

Behold 01-the Wonderment!

by Neil Dougal

The sermon explores the wonderment of salvation through the power of prayer, humility, and the transformative name of Jesus.

Duration: 41:53

Scripture: Isaiah 64:6, John 3:16, Acts 3:1, Acts 3:6-7, Romans 3:23, Romans 10:9

Topics: "Faith And Trust", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about the power of the touch of the Master's hand. He uses the analogy of an old violin, a mess of putty, and a glass of wine to illustrate how people often underestimate the worth of a soul. The preacher also emphasizes the importance of putting trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and finding new partners in the fellowship of God's people. He shares a personal story about a blind woman who prays fervently for the servants and claims to hear angels sing. The sermon encourages listeners to pray more and live in a spiritual dimension.

Transcript

I don't want to use up too much time, but it's a real joy for me to introduce my beloved brother and colleague in the work of the Lord, Neil Douglass. Excuse me, I have a little frog in my throat. I don't know where I picked it up, but it'll clear up shortly.

We had a little trouble getting together, Neil and I. I don't know just whatever happened over the years. We came from the same country, our backgrounds are very much the same. He spent the war years in the Navy, and I in the Air Force, and we never seemed to cross our paths.

He came to the United States, I went to Canada, and frequently we would correspond. He would invite me for meetings as an elder in the assembly in Worcester, and I was just never able to get there. Finally, we managed to get a date that suited.

He invited me for a conference in Worcester, and at last I was going to meet this Neil Dougal. Everywhere I would go, people would say, you know Neil Dougal? I'd say, no, well, I've heard of him. You know, you just preach like him.

People would say something similar to Neil, and I used to wonder what this Neil Dougal looked like. Finally, after corresponding a number of years, we made the date, and I got to Worcester, Massachusetts

to discover he'd been invited to a conference up in Canada. So I met his wife and family, and saw his picture, but still never was able to shake his hand.

Until one time I was in Guelph Conference in Canada. I was speaking, and after the meeting, I stood up and turned around, and this Scot from behind me put out his hand, and he said, Neil Dougal. And for the first time we met.

And at that moment, the Lord knitted a bond between us. It has been a peculiar joy to us to work together in the Lord's work. We have prayed together.

We have wept together. We have labored together. We have carried the burden together.

We have seen God working together. The devil has done his best to break us up sometimes, and we have never had an argument. We have never had a disagreement.

The Lord has given us a very wonderful and blessed relationship in the work of the Lord. And we would appreciate your prayers as many times in the year we are permitted to labor in the gospel together and see his hand in reaching souls. And it's a great joy for me to stay on and sit down and listen to the Lord's message through my beloved brother, Neil Dougal.

Thank you, Brother Neil. I feel like one of all that are made is no more spirit in me. I can return, please, in your Bibles to the Acts of the Apostles, reading in Chapter 3. Acts, Chapter 3, and verse 1. Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

And a certain man, laying from his mother's womb, was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple. Who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. Then Peter said, Sovereign and cold have I none, but such as I have give I thee, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up.

And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

And they knew that it was he which sent for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple. And they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

God will add his blessing to this public reading from his wonderful work. My subject this morning is the wonderment of salvation. The wonderment of salvation.

As my colleague and I work together, and as we go out several ways and we are involved in the preaching of the gospel, we never cease to marvel at the operation of the Spirit of God. And just having come from a very successful gospel campaign in my home assembly in Worcester, I am absolutely elated and most appreciative of the effectiveness of the gospel. I pray especially to the Lord that he might reveal to New

England that the gospel is still effective.

It is still relevant to our day and generation. And the Lord exceeded my expectations. And so with this in mind, I would like to talk to you this morning about the wonderment of salvation.

In this chapter, first of all, we learn a few things concerning the workers. Secondly, we have the witness. And finally, we have the wonderment.

They were filled with wonder and amazement at what had been done in the men that sat at the beautiful gate of the temple. First of all, we observe that these workers were exercise men. Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer.

I believe the greatest need amongst us today is prayer. I speak for myself. I believe that, personally, we all require an adjustment in our prayer life.

We invariably relegate time that we should be employed in prayer to the background or are involved in some other thing. But here were two men exercised about things on earth, and they seek help from heaven. And this is the area that we require adjusting in our day.

And any success in God's word we can always attribute to prayer. Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed, the motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breath. It was Lord Alfred Tennyson who said, More things are wrought by prayer than this world has dreamed of.

There's a very special little area in the gospel chapel in Scott Lee, St. Catherine. My colleague and I, we call it Teaser Corner. Because during a gospel campaign there, we used to go daily into that little corner, and there we would pray.

And we would sometimes meet. For sinners in great need. Prayer is indeed something that we should cultivate more.

Robert Burns, a Scottish poet, said, A correspondence fixed with heaven is a sure noble anchor. And we have been thrilled, as we travel around the country, and being involved in the gospel, to meet exercised men and women. And the Lord Jesus says, men are always to pray and not to think.

When Boyd and I were in Moncton, New Brunswick, we were preaching the gospel one evening, and two teenagers reminded us that during the meeting they fell in love with the Lord Jesus. Two attractive teenagers. The Christians began to sing at the back of the hall, O happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away.

Filled with enthusiasm at the effectiveness of the gospel in its simplicity. And as they were singing, suddenly the door burst open. And then staggered a boy of seventeen years of age, just like a drunk man.

And I was quite sure, and I'm sure all of us, that God was working in his heart. I never saw a lad so convicted. And he put his head against the wall, and he began to weep.

And all we could hear him say was, I wanted to say, I wanted to say. We took him downstairs, and the lad finally accepted the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior. And I can see him yet, as he said, I'm so relieved.

And just then we observed twelve men, approximately, on their knees, in a little room, praying. And after it was over, an old man staggered out the door. He threw his arms around the boy.

It was his grandfather. He said, Son, I pray for you every day since the day you were born. God honors prayer.

And we had a delightful experience in Detroit just a few months ago. To see a man of eighty years of age accepting the Lord Jesus. And to see his old sister of eighty-eight years of age throwing her arms around him and saying, My brother Jimmy, you are saved at last.

I prayed for you for seventy years. Brethren and sisters, we need more prayer. And I am sure that God will honor that exercise.

And will indeed abundantly bless us, the people of God. Dan Smith, who wrote the book, Missionary to the Orient, in his early days was associated with Hudson Taylor. And as a young man he went to pray with Hudson Taylor.

And on bended knees, after five hours of prayer, he decided to have a recess. And he said, Amen. And he turned to Dan Smith and he said, And we've only touched China.

Five hours in prayer and they only had touched the land of China. Brethren and sisters, we need more prayer. May the Lord exercise our hearts like these two men.

These were exercise men. I took my colleague one day to visit an old lady in our assembly in Worcester. She'd been blind for over forty years.

But I've known from experience that she knows God and that she can pray. So I took boy one day. And as we were introduced by her daughter, the old lady, I reiterate, was blind.

And as we came into the room, she said, I love you, I love you, I love you. And she drew us to that rocking chair. And she spoke to us in her broken English.

And she said, I pray for the servants. During the night, sometimes I know sleep, she said. But I pray for the servants.

And as I pray, sometimes I hear the angels sing. Some people might not believe me, she said. But I hear the angels sing, Thank you, God.

Here is a woman that lives in a spiritual dimension that few of us have ever reached. She knows God. And what a thrill for me and for my colleague and others of the Lord's service to know that she and others like her are praying for us in this difficult business.

These were exercise men. But secondly, they were energetic men. When we learn this about these workers, it says that they worked together.

It's a wonderful thing to see God's people working together. To see men like Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, Meshach, working and praying together. Peter and John experienced this great joy of praying and working together.

Paul could look at his son in the face, Timotheus, and say, Timotheus, my work fellow, we need today people who are willing to work for God. I suppose you've heard the story of the pig and the chicken. The pig and the chicken were walking down through a distressed area.

Hunger and destitution on every side. And the chicken said to the pig, I think you and I can help here. We can supply bacon and eggs for this poor community.

Well, the pig was aghast. He said to the chicken, friend, it's all right for you. You only make a contribution.

But for me it's total involvement. I wonder, beloved, are you just making a small contribution to this local church? Or are you totally involved? Paul said to some in Thessalonica, I hear there are some among you, and they work not, but are busybodies. Now this never fails.

Those who are always busybodies invariably do very, very little in the cause of the preaching of the gospel or in other areas of the Lord's work. Workers together. There's a lot to be accomplished, and the Lord's presence, His coming, is very near.

And He beholds us to be exercised men and women and energetic men and women, giving it all that we have got. We also learn concerning these workers, not only were they exercised men and energetic men, but these were emptied men. Peter says, silver and gold have I none.

Very interesting, he did not know what John had in his pocket. But he says, silver and gold have I none. But when it came to the joy of pointing a soul to Christ, Peter said, look on us.

He was willing to share the glory of that great work with his beloved colleague, John. Silver and gold have I none. Thomas Aquinas, who was a great medieval thinker, went one day to visit the Pope in Rome.

And the Pope showed him the treasures of the church. Vast treasures. And very apologetically, he said to Thomas Aquinas, of course, it's obvious that we cannot say, like Peter, silver and gold have I none.

And Thomas Aquinas said to the Pope, answer. It's obvious that we cannot say, like Peter, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. These were men that were emptied of self.

And humility is the basis for productivity in the things of God. You remember Joseph, when he was down in the dungeon, he was brought by Pharaoh to interpret the dream. And Joseph said, it is not in me.

But God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace. He was a man that was emptied of self. And gave all the glory to the one that deserved the glory, our great God.

He was an emptied man, was Joseph. In the book of Judges, Gideon, the son of Joash, the Adiite, was an emptied man, emptied of self. When chosen by God to be a judge in Israel, he said that he was of the tribe of Manasseh.

And that perhaps at that time was the poorest of all the tribes in Israel. He was the least in his father's house. And his father's house was the least of all the families in the tribe.

That's getting pretty low. Emptied of self. The great apostle, as he spoke to the Philippians, he said, you Philippians think you can boast, I can boast more.

Circumcised the eighth day of the stock of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law of parenting, concerning zeal, persecuting the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law of blameless. But what things were gained to me, those I counted but lost, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and who count them but wretches. That is the very essence of humility.

And our great exemplar is our Lord Jesus. And I have been privileged in my lifetime to have met some of the great men of this world. Men who have walked with God, and they have followed the example of our beloved Lord.

He thought it not something to be grasped as to be on equality with God, but he emptied himself, and took upon himself the form of a bondservant. Humility. The poet has said the foundation of greatness is to be little, the increase of greatness is to be less, and the perfection of greatness is to be nothing.

And you and I have nothing to be proud about. It is only by the grace of God that we are what we are. Emptied of self, silver and gold.

Have I not? I am not suggesting you go down to the bank and get rid of your every dollar. I am talking to intelligent men and women who are required to think little of themselves. I am much of class.

Like the beloved John the Baptist, he must increase, I must decrease. Exercise men, energetic men, emptied men, but thank God they were also enriched men. Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I unto thee.

Here they were possessing nothing, but having all things. Here were men and women, here were men who could draw heavily from God's great resources. The wisdom, the glory, and the grace, the riches of these things, endless resources, and they drew heavily from these things.

Now these are a few things we learn about the workers. But then we must come to the section, the witness. There was a witness here to things that could not help this man in his need.

And there was a witness to that which could help the man in his need. The apostle Peter said, Silver and gold have I none. This man sat by the gate beautiful, and this gate, we are told, was made of Corinthian bronze, the most expensive mineral of its day.

Now here was something, environmental beauty, that could not help this man in his great need. Secondly, the evening sacrifice. They went up to the temple at the ninth hour, which was the hour of the evening sacrifice.

And earthly currency could not help this man in his need. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and men of such academic learning tell us today that if you change the environment, then you'll change the individual. Well that's not what we find, is it? In the city of Glasgow after World War II, they experimented by setting up this beautiful housing project with the intention of removing people from the slums and placing them in this beautiful new construction.

And it was a thing of beauty, but the experimentation was an absolute flop. When they removed these people from the slums, instead of changing themselves to suit the environment, they continued as they were. There were some who had never seen a bath before, and they were thinking of the cold winter night, so they brought the coal and they placed it in the bath, just to save them the journey in the wintertime out to the coal shed.

Some pulled the doors off the hinges and used it as firewood. You see, friend, environment can never change our wicked hearts. So environmental beauty, that beautiful temple, and that gate of Corinthian bronze could not help that man in his name.

And we mentioned the evening sacrifice. Every evening the oblation was offered to God. But here's a man and he's desperate.

But that evening sacrifice could not help that man. Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altar slaves could give the guilty conscience peace or take away one's sin. But Christ, the heavenly Lamb, took all our sins away, a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.

Just last week in Worcester, I knelt down with a boy of seventeen, eighteen years of age, tears running off his chin. And he said in his prayer, Lord, I am a sinner. Do wash my sin in your precious blood.

Here was something that was calculated to meet him in his name. But that evening sacrifice could not help that desperate man. And thirdly, earthly curfew.

Environmental beauty, the evening sacrifice, and earthly curfew. Silver and gold have I learned. Can you wonder why Peter, writing his epistle, said, We are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold.

But by the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world, and was manifest in these lost times for us. These are three things that could not help that man in his sin and in his affliction. But there is a witness to that which can help.

Say, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Silver and gold have I learned, but such as I have, give I unto thee in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Rise up and walk.

Oh, we thank God for the name. And beloved, there is power in that name. Brother Boyd and I were in Detroit some time ago.

We were invited out to lunch by a mutual friend. And he was relating to us his wonderful conversion. And it was obvious that it was a man trying to capture something of the conversation.

Finally, he came to our table and he said, Gentlemen, I have one word of your conversation. Jesus. Oh, how sweet the name.

God bless you, my brother. He went out and he paid his bill and he returned and he told us who he was. He said he was the general manager of the largest independent radio evangelical station in the world.

WBFG. We broadcast for God. That was a cult.

What attracted that man to us and us to him? Jesus. Oh, how sweet the name. That name that thrills the heart of the people of God.

Jesus, that is the saving name. And that is the joy of the evangelist. It's to reveal the potential and the power and the dignity and the majesty in the name of our blessed Lord.

The great Harry Morehouse, one of England's greatest preachers. He came to a gospel meeting one night with the intention of disrupting the service. He waited until every pew was filled.

And the preacher began to preach his message. And then thought Harry Morehouse, I'll enter in and I will do my own thing. He opened the door of that auditorium and it was at that point in his message when the

preacher said, Jesus.

And Harry Morehouse stood riveted on the threshold of the door. Instead of being antagonistic to Jesus, he saw the magnitude of his sin. And he fell in love with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Harry Morehouse came to the United States upon the invitation by D.L. Moody. Moody was going away from Chicago for a week. And Harry Morehouse was invited to fill his pulpit.

And for five nights he preached from my favorite verse, John 3.16. At the end of the week, Moody returned. And he asked his wife, how are the meetings going? She said, I never heard preaching like it. And Mr. Moody sat under the ministry that final evening of Harry Morehouse.

And he became known as the man that changed the man that changed the world. His preaching was so effective that it revealed a new dimension to the great Moody. And he was wont to cry for that lovely precious name of Jesus.

In the name of Jesus. How fitting thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin. Professor Hodge of Princeton was dying.

And with his final breath, he said, A guilty, weak, and helpless worm on thy own arm I fall. With his breath almost gone, his beloved wife finished the stanza. Be thou my strength, my righteousness, my savior, my all.

Professor Hodge said to his wife his last words. He said, say Jesus. And he went into the presence of the Lord.

Jesus the earthly name, and Christ the name of his divine exaltation. The deity, the supremacy, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. Here was something that could help this man in his need.

Faith, exercise faith in the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if you're here this morning, friend, and you're not a child of God. You're not converted.

You're not saved. You're not born again. These are Bible terms connecting with salvation.

By this meaning we are saved from our sin. Saved from the penalty of our sin. We are converted to God's things and to God's ways.

If you've not had that experience, we recommend it to you. And we can only present to you the Lord Jesus who can help you in your need. I sat down with a lady last week, six to four years of age, that had spent her lifetime in her church.

And she said to me, upon my question, upon what are you depending for eternity? Well, she said, my good works. So I took her to Isaiah's prophecy and the word of God. All our righteousnesses are at filthy ends.

She was astonished. And so for further corroboration, I took her to the New Testament and showed her all of sin. And come short of God's glory.

She says, what can I do? And I said, there's only one requirement for salvation. If you exercise simple trusting faith in the finished work of Christ, God says, you'll be saved. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord.

Believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. When old Uncle Jimmy of Detroit was converted, this is somewhere amusing.

Brother Boyd and I were having lunch with him and his dear old sister. And she was sitting by his side. And she said to him, Jimmy, isn't it wonderful the Lord is now in your heart? He said, no, that's fine, Sarah, was a scratchman, this time.

Somewhat she did not determine the exact area of the heart, but he did. But friend, it's wonderful to have the Lord Jesus taking up his residence in your heart. Confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord.

Believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead. Thou shalt be saved. So here was something that could help him in his need.

Now, finally, we have the wonderment. This man experienced new power. We read that if ankle bones were strengthened and leaping up, he walked.

And that is the privilege, the prerogative of the child of God. When we have this experience, when we accept the Lord Jesus, when we receive him into our hearts, we experience new power. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not sin.

The Apostle Paul says, I can do all things through Christ who keeps on pouring his strength into me. And we enter into new areas and we enjoy a new power when we find Christ as our personal Savior. We will never know what can be really accomplished through the avenue of prayer.

We know it works. And we know that it can work more if we apply ourselves to it. But not only did he experience new power, but this man, he walked a new path.

Having been raised from this position of begging his physical melody, he was able to walk. And this is what we expect from those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus. We expect them to walk differently.

When we walk with the Lord in the light of his word, what a glory he sheds on our way. When we do his sweet will, he abides with us still and with all who will trust and obey. There is something radically wrong if we profess the name of Christ and our actions have not changed.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things have passed away and all things become new. While we were in Moncton, New Brunswick, there were some lads who came into the meeting.

They were hippies. In fact, I thought it was a caveman coming in the door. The long hair and the beard and everything that went with it.

But at the termination of the meeting, this lad, he came right forward and he said, Do you mean to claim that Christ can do for me what you have said he can? I said, yes. Well, he said, I won't. He said, I have tried everything.

He had been a heroine in this particular land. But finally he got down on his knees and he confessed his sin. This was his prayer.

He says, Lord, I am a sinner. You know it. Please come into my heart and make me clean.

God answered his prayer. He married another lady upon her conversion. Went back to school.

Got his degree. And six weeks after his conversion, he wrote to me and he signed his name, A son of God, sinner. What changed this lad from hippie land to become the son of a king? Christ.

He is the answer to all our problems. He found in the Lord Jesus all that he looked for and more. And you know, no one the poet says was better in scar.

And the auctioneer for it scarcely was his wife. To waste his time in the old violin, but he held it up with a smile. One of my good folks he crossed.

Who will start the bidding for me? One dollar. And who will make it two? And on with two and going, but no. From the room far back, a gray-haired man came forward and picked up the bow.

And wiping the dust from the old violin and tightening the loosened strings, he played a melody pure and sweet. As sweet as the angel sang. The music ceased.

And the auctioneer in a voice that was quiet and low said, Now what am I bid from the old violin? And he held it up with a bow. One thousand dollars and who will make it two? Two thousand dollars and who will make it three? Three thousand once. Three thousand twice and going.

And gone to eat. The people cheer. Some cry, we just don't understand.

Quick came the reply, the touch of the master's hand. And many a man with life out of two, battered and scarred by sin, is auctioned cheap. By a thoughtless crowd, just like the old violin.

A mess of porridge, a glass of wine, a game and he travels on. Going once. Going twice.

Going and almost gone, but the master comes. And the thoughtless crowd just don't quite understand the worth of a soul and the change that is wrought by the touch of the master's hand. And new life is the experience of those who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As my time was gone, very habitually, not only did he enjoy new power and walk a new pathway, but this man, he found new partners. It says that he went with them into the temple. And we have found experientially that there are nothing, no one, like the people of God.

We enjoy new partners when we come into the fellowship of God's beloved people. And he's found, in verse 8, in a new place. He's no longer outside begging, but he's inside the temple praising God.

That is the effectiveness of the production of the work of the Spirit in the life of a sinner who confesses his sin and accepts the Lord Jesus as his personal Savior. And finally, he enjoyed the privilege of new praise. Inside the temple, praising God for what he had done for him.

And we say, God, that there were more praise in our hearts towards the Lord Jesus who has done so much for us. So there we have the wonderment of salvation. The Lord help us to appreciate again the gospel and the effect that it has upon those who are in great need.

Shall we pray? Father, we bow in thy presence and we thank thee again for the Lord Jesus. We thank thee for what he has done for us. We marvel at his death and we thank thee for the plan of salvation that became effective through that death.

And if there be any with us this morning and they are not enjoying thy salvation, we do pray this morning that they will bow at the feet of the Lord Jesus and acknowledge that he is Lord to thy glory. We ask these things in the Savior's name. Amen.

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