That's the crisis identified. Some have not the knowledge of God. Do you think we're to clothe the naked? Yes.

Feed the hungry? Yes. Train the uneducated? Yes. Treat the sick? Yes.

Feed and fish or teach him to fish? Yes. Give him corn or teach him to grow corn? Yes. The latter is the better.

The greatest thing you can do for a human being, apart from winning him to Christ, is to teach him to read. When you learn to read, the whole universe opens to you. But if you teach him to read, you put clothes on his back, you put shoes on his feet, you put food in his belly, you give him food and water and shelter, and do not bring him the knowledge of God.

All you have done is just develop a more intelligent center. That's all. Some have not the knowledge of God.

In Hebrews 3, Paul, the writer talks about, I was grieved with that generation. They saw my work forty years. He said, I was grieved with them.

They do always err in their hearts, and they have not known my ways. Isn't that odd? They saw my works, but they didn't know my ways. They saw what I could do, but they really didn't know me.

That's the way it is with a lot of people that we minister to. Some have not the knowledge of God. Let a kid fall down in a well, and every fire unit from everywhere comes and all the expertise and all of the cranes and all of the technology and around the clock until we rescue a little child from a well.

Or let a man on a construction project be covered up with whatever, and everybody feverishly works to save him, but let a world go to hell. And who cares? I really doubt there's too many people here tonight who are five-point Calvinists, fatalists, whatever we'll be, we'll be, even if it doesn't happen, fall down the stairs and get up and say, Thank God that's over. I don't suppose there's too many people like that.

You know that God predestines a certain number to go to hell and a certain number to go to heaven, but I suppose there are a lot of us who live like that. Yesterday in the line, little girl, young girl, servings of meat or whatever, and I said to you, Is this the first time you've worked here? Yes. You like it? Yes.

Are you a Baptist? Uh, yeah. Yeah, so you work at a Southern Baptist campground. Are you a Southern Baptist? Yeah.

I said, Do you know Jesus? He said, Uh, yeah. I said, When did you come to know Jesus? I don't know. Do you know Jesus or you just know about Jesus? I guess I know about Jesus.

I thought to myself as I got pushed beyond, how ironic. Campground. Christian campground.

Serving us our food. And doesn't know God. Does anybody care? And some of you in the last few hours, the Lord has become so personal and real to you.

Let me ask you, would you be willing to just divorce yourself from the Holy Spirit for 24 hours? Would you be willing to take the Holy Spirit and pull him out and set him off to the side for 24 hours and live 24 hours as an unsaved man? And you say, No way. And yet we're content to let the world live that way. I'm preaching to myself.

The easiest thing for me at this age would be to become a Bible conference speaker. A prophecy teacher. Diving deep.

Coming up dry. Some have not been out. Many.

Most. There was a day if you wanted to be a foreign missionary, you went to another country. You can labor among 150 some nationalities and never leave the continental United States.

They're right here. The vast majority of them don't know God. And I go further and say that the vast majority of those whose names are on rolls of Christian churches in America don't know God.

That's a crisis. Yet the most fragile thing in the life of your church is evangelism. Anything and everything, even good things happening in your church can just burn, turn the candle, the light of evangelism off.

Building programs can ruin evangelism until you get the building built. I know a church, evangelistic, growing. Pastor had a stroke.

The evangelism stopped. The focus turned to the health of the pastor. And for two years you could not go to that church without people praying for their pastor.

He got to the point where he could come to church and read a typewritten sheet of paper and stand there with a dead arm and slurred speech and read his three paragraphs, and that was his sermon. And the people wept and rejoiced with joy. He got well, but the church never did.

He moved on. He is retired. So has the church.

They have never recaptured that evangelistic fervor and spirit that they had before. What does it mean to you? Would you look at the verse again and where it says, Some have not. Between the words some, would you put some of my family? Or would you put some of my friends? Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some of my family have not the knowledge of God.

Some of my friends have not the knowledge of God. Come to a prayer advance. Get close to the Lord.

Yield yourself to grow in grace. Better father, better husband, better whatever. But it does not alter the fact that some have not the knowledge of God.

Last statement, the church indicted. I speak this to our shame. Paul said, you are.

But I have to say I speak this to our shame. Would you please tell me in view of the commandment, Go ye into all the world. Preach the gospel.

How can we be interested in any other thing other than seeing people saved? In view of the promise you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost shall come upon you, you shall be witnesses unto me. How can we be interested in anything other than seeing people saved? We stand indicted. I speak this to my shame, to your shame, to our shame, to the shame of the church in America.

Rescue the perishing. Care for the dying. Sanction them.

Pity from sin and the grave. Let somebody else do it. Weep for the erring one and don't weep over anything.

Lift up the fallen. No, we don't do that, do we? He was a member of the church where my daddy pastored, this young man. And he quit school when he was 16, as did most of the boys in the community.

That was just the common thing to do. And he went to work in the mines when he was 16. And he had worked in the mines less than three years, less than two years, I guess.

His daddy had been a miner. His uncle was a miner. His older brother was a miner.

That's all the family knew was coal mining, deep shafts. Daddy had talked to him. Others had talked to him about explosions in the mines.

I don't know if you know anything about deep shaft mining, but you go down in the ground, you go down in the mine, and then you've got long hallways, and off of the hallways you've got roads, paths, streets, halls. And then off of each of those it's like an artery of works down there, like a network of spider webs. And off on these you go down the hall, that shaft will be number two, number three, number four, whatever.

And then off of each shaft you've got rooms. This is not so now with the continuous miner machine just goes in, chews it up. I'm talking 1940s when you work like a mule.

And to get to where you work, you put your coal bucket, your lunch bucket in your teeth and crawled on your hands and knees through the water to get to the face of the coal. And he was working off to the side like this is the hallway and he is in a room here. The room is held up in the main hallway by locust posts to keep the bottom from coming.

So it's the top. They call it the bottom from falling. And you'll have a room and the wall of the room is coal that is uncut.

And sometimes the seam that you're working on may be three feet, four feet and so you're on your hands and knees. Sometimes it may be five feet or even six feet or eight feet in those days. But he's working there.

And he heard the rumble of an explosion deep in the bowels of the mine. Though he was a young miner, he benefited from the experience of his father, his brother, his uncles who were miners who had warned him there was no safety training in those days. But he warned them and he said, when you hear that explosion, take cover.

Don't come out into the hall. You're looking at me and nodding like you know you've been there. You stay in that room and that explosion, the force of it will pass you.

And then you come out and run because one explosion may bring another. And he heard the explosion and he thought and buried himself over in the corner and phew! All of the blasts went by. The lights went out.

He has just a carbide light, not an electric off of a 9 volt, a carbide light. It sucked his light out. He's in the dark.

He fools with it, finally gets it started and he runs out of his room into the hallway that's covered with black, of course, and with dirty water and the water's dripping and he turns left to go as fast as he can go to get over a mile to the exit where he can get out of the mine and as he is running not more than four feet from where he turns out he hits something soft and kept running. And he got out and he stood outside

wondering, was that my buddy? In the next room did I step on him? And he had. And the next day when they were able to go in they brought out the dead body of his buddy.

There on the side of his face was the footprint and that young man kept coming to my daddy and as wise as my father was he could not help him. This is 1940. You don't have psychiatrists.

You don't have Christian counselors everywhere. You know what his problem was? Guilt. Guilt.

Guilt. And I remember looking through the crack of the door just slightly ajar and that young man in his late twenties his hair was snow white his hands shaking. Preacher, if I just knew maybe he ran out too soon and the blast killed him.

Maybe he ran out himself and I stepped on him and knocked him out. And if I knew that I killed him or if I knew that he was already dead and my dad could not help him and before he was 40 he shot himself in the mind. Killed himself.

Guilt. Was he alive? That's my honor. Was he dead? Could I have picked him up and carried him out? Would we both have died? Would I have died? I don't know.

I can't figure. And he could never resolve the thing. So strange.

People suffer such agony because of guilt that is unresolved. They can't resolve it. It's over.

Who knows? Nobody but God knows whether he was dead or whether he was alive. Whether you could have dragged him out alive or whether you would have... Nobody knows. But he could not get over the guilt and he went to the mine and shot himself.

Pathetic. And yet the Church of Jesus Christ sends onward Christian soldiers and half of our army is AWOL. Another one-fourth of us are weekend warriors.

You see it once a month and two weeks a year. And another part of us is retired. We've plateaued.

Marching us to war. And some have not the knowledge of God. And where is our guilt? We don't feel it.

Is it not ironic that a man feels guilt for something he cannot change when we feel no guilt for what we could change? God have mercy on us. Turn your attention now not to yourself. You're either right with God or you aren't.

You know that. And if you aren't right, get right. But if you are right with God, turn your attention, turn your attention to somebody else.

Do you not know unsaved people? Do you not have unsaved friends? I don't know what I'm going to do with my life. What greater cause than investing your life in the cause of bringing people to Jesus? You say, I don't know what God's calling me. How about volunteering? That's what Isaiah did.

Who shall ask this? Send me. And then God commissioned him. And if God doesn't want you to preach, He'll stop you.

But why don't you just volunteer? And last night, yesterday afternoon, a dozen or more of you, 13, 14-foot raisers, I feel God has searched for me doing a certain will of God. Kneel! Surrender! I was sitting in my study. I was a young preacher from Texas, pastor, going to seminary, pastoring a church.

Monday morning, in my study, knock on the door. Came a little knock. Come in! Ashen face.

Ashen face. What in the world's wrong? Oh, Brother Matthews, pray for me. What's wrong? Some man in my church looked like he'd seen a ghost.

I said, what's wrong? He sat down, and he went, I said, for heaven's sake, Curtis, what's wrong? I'm afraid somebody died, somebody had a tragic accident. He said, I'm afraid God's called me to pray. I said, praise the Lord.

No, no, no, no! Why not? I can't. God is so dumb, He calls you to do something you can't do. I just can't do it.

Get up, get up. He got up. I said, sit at my desk.

Why? I said, sit at my desk. He sat at my desk. I said, now, you're me, and I'm you, and I'm going outside, and I want to show you how you should have come in.

I went outside, closed the door. He's sitting in there in my office, in my desk. I pounded on the door.

Come, come, come, come in. Come in. I jumped in the door.

That's right, preacher! Why? God's going to let me preach. Isn't that wonderful? And he looked at me and said, yeah. Yeah.

Isn't that wonderful? God's going to let me preach. That's the way the response ought to be. What kind of nonsense is this? I'm struggling.

How dumb can you be? Surrender! That's the way you win. Jacob wrestled and won when he lost. You want to win with God? Let Him win.

Oh, young man, young lady. What are you going to do about it? Find a cause outside yourself, bigger than yourself, to which you give yourself. And you lose yourself, and you find yourself in the cause.

Stand with me, please, for prayer. I'll just quit. With our heads bowed and eyes closed, Lord Jesus, thank you for the presence of the Holy Spirit in letting us preach.

Oh, what a blessed thing it is to be able to handle the Word of God. And I really need your help now. So help us, Lord.

With our heads bowed and our eyes closed, you're saved. You have unsafe family, or you have unsafe friends. And during this message, God spoke to your heart about that unsafe friend.

And you're going to say, by raising your hand, this is my promise to God, as soon as I get back home. I'm going to do my best to win that unsafe friend. This is my commitment.

I'll make it right here. This is my commitment. I'm going to do my best to win that one to Christ.

Raise your hand, please. Oh, thank God. Keep it up a minute.

I want to say, I want God to say, I want you to feel the pressure of holding up your hand. This is what you're committing to God. I've got unsafe friends.

I'm going to win them. Do my best to win them. Keep it up until your hand feels the pressure, your arm feels the pressure.

I'm going to do it. God be in my help. All right, thank you.

Take him down. Thank you. Take him down.

Brother Matthews, struggling with what God wants, Lord speak into my heart. I've never surrendered to whatever. I've always thought of it as kind of negotiating, but it's not negotiating, it's surrendering.

Standing right here where I'm standing tonight, I am saying, God, whatever you want, I'm surrendering. I'm volunteering. And if you don't want me to, you're going to have to stop me.

Never made this decision before, but I'm making it, standing right here before God. I am going to do whatever God wants me to do. Raise your hand, please.

Hold it up. Preacher, look at this. Brother Harold, turn, look.

God, hold him up. Keep him up. Oh, keep it up until your arm begins to get tired.

All right, I can't say your prayer, but I can say some words, and if you make them yours, would you pray with me? Oh, God, I sing to you tonight. I am willing to do whatever. I don't want to be ashamed.

I want to be profitable. Make me usable. Some have not the knowledge of God.

Oh, God, break my heart with that truth and help me to win somebody to Christ. And these who said, Lord, I've never said it before, but whatever, whatever, I'm saying it tonight. Oh, Lord, help them on Sunday in their church publicly, down the aisle, make that decision public.

Make it public. Follow through. God, if you don't stop me, I'm going to volunteer and keep going until you stop me.

In Jesus' name, and Lord, it sounds so shallow to say it, but if you don't have any other way to say it, thank you, Lord. Oh, thank you, Lord. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. Receive it, Brother Harold.

The emphasis on evangelism, missions, and surrender was absolutely fantastic at this men's prayer advance. We're going to play some testimonies and some of the congregational singing so you can get a taste of the flavor and the atmosphere that was present at this prayer advance that took place in May of 1999. God's blessings on you as you listen.

Oh, everyone that is thirsty in spirit Oh, everyone that is weary and sad Oh, that your longing I will also lift To the kingdom spirit Nothing but fullness thy longing can meet Tis the endowment for life and for service Thine is the promise so certain, so sweet I will pour water on him who is thirsty I will pour floods upon the dry ground Open your heart for the gift I am bringing While ye are seeking me, I will be found While ye are seeking me, I will be found Two or three minutes. 1993, September, Labor Day, the Monday of Labor Day in Memphis, Tennessee, the pyramid. I was there at a business meeting.

A brother by the name of David Weaver was preaching. My heart had been prepared for a number of years. My wife was saved about a year and a half prior to me.

I'm a product of a broken heart. The Lord broke me in two to save me, and I'm so grateful for that. He used my children.

We were blessed with five children, five wonderful children. My third was a boy. He's a hemophiliac.

Born on April 1, 1993. We have to be taught, I have to be taught by my precious Savior that I couldn't do it on my own. Just to be sure, he gave me another hemophiliac.

I'm grateful for that. I wouldn't want those boys any other way. It's a reminder to me every time I look at my boys that he's in charge.

Amen. The second time I've done this to me, I wouldn't say anything. All I do have to say is tell a little bit of what the Lord's done for me in my life.

Thank the Lord for a Christian home. Thank the Lord that he allowed me to grow up that way. Through that, I got a lot of knowledge, got a lot of head knowledge, but I didn't have a lot of heart knowledge.

What I did learn to do, I believe, was to be a hypocrite. I didn't. To what purpose, as Brother McCloud spoke about, that's what I can look back and say, to what purpose.

Just turning 35 years of age two weeks ago, those 35 years, I look back and think of those 35 years as being wood, hay, and stubble these next 35 years. I'd like to have something, if God grants that to me, some crowns to lay at Jesus' feet as I see these old saints of old and read of these men that have given their lives to the Lord and have grown old that way. I've never yet met a man that said, God, let me down.

God didn't come through. God wasn't faithful. He didn't do what he said he was going to do.

I know that God is going to be faithful, and I want to have some crowns to lay at Jesus' feet. It's for the least that I can do. God turned my life around from a life of hypocrisy, acting like a Christian.

It looked good on the outside, but inside it was full of trash and no good. He gave me a desire, changed my desire from wanting to lay up some crowns here on earth and start a business, a desire to serve the Lord, to preach his word, just to be a man of God in my home. Every time I think that I'm ready for God to use me, he shows me something else.

As recently as this being selfishness in my own life, not being the man in my home that I should be, God's given me a wife that also has this love for the Lord. God uses her to rebuke me, and I respond in anger a lot of times. I just want to thank God for her.

I just can't say enough of what God's done for me in my life. I just want to be a man of God, and I've come here this week seeking God's face. I implore each and every one of you men to do that.

Seek God's face. God's got a purpose for every one of us. I know that God will meet with us here this week.

Thank you, brother. We want to spend time praying. A little report, brother, about what's going on.

Well, my first year to come to prayer events was last May, last year. Before that time, there was a lot of things that I was dealing with in my life. I never heard things quite said the way they were said here.

As brother Vaughn said earlier, if the Lord's dealing with your heart, get out and find a rock or a stump or something. I thought, man, most preachers try to get you to come into the service, and here he's telling us to get out. Something's wrong.

I thought, hey, that's a different approach. I've never heard that before. But it's then that the Lord spoke to me, told me that I need to get with him.

Well, when I went out there, and I found this stump out there and nobody else was around, that's the first time in my life since I've been saved that I really met with God. Actually, he met with me. I'm telling you, he became a very real presence in my life from that time.

And my life from that point, I've just made like a 180-degree turn. And I've been growing and just seeking his face daily and loving the Lord more continually. And I'm trying to live my life by Romans 12, 1 and 2. If you're familiar with that, and I can't quote it exactly, but it talks about, you know, presenting yourself, delivering sacrifice wholly and acceptable unto God.

You've all heard that. But the last part seems like a lot of preachers or people I've heard in the past leave that off. So this is your reasonable service.

And I thought, you know, it's only reasonable for me to be on my face daily seeking the Lord and being wholly and acceptable for Him. And after I'd met with Him like that, because I tell you, when I got out there and I got on my knees, when I closed my eyes, I'll be honest with you, I was scared to open my eyes. I thought when I opened my eyes, I was going to see His feet.

That's how real it was for me right there in that moment. And when you're bound before the presence of God, I mean, what do you say? What do you do? I mean, we're talking, this is God, the Creator of all. You know, literally, I just bawled my eyes out.

Because it kind of reminded me of what a dirty, wretched sinner I was and how I needed to just really surrender all, basically. And since then I've been working on it. Like I said, I prayed every day, Lord, show me something in my life that's not right, something that you want me to get rid of.

I prayed that, you know, like five days in a row. He showed me five things. I was like, whoa, what the hell.

Let me get a couple of these things out of the way. But I'll tell you, it's been wonderful, absolutely wonderful. And the Lord's blessed me with a wonderful wife, which she's about the same time really got her life straightened out.

And we've both been growing together closer to the Lord and just really loving the Lord. And we want to be the great parents for our kids. We've got three kids and trying to raise them the right way, you know.

And, well, what Brother Vaughn was saying, I never really thought about this, I guess, because me and Dad have always had a really close relationship. He's my best friend. And he's my dad.

We run a business together, a family-owned and operated business, which we have all Christians working for us. And, you know, I guess I took it for granted. And I've talked to some people out on the jobs, and they say, how can you work with your dad? To me it's always come natural.

I'm like, this is my dad. I love my dad. He's like my best friend.

We go out and do things, you know. And when Brother Vaughn talked about that, when we had revival service and he came out to our revival, and he talked about that and said how rare it was, you know, I really started thinking about that. And, you know, it is kind of a rare thing today.

And that is sad. It really is. You know, I wish everybody could have a relationship like me and Dad had.

To hear that, I want you to meet John's father, Brother Lloyd. Brother Lloyd, just take a moment. I just want to say, I just really thank the Lord to have the opportunity to come here to prayer with you.

Last year I came here and didn't really know what to expect for sure, but I really needed some spiritual healing in my life and for our family. It's just been really, really a growth thing for us. And I just thank the Lord for this chance to be here again this year.

Twenty-three other guys too. But I just want to say one thing about my son here. During the Gulf War, it was really hard for me.

I know what it means to try to pray and maybe not even words come out. It's agony. I'm a Vietnam veteran and was in combat.

And when my son went over there, it was just like me going again, or two of me. And I couldn't get a piece about for quite a while that he was going to make it back okay. But one day, God gave me a glorious piece about, a wonderful piece, that he's going to come back and he's going to bless me with grandchildren.

And he has three grandchildren. So I thank God today for that. He's a wonderful God.

Thank you. God bless you. Thank you.

With tender hand he lifted me. With tender hand he lifted me. O praise his name, he lifted my soul.

Nothing changes the heart like a sight for Christ. Brother, before we do that song, I'd like to do, Oh, How I Love Jesus. To the tune of Oh, How I Love Jesus.

412 in your handbook, my faith has found a resting place. We'll sing that, the conclusion of this song, crucified. To the tune, Oh, How I Love Jesus.

They nailed my Lord upon a tree and left him die.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4392.mp3>

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