

Pacific Garden Mission (Dramatic Reading)

by Hyman Appelman

The sermon tells the story of Dr. Hyman Appleman, a lawyer who finds faith and receives Jesus Christ as his personal Messiah, leading to a new life and purpose.

Duration: 29:36

Scripture: Isaiah 53:3-6, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, Romans 10:9

Topics: "Dramatic Reading"

Description

In this video, the story of a man named Hyman Appelman is shared. He was well-trained in logical thinking and had the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. When he encountered the undeniable truth of the gospel, he couldn't resist it, even though following it came at a great cost. The video highlights the work of the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, which offers the gospel to those in need, providing not only physical necessities but also spiritual guidance and freedom. The story of Hyman Appelman serves as an example of how the truth of the gospel can transform lives and set people free from their fears and doubts.

Transcript

How do you do? Mine coming with us. We want you to meet a man who was well trained in logical thinking, who was skilled at separating truth from falsehood and at using either one. When he came face to face with unmistakable truth, he found it irresistible, even though following it cost him a great deal.

Despite the cost, his heart and mind and life were unshackled. From Chicago, Crossroads of America, the Pacific Garden Mission presents Unshackled, the unique dramatic series telling the true stories of some very real people. For 121 years, the old lighthouse has offered the gospel, which gives new life to the men and women of Chicago's streets.

Now through Unshackled, it reaches straight to you right where you are with the same wonderful offer of new life. People of many lands and cultures are hearing these programs. Their response demonstrates that the deepest needs of mankind are everywhere the same and that geography has little to do with spiritual problems, nor does race or gender or age have any bearing on what those who come to the old lighthouse receive there.

Food, clothing, a clean place to sleep, medical and dental care are provided without charge. And when physical needs are met, they are given counseling for their deepest inner needs and are told of the one who can heal their hurts and set them free from the bondage of their fears and doubts. Like the man

whose story we're about to tell, they too are unshackled.

Today we are retelling the story of Dr. Hyman Appleman, another true story from the classic files of Unshackled, the program that makes you face yourself and think. During midsummer 1967, radio listeners and television viewers in the Chicago area had within a week at least half a dozen different opportunities to come to know the face, the voice, and personality of the man whose story we have to tell. Hosts of talk shows and interviewers, almost without exception, included him in their programs.

And although he had no connection with the entertainment world nor with government, he attracted considerable attention. An interviewer could sum up at least a few of the reasons by listing what appeared to be contradictions. Nothing in this world is just what it appears to be.

This is certainly true of my guest. To give you an idea, he's a lawyer who hasn't argued a case in many years. Although he had achieved success in his profession, he left it and became a career non-commissioned officer in the United States Army.

Correct me if I'm wrong, Dr. Appleman. All true so far. Okay, then let's go on with the list.

You could speak German, Russian, Yiddish, Polish, Greek, and, of course, Hebrew. At the age of 13, you were brought up in an Orthodox Jewish home and left it to become a Gentile. No, not true.

But I thought you said... It means that I am a Gentile. I was born a Jew, and I am still a Jew, a completed, fulfilled Jew. I'm not sure I really understand what that means.

It means that I am not a Gentile, no more than the Apostle Paul or the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that took some explaining. And one interviewer said afterward, I've never heard anything like it in my life.

But we will ask Dr. Appleman to do the explaining right now as we bring you his true story on Unshackled. I am Hyman Appleman, born early in the century in the city of Mogilev, which lies north of the great city of Kiev, on the Dnieper River in what used to be called White Russia. My father was a successful builder.

Although there was no persecution of Jews and we had no pogroms in our city, my father read the signs of the time and decided that his family would have a more secure future in the United States. He made the move first and sent for us a year and a half after he had established himself. I was the oldest of three boys, so he wrote me a letter designating me as the man of the family.

As a young boy of 13, I found myself beginning in a new country and in the strange city of Chicago. But after many years, I did persevere and finally was licensed to practice law in 1921. After completion of public school, I went on to Northwestern University and then for my legal training to DePaul.

I went into practice with a man who was both a good partner and a good friend. Listen, Hyman, you should go to Rockford with your father so you can help him straighten out the problem with his customer. That's fine to say, Irwin, but there are clients here in Chicago with pressing problems.

What kind of a lawyer is it that lets clients rush him? There's always a continuance, a delay. Your father needs the money those people owe him. I'd like to go with him, of course, but... Look at it this way.

He's not only your father, he's also a client, one of our very first. Go with him, Hyman. He needs you.

It is not easy for an Orthodox Jew to travel in a Gentile world and to keep himself clean of defilement. I can remember how, during our stay in the nearby city of Rockford, my father made every effort to remain clean in spite of the dangers of contamination that were all around us in our hotel. For example, I found him in the little bathroom standing at the washbasin drinking water from his cupped hands, although an apparently clean glass was provided.

Meals presented an especially difficult problem. He solved it as best he could by going out and coming back with his supplies in a small paper bag. All right, here's our lunch.

But there's a coffee shop downstairs. I thought... Coffee shop? I would sooner drink from the glasses they give us than eat in their coffee shop. Anything we order will be traife.

What did you buy us for lunch? Here, here. Six hard-boiled eggs, still in their shells. And six oranges, plenty for both of us.

Oh, I suppose that's true. Well, look at this egg. It comes to us in God's original package.

Now, crack it, as I do. Now, you see? Nothing that the hand of man can do will make the contents unclean. And an orange, too.

You can throw away the rind, and what is inside has not been touched. That's true, of course. Rather than risk defilement, I would gladly live for months on hard-boiled eggs and oranges.

What about you, son? Yes, you're right, of course. Some people work hard for money, some for fame, and some just for the love of the game. As a lawyer, I found that the greatest of all was the love of the game itself.

I enjoyed making money, but it was the work itself that drove me. I loved matching wits with others. I enjoyed the game of trying to find the needle of truth in a haystack of lies, evasions, and confusion.

I learned to throw the glaring light of analysis on a statement, a testimony, a situation, and to study it so carefully that in time the truth would usually become apparent. While I was not above some small falsehood in the interests of personal progress, I placed great importance on truth as something to be mined out of the depths of confusion. All that winter, I had been driving myself harder and harder, going without sleep, trying to keep up with the social life with my fiancé and my business.

In the fall of 1924, I had a nervous breakdown, and after several weeks, I returned to my regular schedule. My doctor, partner, and family were quite concerned. I don't know what we have to do to get him to slow down.

His life is at stake. I've already lost one son. I don't want to lose another one.

The doctor feels that he needs an extended period where he has no stress or schedules to meet. A vacation would be helpful. Well, we'll have to insist that he leaves right away.

I'll take care of his clients with upcoming cases. Mr. Appleman, I'll talk with him about it. I was living under almost constant tension.

I was building my practice, furthering my career. At the same time, I was engaged to marry a fine young woman. Her parents and mine were friends, and the combination of an active social life and an intense

attention to my profession brought about almost complete exhaustion.

My partner finally insisted that I do something about it. Come in. You want to see me? Yes, Hyman.

Hyman, listen. I have no possible use for a dead partner. Who's dead? You will be if you don't get some rest.

All right. So I'll move my bedtime to 10 o'clock. I don't believe you.

I'm a liar, Owen. When it comes to a thing like this, yes. You're not lying to me, but to yourself.

What are you suggesting? Take a vacation. A complete rest. Who would leave me alone long enough for a rest? Not here in Chicago.

Go away. So far away that people can't possibly expect you to come back or listen to their problems. Go a thousand miles.

A thousand miles? You're talking about Denver. Why do you pick Denver? I have an uncle in Denver. He's a patient in his Hebrew sanitarium, tuberculosis.

I haven't seen him in a long time. That's it. I'll go to Denver and visit Sam.

My trip would change my life and adversely affect my relationship with my partner, my family, and my fiancée. I made a few stops to visit relatives and friends before proceeding to Denver. I had an unusual encounter with a few men while visiting friends in Kansas City, Missouri.

A reporter who had listened to me in a debate over some insignificant matters later challenged me to read the New Testament. And as I examined the Bible in my hotel room, I learned that the Old Testament was also included in the Gentile Bible. The next morning, I was invited to attend a church service by a man who promised that I wouldn't have to introduce myself to anyone.

I went to my first church service. Later, I continued on to Denver, where I stayed in the YMCA. The things that I had read in the Bible and heard during the church service began to fill my mind.

So that I couldn't find rest, nor find satisfaction. And within three months, I'd lost 62 pounds. I was in worse shape than ever.

And finally, when things were bad enough to really frighten me, I went downstairs to the lobby of the YMCA to see if someone could direct me to a local doctor. The only office open at that time was the employment office where I spoke with a secretary. Well, Mr. Appelman, if you think you need to see a good doctor... I do, sir.

I need a good one. I'm willing to pay for the best one in town. And if I don't see him pretty soon, he may not be able to do a thing with me.

Well, I know someone who can help you. And who is that? Dr. Davis. Dr. James C. Davis.

He's a nerve specialist? Dr. Davis? No, hardly. No, he's more of a soul specialist. I don't understand.

I'm sorry. My little joke. You see, Dr. Davis is a doctor of divinity.

He's pastor of the church across the street. And just what does he have to do with my health? Well, nothing really. But almost every good doctor in town belongs to his church.

Dr. Davis should be able to suggest the right man for what ails you. Well, I was getting desperate. I walked across the street, found my way to the pastor's study and introduced myself.

We talked for a few minutes. He asked some questions about my home and my health. And then he said something that just about ended the interview.

Mr. Appelman, if you don't mind my saying so, I think you haven't yet recognized the real nature of your problem. I'm nervous and I'm tired. Doesn't it sound as though I need a nerve specialist? Well, not to me.

And after a good many years of pastoral counseling, I think I know a little bit about what makes people tick. And just what do you think you know about me? You don't need medical care, Mr. Appelman. You need Jesus Christ.

What did you say? I say that you need to receive Jesus Christ as your own personal messiah. Dr. Davis, I'm a Jew. Don't try to force Jesus down my throat.

Wait a moment, please. Wait. Let me show you something.

Who do you think most Jews believe was their greatest prophet? Well, I suppose Moses and Isaiah. Would you read from Isaiah's writings in the 53rd chapter, beginning with verse 3? He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him.

He was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray.

We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Good, good, Dr. Appelman. And let me continue reading the rest of that chapter.

If you are honestly seeking the truth, as most good lawyers do, you'll see that your own prophet Isaiah, writing more than 700 years before the coming of the Messiah, can only be referring to Jesus Christ. Dr. Davis read and explained for hours. I asked questions, and he answered from the Bible.

Our visit began at three in the afternoon, and midnight was approaching when we really got down to the point of decision. You see, Hyman, the writings very clearly state that Messiah, who came once as a servant, Jesus, will come again as a mighty conqueror, taking vengeance on the nations and restoring Israel. You really believe that? I do.

God's Word says it. But I've always thought you Gentiles hated the Jew. Hyman, I can't speak for the Gentiles.

That word means heathen or even barbarian. I ceased to be heathen when I received Christ as my Savior. Jesus said, And when he said it, he was speaking of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In Christ, I'm a Jew by adoption. Spiritually, I am in the covenant God made with Abraham. This is all very new, and yet it all falls into place.

It's like a long cross-examination of a witness where you come back to the same subject matter, but from a new angle to see if the story holds up. The testimony of the witnesses who know him and wrote about him, all of it holds together. I agree.

Of course, I'm just a preacher, not a lawyer. And I am a lawyer and a man who can distinguish between the truth and a lie. To me, all of this is clearly and unmistakably the truth.

Fine. So, what are you going to do about it? What should I do? Are you going to admire the truth as an abstract thing, or are you going to receive the truth? Receive it? The truth, with a capital T. In this case, the truth is a person. Jesus said in the book of John, chapter 14, verse 6, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me. And if I receive Jesus as my Messiah, think of the people who will be hurt. My fiancé, my parents, my partner.

Pastor, my father almost bankrupted himself to help me. It will break my parents' heart and bring them to their graves. I don't think I can do it.

Yet, you agree that God's word urges you to receive him? Yes, I do. Would a good God punish you or your family because you've done the right thing? You're not leaving me any way out. Only one way, Hyman.

Jesus? Yes. The righteous judge of all will grant you your appeal. Pray to God from your heart, Hyman.

I've never done that in my life. I wouldn't know how to begin. Kneel with me, and I'll pray for you.

Dr. Davis prayed in anguish for my soul with tears streaming down his cheeks. I also began to cry as I thought of the sacrifice of Jesus and my parents. It was well after midnight when my last objection melted and I received Christ as my personal Messiah.

The following Sunday, wanting to make it as visibly public as I could, I was baptized in the church. Then I wired my family to tell them what had happened. In a moment, you'll learn what happened as a result of Hyman Appelman's decision.

We'd like to share excerpts of letters from listeners, like the man who writes from Guyana, South America. Through Unshackled, we became Christians, and now we're serving the Lord, attending church regularly. I send love and greetings to you in Jesus' name.

And this woman from High Point, North Carolina writes, Jesus is showing and teaching me so much through Unshackled. I love your stories, and I pray that you will always be there when I turn my radio on. This 17-year-old from South Texas writes, I am a Christian, but sometimes it's hard not to go with the world, and every time I need advice as to what to do, a story comes on that helps me with my problem.

A woman from Maryland confides, I am struggling with a drug and alcohol problem, and am beginning to realize because of your broadcast that I do need Jesus to help me overcome my addictions. Your program, Unshackled, has made an impact on my recovery, because I've heard storylines that sound exactly like what I'm going through. If Unshackled has made a difference in your life, please write and tell us.

The address, Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago, Illinois, 60605. Our email address is unshackled at pgm.org. And please include your address. A decision such as mine is bound to result in repercussions, and they came very quickly.

The first was in the form of a telegram in reply to my own. It read simply, Hyman, you are still sick, come home. I received at least a dozen telegrams during that week.

A few days later, my fiancée began her trip to see me. And it was a long trip in those days. She would try to rescue me from what had happened.

She was very concerned, very sincere. My dear, we all love you very much. No one is angry with you.

We're trying very hard to understand, but what you are doing is simply out of the question. And why is that? It presents too many problems for too many people. It just isn't practical.

It may not be practical, but to me it seems right and true and necessary. And just about impossible. Well, what do you suggest? I suggest that you forget all this nonsense.

Then we'll be married and you can come home to Chicago with me. We'll make it a honeymoon. That's very beautiful, as you are.

Well then. My dear, I can't do it. You mean you can't marry me? I can't forget this nonsense, as you call it.

Nothing I say or do will change the truth. Jesus is Messiah. He has come once.

He will come again. My engagement ended that day and I was left alone in that new city. And there began the new life that was to take the place of the old one.

In the months that followed I left my profession because I wasn't licensed in Colorado. I dissolved my partnership and had sharp discussions with my family. I took jobs doing manual labor and gave my testimony as often as I could in the evening and on Sundays.

One day I received an alarming telegram from home. Irwin, where's my mama? Hyman, when did you get back? What are you talking about? I got a telegram saying that my mother was dying. Is she dead? Are they at the cemetery? Hyman, it's not true.

Your mother's in Detroit visiting friends. I went to my father's office and we had a terrible argument. I asked him why he would do this.

We almost fought physically. He cried and begged me to stay home. We both cried.

Finally in anger he said that he wouldn't give me a crumb if I was starving. When I left I decided to travel east to Philadelphia. I took a job as a freight clerk in Camden, New Jersey.

But during this time things did not go well for me physically or spiritually. My family had made it clear that they wanted nothing more to do with me. And I was depressed and disheartened.

I stopped going to church and reading my Bible and praying. I decided that there was only one more thing for me to do. End my life.

I resigned my job and boarded a train for Chicago where I figured I would swim as far out into Lake Michigan as I could, throw up my hands and drown. Later, during a layover in Pittsburgh, I was walking around and saw an army recruiting poster in front of the post office. I studied the poster for a minute while I thought, You are only 23 years old, Appelman.

You have plenty of time for suicide. Why not enlist in the army? Maybe something will happen so that you will forget about home and stop being depressed. So on the impulse of the moment, I enlisted and laid a course for my life for years ahead.

But it was while I was a staff sergeant in the Old Army Medical Corps that I met the woman who was to become my wife and was led into the work that God had planned for me as an evangelist. While stationed at Lawton, Oklahoma, and at the time of my marriage, I was asked to help with pastoral work of a little church newly formed, and leaders of a nearby church asked me to consider being ordained as a minister. I wept as I thought of how unworthy I was.

After all, Hyman, you can better serve the people if you have the full authority that goes with ordination. That's all very well, but I'm a professional soldier. Not only, you're also a lawyer, a university graduate, and a man with a keen mind.

But that doesn't make me a minister. What more do you want? Education. I didn't go into law as a jack-legged lawyer.

I don't want to go into the ministry except as a man who is educated, trained for the work. If the law deserves the best education I could get when I was 20, the Lord deserves even better today. Let's talk about schooling and then think about the ministry.

Hyman Appelman, unwilling to give to the Lord's work anything but his best, used the 70 days of accrued army leave in an experiment to determine if he still could do the work of a student. And then when the work went well, he bought out of the army, a privilege permitted back in those days, and plunged full time into the work of becoming trained for his new career as pastor, teacher, preacher, and evangelist. And God blessed his efforts.

Over many years, some trying, but mostly fruitful, Dr. Hyman Appelman presented the claims of Christ with the clear logic of a lawyer, the erudition of a student in the simple faith of a man who has recognized that the Messiah has come and will come again. That Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Son of God. As Hyman Appelman discovered God is no respecter of persons and that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Friend, think of these things. And if you have questions or need help in making this crucial decision for your life, please get in touch with Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago, Illinois, 60605. Our email address is unchackled at pgm.org. The telephone number in Chicago is area 312-922-1462.

These true testimonies shine God's light of truth into a darkening world, so invite your friends and neighbors to listen. We'd love to receive word from you, either by letter or email, what this program means to you. And your comments are valued as we pray that the Lord will continue to allow us to broadcast Unshackled.

This is program number 2497. Unshackled is produced by Pacific Garden Mission to show through true stories that if your life is empty, it can be filled to overflowing. Right today, we do look forward to hearing

from you that's Pacific Garden Mission, Chicago, Illinois, 60605.

If you need spiritual help now or anytime, day or night, just call Pacific Garden Mission and talk with someone who cares. 312-922-1462. ■■

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