

Audio Sermon: Power of True Religion: Power Through Us

by J. Glyn Owen

The power of true religion is not just about personal blessing, but about being used by God to touch others and share the gospel with those around us.

Duration: 50:15

Scripture: Isaiah 55:10

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Gospel Power"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the power and transformative nature of the gospel, likening it to a river of living water that flows from within believers. It highlights the inherent capacity of the gospel to bring victory, blessing, and transformation to individuals and communities. The message encourages continuous thirst for God and belief in His promises, leading to a life where rivers of living water flow through believers, impacting those around them.

Transcript

There are surprises in the weather here in Canada, aren't there? And one of them has come this evening. I'd be very warmly welcome those of you who have braved the way into the center of the city and we are able to meet and worship the Lord in this way. It's rather wonderful that the weather doesn't keep him away from us.

That is the precious thing that in the sunshine and in the storm, in the winter and in the summer, our God keeps truth, keeps his promise and rendezvous with his people. This is a very, very precious truth to be reminded. When we can't come to him he can nevertheless and does come to us.

And if need be, just as our Lord of old, he can walk the turbulent seas in order to come alongside our tossing boat. Well, praise his name that we are able to be in his house tonight and that he is here with us. Now our subject, we began looking at it a few Sunday evenings ago.

We based our theme on the fifth verse in 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy chapter 3 where the apostle Paul, writing to the young stripling Timothy, tells him of some of the things that are going to happen in the last days. And among them, he says, there will be a rash of people who, having a form of godliness, will nevertheless deny the power of it. Having a form of godliness will nevertheless deny and even resist the

power of it.

Now, we first of all thought of the division of religion as we have it there into a twofold entity. There is the external shell or form and there is the inside spirit or soul of true religion especially. The power of it, the doneness of it.

Religion is not all form, there is force. And then we came to consider what is this power, what is this force, how does it function? And we come to the third tonight and the last in this short series. First of all, we considered the power of true religion over us.

One thing that characterizes men and women who worship the true God as he has demanded to be worshipped is this, that we acknowledge his sovereign rule over us. And as Jesus taught us to pray, increasingly our concern comes to be for his name, for his glory, for his kingdom. God rules over us and insofar as we have entered into the spirit of biblical religion, this surely is one characteristic of our lives.

God has power over us and we accede to that. Indeed, we delight in that. We rejoice, as we heard in our conference last weekend, to be the bond slaves of Jesus Christ.

But it isn't only there that we discover this power of true religion. Not only is it power over us, the power of the potter over the clay, molding it according to his own perfect will, fashioning something that he has in his own mind and for his own purposes, but it is a power within us. It is doing something to the mind.

It engages the conscience and the will and the heart and the whole being of a man on the inside. This, of course, manifests itself in the fruit of the spirit and in the gifts of the spirit. But the work is all on the inside, and we saw something of that, though by no means everything that the New Testament has to tell us about that very, very precious aspect of our subject.

Now tonight we come to a third, and we must add this. Power through us. The power of the gospel is not only power over us and power within us, but if it is over us and insofar as it is functioning within us, sooner or later it is a mighty current that will flow through us, and the power working within us will be touching other lives.

And in true religion it is always so. It is always thus. If what I claim to be the true religion, if what I confess to be the Christian faith, is simply a matter of doctrinal belief, of holding certain tenets, crossing the T's and dotting the I's, and judging other people from my stance and standpoint, if it's simply that, if it's simply doctrinaire, then we need to question ourselves.

If the power of God is at work in us, God will always be seeking to touch others through us. This is a principle written into the warp and woof of Holy Scripture and of biblical religion in the Old and New Testament as I understand it. Now let's start then with this general principle.

Let's repeat it. Whom God subdues by his power and indwells by his spirit, he uses in order to extend his sway, to manifest his purpose and to bring others within the orbit of his saving grace. You see, Christian experience is not God giving us a little bit of luxury, something to enjoy.

Oh, there is enjoyment in it and there is a song at the heart of it. There's no question about that. But true religion is not God giving us a little bit of extra jam on our bread.

God is fulfilling a purpose. And all his enrichment of us is with a view to his fulfilling his purpose in us and then through us. Now we are so selfish and self-centered that we so often forget that.

And we're only concerned about the little bits that affect number one. Oh, I want a bigger experience. I want a greater experience.

I want more joy. I want more peace. I want more power.

I want more of this and I want more of that. Well, perhaps we need all of these things. But if we are seeking them only for our own spiritual luxury, we are out of alignment with New Testament spirit and New Testament thought.

In the mind and in the purposes of God, what he has to give us is with a view ultimately to doing something through us. Now it's very difficult to present this in its balance, in its equipoise. When God is dealing with us as sinners, he gives us full attention.

You should never think of God as talking to you and then looking at somebody else. You know there are people like that. I've caught myself doing that, so I'm not thinking of other people.

Sometimes in the vestibule there on a Sunday morning or a Sunday evening, somebody's saying something and then somebody else comes out and they're whispering something from the other end. It's a very difficult situation. You're listening to what this person is saying and then you see that person over there has got something to say as well and the man is at sixes and sevens.

God is never like that. When you come to him in penitence and in prayer, he gives you his attention. He listens to every sigh and every sob.

He hears you. He sees you. And yet, my friends, at the same time our God is looking beyond you.

He sees beyond. He sees your family. He sees your neighborhood.

He sees your nation. He sees generations yet unborn. And as he's touching you, he relates you to things that will happen to the end of time that you cannot see.

For our God is an omniscient, all-seeing, all-knowing God. And all the links in the chain of history are ever present to him. And when he blesses you, he thinks of others beyond you.

To go back to last weekend, as he gave Ruth the Moabitess favor with Boaz, God was looking down the passage of time to the very emergence of King David from that line. And God was planning not only the emergence of King David from that line, but of David's greater son. Nobody else could see that, you see.

But when he gave Boaz an affection in his heart for this young woman, this Moabitess, and brought them together as man and wife, God was looking down the ages. He was looking beyond the present as we can't do. Now, this principle was enunciated early in the Old Testament.

It started, I suppose, one of the first illustrations, perhaps the first time it is illustrated and outlined anyway, is with regards to Abraham. You remember these words in Genesis. God says to Abraham, I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you.

I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you, I will curse. And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

Have you got it? It's exceedingly wonderful. God says, look, Abraham, there's no knowing what I'm going to do for you. You have no idea, Abraham.

I can't stop telling you about it. But I want you to know, he says, that you're not going to be a reservoir that's going to contain all this blessing of mine all for yourself, just to sing and talk and write about it. Abraham, I want you to know, he says, that there's going to be a floodgate opening one day, and the blessing I give to you will reach all the ends of the earth, and all nations will be blessed in you.

What a mighty God we have. What a gracious God. That same principle was personally exemplified in others, of course, beside Abraham.

I can't go after them tonight. Let me just refer to Joseph, and perhaps Moses, just to illustrate the point. Having at last arrived at a height of eminence and authority, second only to the reigning Egyptian pharaoh, and having by that time recognized God's gracious purpose for the dark threads in his life, Joseph refused to be angry with his brothers for selling him in the first place, and acting so treacherously.

You remember the story? All they've sold him, all they were cruel. I'm not going into that story. You remember it well enough.

Those of you who come out on a Sunday night will read your Bibles. You remember the story. There's no question about that.

And now here they are, here they are before Joseph, and Joseph has got the power in his own hands to do anything he likes with them. Now what do you think? What on earth does the man tell them? He says, look, he says, don't be angry with yourselves because you've sold me and you've sent me down here. Don't get too cross with yourselves.

I'm not cross with you, Mesa. Do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here. Well, Joseph, what's gone wrong with your man? Are you losing your common sense? Well, perhaps.

But here's the explanation. Because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. And again later on, but God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

You see, Joseph recognized that in the sweet and bitter elements of his providence, God was not only working out what was best for Joseph himself, but he saw that God was working out blessing for others also. And it pleased him as a man of God. Had he been a selfish, unregenerate man, I guess Joseph might have got angry.

And I'm sure most of us would have. But because the Spirit of God has got into his soul, he's lost that anger. He can see that God had a purpose.

And not only did God have a purpose, it brought blessing and eminence to him, but it brought blessing to others too, you see. And so he says, don't be angry with yourself. It's only the grace of God can talk like that.

When a man's heart and a man's thoughts and a man's goals and motives of all come to synchronize with the divine. Take Moses. God did not simply appear to Moses in the burning bush in order to reveal himself to Moses alone, and thus simply to enlarge and enrich Moses' personal knowledge of him.

No, that was necessary. That was part of it. But God did reveal himself to Moses as the great I am.

But God's purpose went way beyond the individual that he had condescended to bless at the time. And so we read in the ensuing story words like this. The Lord said, that is to Moses, I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt.

Now imagine it. Here is dear old Moses wrapped up in the vision. It's wonderful.

It's marvelous. God is speaking to me from the bush. I've taken off my shoes.

I hear the voice of God. And he's all enraptured with all this. And God says, forget it, Moses.

I'm thinking of my people in Egypt. And I've come to you because I've heard their cries. And I've heard the lashes of their taskmasters.

And I've come to you because I want you to go to them. That humbles our pride, doesn't it? My friend, God has come to some of you today perhaps because he's not first and foremost bringing blessing to you individually, though he does that. But there's somebody somewhere he wants you to touch.

He wants to reach through you. Have you thought of that? Don't get too wrapped up with the vision, whatever it may be. Take all that is in it.

But then ask yourself, why, God, this privilege for me? Is it only for me? Now, the same principle applied personally to those whom Jesus called to be his apostles. I must bring this in because, you see, we're jumping from the Old Testament into the New. And it's good to see that the same principle operates in the New.

Mark records the way in which Jesus called the twelve to him. Chapter 3, verses 13 to 15, this is how it reads. Jesus went up into the hills and he called to him those whom he wanted.

And they came to him. He appointed twelve, designating them apostles. Doesn't end there, though.

This is how it ends. Designating them apostles, that they might be with him. That doesn't end there, even.

And that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. You see it? He called whom he willed, whom he wanted. And they came.

And he appointed twelve to be apostles. And he said, I've chosen you to be with me. Marvelous, marvelous, we say.

Yes, very marvelous indeed. But that was not the end of it. He called them to be with himself in order that, having been with him in the flesh, he could send them out and send them forth to carry the message, the good tidings, the glad tidings to other people.

That others might share in the grace of the incarnate Lord and in the saving purposes of the eternal God. It's a principle indebted in scripture. He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them forth.

Neither has the principle changed when we come to the rest of the New Testament. It's the same with the apostle Paul. You remember how God told Ananias, had a little bit of difficulty in persuading Ananias to go and speak to this Saul of Tarsus that had been spoken to by the Lord on the way to Damascus.

But God gave him the message. And this is it, Acts 9, 15, 16. Go, man, he says.

The Lord said to Ananias, go. Oh, this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake.

What a marvelous vision that was on the road to Damascus. We can't go into that tonight. But let's simply note this, it was something extraordinary.

Not every Christian, not any other Christian seems to have had this. A revelation of the enthroned Lord Jesus Christ. So that he saw him in the midst of the throne and he never got over the spectacle.

That Jesus was Jehovah and Jehovah was Jesus. But it wasn't just for Paul to luxuriate him and talk about and dream about and think about. Says Ananias, he's got to bear my name.

I've chosen him before the Gentiles, even their kings and the people of Israel. And I'm going to show him how great things he must suffer in order to do that. He's got to take something of the marvel of it and the wonder of it and the grace of it.

Elsewhere I want to reach others through him. Brothers and sisters, if we don't get anything else tonight, I suggest to you, this is important for us to get. Why are you and I the recipients of God's grace? Oh God loved us as individuals.

Don't let me minimize that. Don't let me cast a shadow upon that. The great apostle wouldn't.

Who loved me himself, me, he said concerning himself. He loved me, me, me. Oh yes, there is this personal intimate aspect to it.

All right. And gave himself for me, of course, but God had something beyond me. And he has something beyond all of us tonight.

Or that we might say with the apostle, I press on to take hold of that for which Christ himself took hold of me. Or in the way of the old King James, to apprehend that for which I also was apprehended of Christ Jesus. He took hold of me for a purpose.

Oh, he says I'm pressing on to lay hold of that purpose of his that he had when he laid hold upon me. Now that's the first principle I wanted to establish. I trust that as brief as we have been on it and as certainly not exhaustive, that the point is clear.

But now, let's come nearer the heart of our text. The gospel that is given to us, the gospel that is committed to us, the gospel that has brought us the knowledge of God and of his grace, is a gospel which has in it an inherent capacity to win, to gain victory. The gospel itself has an inbuilt capacity to succeed.

Really, I'm preaching to myself now, I guess more than to you. You'll forgive me for that, but you'll listen in for a little while, will you? But I find that I have to tell myself this very, very often. I know how feeble my efforts are to expound and preach the gospel.

But this is something that comes home to me. Ultimately, it doesn't matter on how you preach. If you're proclaiming the truth of the gospel, it has this inbuilt capacity.

It will bless. It will reach. It will touch.

It will save. Amen. And brothers and sisters, we need to see this.

We're on the side, you see, of divine power here. Now there is a thread of biblical truth here that we need to explore. And I can only, I can only refer to it.

Listen to the great words of Isaiah. You're familiar with them. But now, let's see them in this context tonight.

Has the rain and the snow come down from heaven? And do not return to it without watering the earth. That's why they were sent, you see. Why is the rain sent? Why is the snow sent? Well, they're sent on an errand, and they don't return back to heaven until they've accomplished their errands, says the prophet.

I think he's got a sense of humor there. Without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed to the sower and bread for the eater. Now from that analogy, the prophet applies a principle.

So is my word, says the Lord. So is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

What are you saying, Isaiah? What Isaiah is saying is this. That when God sends forth his word from his own mouth, it will accomplish the purpose that God had for it. He cannot fail.

Now there may be mysteries about that that I can't go into tonight. We may come back to some of those another time. But we can't go into the mysteries tonight.

I want us to get beyond the mysteries to the things that are clear. One Old Testament passage that most graphically and helpfully expounds this theme of the gospel's inherent power to succeed in its divinely appointed mission, I believe is found in the passage we read tonight. Ezekiel chapter 47 verses 1 to 12.

That's why I read it. Now, I believe that that river that Ezekiel saw is a glorious picture of the gospel. Of God and of his son Jesus Christ.

What is the gospel after all? Isn't it God coming forth from his temple? Isn't it God coming out from his sanctuary? God coming down to planet earth. God becoming enfleshed in Jesus from the virgin's womb. God becoming man and coming down and moving among us like a mighty river.

And that's what the gospel is. It's God in his going forth. It's God on the near end of salvation.

God doing his sovereign saving will and purpose. Have you looked at this picture? Now, please, I'm only throwing out a few suggestions. Just read it before you go to bed tonight.

You'll have a good sleep after it. You may not sleep for a half an hour or so. But when you do, you'll be blessed.

The symbolism of this passage finds parallels elsewhere, by the way. Let me remind you of them. There's one parallel passage in Genesis, you know.

In the early paradise here on earth, where the garden of Eden was beautifully watered by four rivers. And it was very fruitful. And it was fruitful because it was well watered and it was the place where God ruled and reigned.

A first Edenic garden. In the book of the Revelation, it is a picture of heaven. You remember the river flowing.

The river flowing in Revelation chapter 22, verses 1 and 5. Now, I can't go into that. That's in the heavenly Eden. Heavenly Eden, paradise regained.

This river in Ezekiel 47 represents God, then, in his outgoing influence. And that, of course, is precisely what the gospel is. Now, the gospel, like the river in the passage, takes its origin, as we have indicated, from under the threshold of the temple.

You got the picture? The spring of this river, the source of this river, is in God's temple. And there it begins to trickle. And it flows out.

It flows out and it moves in its own particular way past the altar of sacrifice. And once it goes past the altar of sacrifice, it just gushes out through the southern door and it moves in a certain direction. So does the gospel of God.

Where did the gospel begin? Brothers and sisters, I don't need to remind you. It wasn't a council of men and women that called forth the gospel of God. It wasn't a group of the intelligentsia of Greece or ancient Rome or anybody else or any other people that called forth the gospel of God.

Do you know where it started? It originated in the heart of God himself and in his mind and in his grace. And then it passed the altar of sacrifice. It came via Calvary.

And when once it came off this side of Calvary, it couldn't stop it. The river gains momentum. It's a river in spate.

It's moving mightily along. Nothing can stop it. You know, the remarkable thing about this river is this.

There are no tributaries to it. In every other river, a river is enriched by its tributaries. Not so the gospel of God.

The gospel of God comes in its own momentum. Your philosophy, your bit of theology and mine don't add anything to the gospel. We don't make it go faster.

It's all in itself. It's self-contained. And the thing that sends the gospel forth, sends it out, gives it momentum.

It's not the preacher. It's not the people. It's God.

And you measure it a hundred cubits and you're in water ankle deep. And you go another, and did I say a hundred or a thousand? It's a thousand. Go another thousand cubits and it's up to your knees.

And go another thousand and it's up to your thighs. And go another thousand and it's water to swim in. You can't cross.

You can't cross this river. What happened? And it's happened all at once. No tributaries.

And it started as a little trickle. It should have got less and less as it moves over the dry, arid land. It should have become less and less.

Instead of becoming less and less, it's becoming more and more and greater and greater. You see, the power of God is in it. The power of God is in it.

Now, if when we've gone to the end of the river, which we haven't, of course, and never will. But if we go to the other end of the river, turn back with me now. Come back towards the city of God.

And you'll see that on either side of the river, man alive. There are trees. There were no trees there before.

And they're bearing fruit every season of the year, every month of the year. And the fruit is marvelous. And the very leaves are for the healing of the nations.

There's something extraordinary about this. And it all stems from the nature and the quality of the water of the river. God is in it.

See, God is in it. And then to me, the most wonderful thing of all is this. That when it gets to the salt sea, maybe the Dead Sea is going down towards the Arabah.

Or maybe the sea, the Mediterranean even. Never mind, which sea. The saline properties of the sea are negated by this water.

And the water of the sea becomes fresh. And fish begin to live where fish could not live. Hallelujah.

And it all started as a little cripple under the threshold of the temple. What am I saying, men and women, brothers and sisters? What I'm saying is this. That in the gospel of God, there is an inherent power.

There is a power that makes for goodness and for grace and for victory. It has an inbuilt capacity to transform the whole of life. Is that the gospel that you have believed and received and accepted? And are pledged to proclaim? Then I tell you, you're on the way to victory.

But that's not all. And much as I would like to close now, I have to add one other thing. Because you see, the New Testament brings in at least, oh, not only one, but one other picture which added to this makes the whole thing really something that makes us worship God.

The gospel is not something in the head that we talk about, though we do talk about it, and there are tenets, and it is represented in the New Testament as the truth of God. We have received the truth in receiving Christ and the gospel. It is that.

But, oh, it's much, much more than that. As it is experienced in the soul, it is something so infinitely wonderful that, really, it baffles human imagination rightly to talk about it. You remember our Lord Jesus Christ on the last great day of the feast in John chapter 7 and verse 37? I can't go into the background of that now.

Most of you will be familiar with it, but I must just refer to it. On the last great day of the feast of Tabernacles, we read, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, streams, or rivers is the old translation, rivers of living water will flow from within him.

Now, brothers and sisters, if that doesn't take your breath away, you take some breathtaking. Jesus said, If any man really thirsts for the things of the Spirit and the things of God, let him keep on coming to me. Now, that's what the tenses here say.

They stress that. He is speaking not just of a coming once in a lifetime, however much may have happened on that one occasion when you came to the Lord Jesus. He is not talking about that.

He is talking, he is saying, If any man thirsts, let him come and come and come and come and keep on coming to me. So that the first coming leads to a communion with him. If any man keeps on coming to me, keeps on thirsting, let him keep on coming to me and let him keep on drinking.

And whoever keeps on believing in me, not just believing once for all forever, whoever keeps on believing in me, as the scripture has said, What? Rivers of living water shall flow from within him. Have you got the picture? I asked the question, I cannot say dogmatically. I asked the question, Was Jesus here thinking of Ezekiel 47? You know, I have a feeling he must have been.

The river that makes glad the city of God, the river of gospel grace. Now we all know too well that there is a kind of formal association with Christ and his gospel. There is no dynamic effect at all.

It doesn't change a plot in the garden. It doesn't change a foot square of territory. Doesn't transform anything.

And here is something that transforms the desert. Now despite the fact that there are some difficult grammatical issues here, the point is quite clear. Jesus says, Jesus says, A paradise can be regained in some measure in our experience here and now.

And our souls can be so satiated by the blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit that out of our inner man there can flow rivers of living water. My word, this is a great theme, isn't it? I remember preaching with Dr. T.B. Duncan, who was in St. George's Tromne in Glasgow before Reverend Eric Alexander. He was preaching in Keswick one year.

We were together in the same service. He was preaching on the Holy Spirit. I don't remember more about it, but this illustration.

He said that he'd just come back from India and he'd been traveling up by train to Missouri and Landau to minister in conventions there. He was traveling in the train and it was still time of the year when the rivers were still, there was still water in the riverbeds. And he said the thing that completely amazed him was this.

Was how a main riverbed was evident and then there were tributaries moving in different directions and then sub-tributaries and then sub-tributaries of the sub-tributaries and they divided themselves out into so many little tributaries in the end that miles and miles on either side of the river you saw a little bit of vegetation. Is your life like that? Do you bring life where you go? Do you bring grace where you go? Is the grass greener? Are the heavens bluer? Is God nearer? Is Jesus clearer? Is the Word of God more powerful where you and I go? Is the grass greener? Is the wilderness transformed? Or are we just dead ducks? I don't want to be funny, but somebody did say that rather than be like riving waters, many of us are more like dripping tubs. And you know what that means, don't you? We drip a little bit of blessing every now and again.

And somebody gets a little drop, a little bit of a blessing through us. But brothers and sisters, what do we know of the rivers of God? This is the promise. Now, either this is true or it isn't.

And if it isn't, the sooner the better. We expose it. I believe it's true, though it condemns my own life.

If any man keeps on thirsting and keeps on coming and keeps on drinking. I conclude with this. I can't remember the exact details.

I know it was in New York, and I know the background generally. I'll give it to you as I remember it. It came to me as I was sitting in my vestry tonight.

I heard an American refer to this as an incident where a family of children had been in great trouble, suffered cruelty and malnutrition and all the effects of poverty and drunkenness and much else. And the children were unable to get into this. One, sorry, one of the children had to get into a hospital, not into a home.

And this little black girl of about seven years of age was in the hospital. And the nurse brought her a tumbler of lovely cold milk from the fridge. And the nurse put this cold tumbler of milk in her hands and said, My dear, she said, drink this up.

It'll do you good. And emaciated as she was, emaciated, she looked up at her and she says, Nurse, how far down can I drink? You see, in her home, they never had a whole tumbler of milk. She was allowed to drink down so far and then probably a brother or a sister down a little further and somebody else down to the bottom or something like that.

And the nurse grasped it and she saw what was the background of the little girl. My last, she said, take it, she says, and drink it. Drink all of it.

Drink it to the bottom, she says. And when you've drunk it, if you need more, there are gallons more to fill it up again. And the little girl drank.

Perhaps the metaphor isn't suitable. God forgive me. For us, Holy Spirit is a person and not a thing.

But I hear, I sense, I hear the voice of God telling some of us dry and parched and pinched and dead and fruitless tonight. Oh, Sonny, oh, my daughter, drink, will you? Drink to the bottom of it. And when you're drunk to the bottom, I'll fill it again.

And out of you, it is possible for rivers to flow. Is it? Do you believe it? Do you really believe God's word? And brothers and sisters, we are in honor bound. We are in honor bound to seek more and more of this.

All for a divinely given thirst that will bring us back and back and back again. Believing and believing and believing and receiving and receiving and receiving until the floods begin to flow. Channels only, blessed master.

But with all thy wondrous power flowing through us, thou canst use us. Every day and every hour. Let us pray.

Our God, we worship you. We can sometimes express that worship better in just awesome silence than with words. For in the midst of our response to your word, there is of necessity and acknowledgement of sin and unworthiness.

An acknowledgement that the best we are is so infinitely short of the least you desire and deserve. But our father, we do worship and bless your name. That you have given us such a glorious gospel with its inherent capacity to success, to ultimate victory, and it cannot fail.

We hear the sound of our savior's words so close to the death he knew was coming. Don't be afraid. I have overcome the world.

And we hear him sending his disciples to make disciples of all the nations without apology. Saying, Lord, I am with you always to the end of the age. Oh, Lord, take hold of us, lay hold of us, and make us into the people you desire us to be.

Make us a force wherever we are. Not a carnal, self-motivated, carnal people, but a people that are indwelt and infilled and enabled and constrained and even restrained, too, by the indwelling Holy Spirit whom you have given to your own. Father, hear us and help us more and more to apply your word to our lives.

For Jesus' sake, amen.

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