

Cities of Refuge

by Paris Reidhead

Paris Reidhead's sermon explores the biblical concept of Cities of Refuge as a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ's role as both Savior and Judge.

Duration: 54:27

Scripture: Joshua 20:7-9, Matthew 6:33, John 1:29, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:12-14

Topics: "Refuge"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of being a witness for Christ and leading others to salvation. He compares believers to markers and witnesses, pointing people towards Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away sin. The speaker also highlights the two sides of the picture - the avenging justice of God for those who reject Him, and the grace and salvation offered to those who turn to Jesus. The sermon concludes with an urgent plea for sinners to come to Jesus and find rest for their souls.

Transcript

Will you turn, please, to Numbers chapter thirty-five and Joshua chapter twenty. I shall begin reading with the ninth verse of the thirty-fifth chapter. And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye become over Jordan into the land of Canaan, then ye shall appoint you cities, to be cities of refuge for you, that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person it unawares.

And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger, that the manslayer die not until he stand before the congregation in judgment. And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge. Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be the cities of refuge.

These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither. And if ye smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death.

And if ye smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer. The murderer shall surely be put to death. Or if ye smite him with a hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer.

The murderer shall surely be put to death. The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer. When he meeteth him, he shall slay him.

But if ye thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of weight, that he die, or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die, he that smote him shall surely be put to death. For he is a murderer. The revenger of blood shall slay the murderer when he meeteth him.

But if ye thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him anything without laying of weight, or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm, then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments. And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled, and he shall abide in it until the death of the high priest which was anointed with the holy oil. But if the slayer shall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled, and the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the slayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, because he should have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high priest.

But after the death of the high priest, the slayer shall return unto the land of his possession. Now please to Joshua, the twentieth chapter, in just a few verses. There's no use reading the first six verses, it's a reiteration of what we've just read, but beginning with the seventh verse.

And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, and Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah. And on the other side, the east side Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person it unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood until he stood before the congregation.

These two portions of scripture make it clear to us that God had thought for the customs of the people, the customs of the land into which He was bringing His people, and the customs of the people Israel, for they were Semite, you remember, and carried with them the same practices as you would find in other tribes at the time. Whereas we are about to consider the implications of this, these instructions, I want you to know now that the cities of refuge are a beautiful type and picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see Him typified here, we see Him pictured here, foreshadowed here.

And having said this, I want you to bear in mind that you will be able to establish analogies as we proceed with some of the practical details that were involved in the location of the Levites. Now, remember that God brought the tribes of Israel into the land. He declared expressly that the Levites should not be given an area.

They were not to be given a district as theirs. They had no inheritance in Israel. Perhaps the best picture that you could find of the church anywhere in the Old Testament in this particular period would be in the Levites.

Here the Christian is seen as God's peculiar person, represented by this one tribe that he chose to have the privilege of coming into his presence in service and in worship and in ministry at the tabernacle.

Therefore, in the Levites we will expect to find something that is instructive to us. Now, God provided for His own.

He intended His people--His Levites--to be supplied. The rest of the tribes were given the privilege of working the land and following the industries and businesses that they would have located in the cities that they captured. But not so the Levites.

They were peculiarly God's own. He was to be their inheritance. They were to find in Him all that they needed.

The tithe of the people was brought for their support. Each of the tribes was to contribute a tenth. Not in any official sense that the tribe collected it particularly, but the individual would bring his tithe for the support of the Levites.

Then, of course, they were to bring in addition to that the offerings that were required. You may wonder as you go into the next twenty-five days or so whether or not this provision for thirty percent income tax deduction had its rise with a benevolent Congress. It did not, actually.

There were rabbinical scholars that made diligent study of the book and came before congressional committees and presented evidence that if Jewish people were to give everything that the Bible required that they give, it would be a thirty percent. And on the basis of the fact that less deduction would be an infringement of religious rights in a free country, you are allowed a thirty percent income tax deduction. Now, mind you, you're allowed it, but you must understand that it's going to require considerable documentation.

And incidentally, this is one of the reasons why we're so anxious for you to be assisted, if we can, by providing you with the means whereby it can be vouchsafed. There are times when people will come to us and say, well, could you give me some record? Well, if we have it, we can. But it's still the fact that our government has recognized that God makes requirements.

God has imposed upon his people responsibilities. The tithe went to the Levites, and then the additional went for the special occasions, the feast days and the sacrifices that were required. But this was the heritage of the Levites.

They had nothing more. They were to be God's people, God's own, for the purpose of revealing him in a special way to the rest of the eleven tribes. Now he ordered that the Levites were to be dispersed into forty-eight cities.

They were to be scattered throughout all Israel. His reason for doing this, I am sure, was that he wanted everyone in Israel to be in close proximity to a Levitical city, in order that there might be the means by which they could be continually taught and instructed in the things of the Lord. I think perhaps this is another analogy for us.

We can see that God put you in that office. As it were, you are his Levitical city. He wanted the people that work where you work to have an opportunity to see how one of God's own will live, how he will conduct himself, how he will manifest the religious beliefs that he has under pressure.

And incidentally, sometimes when you think you are being persecuted, all that is really happening is that the people with you are wanting to, well, they want to simply see whether or not what you testify to, and

they have reason to suspect you believe, if you have not told them, whether or not it really works. God wanted you to be in proximity to sinners for the same reason that he wanted the cities of the Levites to be scattered throughout all Israel. He wanted everyone to have access to a witness and a testimony concerning him.

In addition to the scattering of the Levites in this general sense, he made specific place for six cities of refuge. To understand why he has done this, you must have some insight into the old custom of avenging by blood. You will understand that there was no central law, no central administration of justice.

For centuries, the only one that could execute justice was a member of the family. The blood avenger was probably the nearest kinsman, the father, the brother, someone very close to the one slain. It was his responsibility to count himself the kinsman who would exact retribution for the crime against the one slain.

It was a family duty. Had the avenger refused to pursue the slayer, his own family would have turned on him, if not to slay him, at least to ignore him and disown him, because they would have considered him derelict in his duty. Now, there was a good purpose served by this, because it was a restraint against evil.

It was some kind of law. It did have the effect of causing a man to think twice before he would raise his fist in slaughter. He knew that the nearest relative would be on his trail and pursue him.

Now, mind you, not just for a day, not just for a month, but it would make his life work. That would be his task. He wouldn't be free for anything else until the murderer was slain.

Might spend years in doing it, but nevertheless, this would be his responsibility. Now, as I say, it did restrain crime in some measure, but of course you can understand that it got out of control very soon. It wouldn't be too difficult for someone to say, well, my brother was worth two of your family, and then two would be slain, and there would then develop blood feuds that still characterize certain parts of the desert.

The Arabs have their heavy vendettas and feuds that continue to the place where if one were to even go into a certain area, it would be equivalent to his death. This characterized primitive tribes in our own land during the time when it was inhabited by the Indians. We saw the same thing happening in Africa while we were there.

There were certain men that said they never would leave their tribal area because if they were to go into the district of the other tribe, it would be as good as their life forfeit. Now, God took cognizance of the practices of the people. If he had passed a law prohibiting the avenging of blood, it would have been pointless and meaningless.

It would have cut right across one of the great bulwarks that they had in social protection. To have done nothing would have been to have encouraged evil. Therefore, God took such steps as were appropriate to the testimony that Israel was bringing to the nations around them.

He said that he would appoint six cities and scatter these cities, three on the east side of Jordan, three on the west, so that no one in Israel would be more than a day away from a city on foot. So that if by accident, without intention, without motive, a man were to kill another, he could flee to a city and there be protected until the elders of Israel had an opportunity to try the case and find out whether or not it was accidental or whether it was murder. If it was murder, he was turned over to the avenger of blood.

If, on the other hand, it was accidental, provision was made for him to live by staying in the Levitical city. This was God's means of improving the conditions that prevailed and of giving to us a glorious picture of so great salvation as we have it in our Lord Jesus Christ. The law of the city of refuge did provide for the punishment of the guilty.

The elders would examine his testimony and evidence. If they were satisfied that it was accidental, man was free to live in the city that he had chosen as long as he wished. And when the priest died, he could return to his own home.

But it did not provide for the protection of the guilty. The man who had murdered would find no protection by fleeing to the city. What lessons will this give to us? What can we learn from these facts that we've been presenting? First, we will look at the avenger.

It's interesting to note that the avenger is given the same name as the kinsman and redeemer. Now, I do not know if this is a correct pronunciation, but the name and the word in the Greek we would spell in our spelling, G-O-E-L. The G-O-E-L, I believe it is.

And it's identically the same word as you have for kinsman-redeemer. The nearest of kin was responsible to avenge the death of one of his family. We saw a few weeks ago that our Lord Jesus Christ was the kinsman-redeemer.

He it was that in our behalf was willing to satisfy the law. He died for us. But there is another sense in which you must view the Lord Jesus.

He not only is kinsman-redeemer for you, but he is the avenger of blood for his father. He is the one that has been appointed as the judge of all the earth. If you would care to turn to Acts, the seventeenth chapter and the thirty-first verse, you would see our Lord in this capacity.

You see him here in this message, this sermon of Paul, in which he says that God has commanded all men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed day, first a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath appointed, God's kinsman, God's avenger. He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, him that he hath raised him from the dead. And in Revelation, the last chapter, the twenty-first chapter, you have that stirring, moving, overwhelming picture actually of the Lord Jesus as he is there.

In the twentieth chapter I shall read from in the eleventh verse, And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. For the Lord Jesus Christ now is the avenger of blood. He is the one that is going to deal with those that have broken the law and have stood in open defiance against his Father, done despot to him.

The Lord Jesus now is there, no longer the meek and lowly lamb, but the lion that sits upon the throne in splendor. And then here is the twelfth verse declares, I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life.

And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them. And they were judged every man according to their works.

And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire, and this is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the second death. If somehow the Spirit of God can cause us to realize that our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the kinsman redeemer, but the avenger of blood, our picture of him will be far clearer and our understanding will be far better.

We have perhaps, as some have charged us, been so guilty of magnifying the love of God and the mercy of God that we have forgotten the judgment of God and God's wrath with sin and God's anger with sinners. And, beloved, it behooves us, I feel, never to put undue emphasis on one or the other of these aspects of our Lord's character. He is the one who endured the agony of Calvary for you, who died your death, that he might satisfy the law on your behalf and redeem you, charged and held by death as you were.

He is that. But he is also the one that is going to see to it that his father is honored with the honor that is his due. And the day has been appointed in which God will judge the world by that man whom he hath appointed, Jesus Christ.

And he has signified that he will judge the world by that man, by raising him from the dead. So be it known unto you then, sinner friend, that whereas the Lord Jesus stands before you with nail-pierced hand outstretched and says, Come unto me, all ye that labor under heavy laden, and I will give you rest, this isn't all that the story has to tell. This isn't all the revelation that God has to bring.

For behind you is one who stands with the sword of justice that shall surely fall on all who do despise to the Spirit of grace and count the blood of the Son of the Lord of God an unworthy thing and tread it beneath their impenitent, unbelieving feet. So you have two sides to the picture. You have the Lord Jesus as the avenger of blood that will see to it that every sin is brought into judgment.

Nothing escapes. Then you have him, of course, in the other side of this glorious picture. For all who will, for all who flee to the city of refuge, all who turn from their sin and come to him, you find the Lord Jesus who stands, as it were, with one hand with the sword of justice extended.

Then you see him bear his own breast and stand between you and that sword, and by his identification with you, draw the sword of God's justice from his hand into his own heart. And this gives to us some insight into just how heinous sin is, what a monstrous crime it is not to be treated lightly. Our Lord Jesus saw the mountainous evil in my heart and yours as to be of such a nature that the only way that his Father could be propitiated and justice could be done and righteousness endured and government continued was for the Lord Jesus to gladly consent to the judgment that I deserve to die, but gladly consent to take my place and die my death.

He is the avenger of blood. Within something else, he is also the city of refuge. Six cities were appointed, scattered, as we've said, across Israel in such a way that no man was further than a day's walk from a city.

They were near everyone. The roads were well marked. God required this.

Elsewhere you will find that it was stated that the roads to the city of refuge had to be kept up by the tribe. There could be no impediment in the way. There could be no detours.

The roads had to be open so that at any time a manslayer could flee. There had to be markers on the road. There should be no reason for him to be confused.

At every intersection, at every corner, every place where one in flight could become confused, there had to be a marker so that he could, without delay, make his place, make his way to the city of refuge. And, of course, we were delighted to learn, I'm sure, as we read, that as soon as he touched the suburbs, probably a half a mile, something like that, a perimeter around the city was marked off, clearly marked off, lined off, clearly lined off, no question. It had to be marked off because as soon as the manslayer should come to the suburbs and throw himself so much as a foot over the line, the pursuer couldn't strike him.

He was safe as soon as he touched the suburbs. Our Lord Jesus Christ has given to us in this a lovely picture, a lovely picture of himself as the one who in great love has put himself come down near to where you are. God is not far from every one of us.

For in Jesus Christ, God became flesh and dwelt among us that we might see him and behold him and understand him and realize who he is and what he is. And the Lord Jesus Christ then became the city of refuge located near where you are so that you wouldn't have any problem or difficulty. And then, of course, in great love and great compassion and great consideration, he said, go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

He didn't want one nation without its city of refuge, without its knowledge of himself. He didn't want one person to be in darkness. He wanted all to hear.

The road has been prepared by him. He paved it. He was the one that had to remove the mountains that intervened, that were barriers to himself.

He took them away. He gave us this lovely revelation so simple that even a child can see it. He marked the way so clearly that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err in his coming to Christ.

Anyone can do it. The path is so well marked. You say, well, I'd like to be saved, but I don't know how to be saved.

No, that isn't the problem. There isn't any problem about how. The world may raise its voice in indictment of the church saying, you haven't told us how.

Perhaps if we've been guilty of any failure, it's we've told people how to be saved before we've told them why they need to be saved and told them the law of God, which means that the avenger of blood is behind them. But how to be saved, there's no problem about that. That's been made clear.

The road is to be kept clear. As far as you're concerned, you're both the road and the marker. And when men see you, they ought to see in you the means by which they can come to Christ.

You ought to be able to say, follow me as I follow Christ. Men and women ought to watch your life and want to know Christ because they know you. They ought to be able to come in right behind where you are and be led to him.

He's put you there in close proximity to the manslayer, the lost soul, that you can be the means of pointing him to Christ. I want to ask you, have you let the way grow over with thorns? Have you let rubbish come in? Have you let the sign become obscure? If somebody coming up to you and say, which way to eternal life? Looking at your life, say, well, this person surely doesn't know how. They do what I do.

They have the same attitudes I have. They are the same kind of person that I am. Well, how it does thrill my heart when someone will come to me and say, you know, I'm not a Christian yet, but for so many years I've been working with so-and-sos in this church, and this young lady or this man has been there beside me, and I know I'm lost, but I'm seeing how to come to Christ because I'm with them.

I wonder what the lost find in you. Do they find a way that they can follow, a path that's plain, or do they find it obscured and hidden because of the trash and the rubbish that's come in to block the way that the manslayer, seeing you, hearing you were a Christian, coming to you, would find that you're interested in everything else but his soul? You're to be the way. You're to be the marker.

You're to be the witness. You're to be the one standing, pointing toward the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. He put you there for that purpose.

And something else. You're to be the one that's to stand there beside the manslayer and warn him to flee from the wrath to come. I think perhaps we haven't had enough preaching in this pulpit or in our day on the faith justice of God and the righteousness of God and the holiness of God and the wrath of God against sin and sinners.

There's a book that I want every one of you to buy. It isn't available yet in the bookstore. I'm sure I just received my copy from the publisher this, on Friday.

But I want every home to have it. I want every one of you to have it as soon as you can get it. It's Joseph Alleyne's Alarm to the Unconverted.

Alleyne's alarm was standard in the Scottish English home for three centuries. In fact, James Stewart, who was here several years ago for our first missionary convention of the enlarged type, has told us how it was a little lad in his mother's home that he heard her read from Alleyne's Alarm to the Unconverted. I hope, I want you to get it.

I'm urging that you get it and that you have it and that you read it and that you saturate yourself with it, because I believe that we have been derelict in that we have seen the manslayer and have not warned him to flee from the wrath to come, that the avenger of blood is surely on him and that he must flee. The sense of urgency has gone from so much of our witness. The sense of concern, the sense of danger in which the sinner stands, we fail to realize that he's only one breath out of the pit.

I do not believe in alarming sinners as much as I believe in alarming Christian to the plight of sinners. If I can't get you concerned, then there is no reason for me to get the unsaved concerned, because when they come in with concern and find you unconcerned, they'll say, this has been a moral deception. But oh, when there is concern.

There's nothing that moves men like your concern. They won't become concerned about their soul until you concern them. Believe me, they won't.

It's your concern, your sense of their danger, their jeopardy, your interest in their never-dying soul that will do more than anything else to awaken them to their need. Perhaps I've told you, it's been some years since I have, but I'll never forget the experience we had in Little Falls, Minnesota. They called me to the pastorate there in 1940, the fall of 40, and I began ministry in January of 41.

And the first thing we asked for was two weeks' cottage prayer meetings, a small community of 6,500 people. We could all meet in one home. There'd be about 30 or 40 of us there.

But this particular occasion, we were meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Leo Link. Now, Leo didn't go to church. He had two lovely daughters, Shayla and Sharon.

Mrs. Link was an earnest Christian, but Leo just never went to church. He used to, when I first, first time I met him, and this was just a few days before, I said, well, Mr. Link, I didn't see you in church. Oh, no, he said, I go to the round church.

You see, I don't want anybody to get me in a corner. And he laughed and thought this was quite funny, that he never went to any, any place where the gospel was preached. And we prayed for him, of course, in a casual way.

But this particular night at the Link home, when we came in, we said, where's Leo, Mrs. Link? She said, why, he's gone down to the garage. He said he had several jobs that he wanted to check up on and one that he wanted to finish. Had to go out first thing in the morning.

And so he left right after supper. We went to prayer. The Spirit of God was on us.

It was in the middle of the second week. There was a real burden of prayer. And Evelyn Link started to pray.

And she couldn't pray but just a few words until she broke. And the sob that rose up was, oh, God, save Leo, save Leo. And then there was silent sobbing on the part of the company because all of a sudden it became over us that Leo was hanging over the open mouth of a devil's hell.

That his mind was blinded by the God of this world and the weight of his iniquity was enough to push him into the pit. And the only thing that kept him out was the restraining grace of God. And we saw his jeopardy and saw his plight and saw his need.

And we all echoed the cry. Then Roy Larson, one of the deacons, began to pray, tried to pray. He prayed to a few words of usual introduction to Roy's prayer.

You could almost make it a duet when he started to pray. You knew what he was going to say for the first three or four sentences anyway. And then he couldn't say another word, not another word.

He just broke. Oh, God, save Leo, save Leo. And that was the prayer meeting.

Just a sobbing cry. Oh, God, save Leo. His jeopardy, his danger, his need, the darkness of his heart, the blindness of his spirit.

After it was over, Sheila, a little girl then about ten or eleven, came to me. She said, Pastor, wouldn't you like to see my new bicycle? Oh, I said, honey, I'd love to see it. Let's go down.

We went downstairs. And to my amazement, standing right under the living room, with hands on a tool, was Leo Link. He hadn't gone downtown.

He'd gone down the basement. And he'd heard his friends, his wife and the deacon, up above him on the little floor. Oh, God, save Leo.

It wasn't tears in his eyes, but if I've ever seen a man unconscious on his feet, it was Leo. He was overcome. He was overwhelmed.

He couldn't speak. Something had happened. He had discovered that people were concerned about him.

The next week, W.B. Riley, pastor, my pastor from Minneapolis, came and gave us a night's meeting. The house was filled. Invitation was given.

No sooner was the first word said, will you come, than Leo Link got up and came down and Evelyn with him. I said, what happened? After we'd talked and prayed, I said, what happened? He said, you know, I didn't think there was anything to religion until I heard Roy Larson and Evelyn sobbing, that I'd be saved. And you're out in the field, and around you is the event, is the manslayer.

He's guilty. He's dead in his sins. He's slain, unless something happens.

He'll perish forever. His hands are filled with blood, and his heart is filled with sin. The man, the avenger of blood, is hard on him because of his sin.

And you're beside him. Can you let him stand there? You ought to be saying to a man, see your crime, see your sin, and listen to what God has said. Every sin shall come into judgment.

None shall escape. Flee to the city of refuge. This is the way.

This is the path. Let nothing stop you. Move.

Go. Surely if you were in Israel and saw a young man raise his ox, gold, and find it, unknowingly strike a person in the head and take their life, you wouldn't say, stay for tea. Let's talk about this.

You'd say, dear friend, rise and flee. The avenger of blood is on his way. Flee from the wrath to come.

Flee from. And you'd go with him away until he was well on the path, and then say, now you must go alone. And when you come to the suburbs, cast yourself there.

Cast yourself there. And God has put you in such a place because there is a city of refuge, and you are the one that are to stand by the manslayer, and to go to Christ, to none but Christ. It isn't just to flee, but it's to flee to Christ.

Here you find a manslayer. He's guilty. And he says, no, there's no use for me to go.

There's no use for me. The city isn't for me. I know I didn't mean to kill the man, but those cities were for other people.

It couldn't mean me. And you turn to him and say, but listen, aren't you guilty? Aren't you under the sentence of death? Aren't you as good as dead? Look, here comes the man. And it said, a city of refuge for the one that had slain.

Be on your way. Go, man. Don't sit here.

Can you see him? I see him as he goes, as he runs, as fleet as he can, weary, passing through the field and seeing not the flowers over the brook and hearing not the ripple of the water against the stones and up the hill and missing the panoramic view. For there's only one thing he wants. The city of refuge.

He must be delivered, until at length he comes to the place, and behind him is the pursuer, the avenger. And there, with his nostrils losing blood and his breath coming in gasping sobs, he casts himself over the line and lies there unconscious. But he's inside the perimeter.

He's inside the suburb. He's in the city of refuge. And this is your responsibility.

You've been there. You were under the sentence of death. You knew your doom, and you know theirs.

And you know there is a place of deliverance, but only one. The only place is that place that he made where the wound carved in his side, cleft in the rock where he could hide, where you could come. Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

Let the water and the blood from thy riven side which flowed be of sin the double cure. Save from wrath and make me pure. This is your privilege, your responsibility.

And if you do not warn them to flee, then their blood will God require at your hand. And when the man slayer has the avenger plunge his knife into the heart, their blood is in your hand. Think of those that in hell may rise up one day and say, you lived with me in the same house, and you never warned me to flee from the wrath to come.

You ate with me at the same table, and you never prayed with me to flee to the city of refuge. You played games with me. You enjoyed relaxation with me.

You went hunting with me. You worked with me side by side, and yet you never planned with me to flee to Christ. Your blood, my blood is on your hands, city of refuge.

There are six cities, and all the lovely names. So you can be perfectly safe in pointing anyone to Christ. The first name in the Northwest was Kadesh, and it means righteousness.

And the first thing that you do when you come to Christ is have him give you his righteousness, a covering, a clothing, a panoply that he gives. So you flee to Kadesh and have righteousness. The second city is Shechem, and Shechem means the shoulder or strength.

And so when you come for cleansing in place of your rags, for purity in place of your filth, you find not only cleansing, but you find strength and power of the risen Christ to get under you in your feebleness and weakness to hold you up. And the third city is Hebron, and Hebron means friendship and love. And you find in Jesus Christ that the great heart longing in need of your spirit is met.

And God himself who has loved you with an everlasting love, the lover of your soul to whose bosom you have fled, will fill your heart with the overwhelming outflow of himself so that it can be said the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost. And you flee to Hebron. And then across the river, the first city was Bezer, and Bezer means security, certainty, assurance, and rest.

And having come for righteousness and having come for strength and having come for comfort and love, then to find security and certainty and rest so that you're hidden, that nothing can find you. Dear to God, you cannot dearer be, for in the person of his Son you are as dear as he. Near to God, why, you cannot nearer be, for in the person of his Son you are as near as he.

At Bezer was there security. And then at Ramoth, Ramoth meant heights. And then to be taken up out of your weakness and out of your failure and out of yourself into what he is, to enjoy him and delight in him

and love him.

Taken up into heights and then to Golan, which means circle, the everlasting, endless life, the glorious fulfillment of all. And in the sixth city, this lovely revelation of the fullness of Christ. And with every breath you breathe and every sinner you meet, you can say, flee, flee, flee to the city of refuge, for you find in Christ righteousness and strength and love and security and heights that satisfy an eternity that never ends.

All in him. In the highlands of Scotland, a young man by the name of Lamont got into an argument with a young Scotchman. And unknowingly, not intending to do it, but nonetheless in anger, for his anger hadn't carried him to the place of murder, Lamont drew his knife and in scuffling with young MacGregor, did him to the heart and he died.

And immediately Lamont broke from the inn where he was staying and dashed out into the night over the mountain pass in the highlands and finally came to a house and he rapped on the door. A man came and said, who is it? He said, I've just fled from an inn and there's a posse behind me and there are men that are crying for my blood. I have slain a man, though I meant not to do it and I need protection.

And MacGregor said, when you pass the lintel of my door, you're as safe as I am, for no one will touch you in MacGregor's house. He was the chief of the clan. And no sooner had the young man got in and was safely behind MacGregor when the men came up.

Have you seen a man by the name of Lamont? Why, what's he done? He's slain a man in the inn. And who did he slay? He slew your son, your son. Bring him out to us and let vengeance be done.

And MacGregor looked at him and said, no. I told him that when he stepped under the lintel of my door, he was safe. And as long as he stays here, no man shall touch him, though it was my son he slew, for MacGregor will not break his word.

And for scores of years in the highlands of Scotland, the faithfulness of MacGregor was used as an illustration. But I say to you that there's one whose son bears in his body the wounds that you made by your sin. And the Father said, if you step in and you speak for me, I'll spare you for his sake.

And if you come under the lintel of that door of his grace, all that God is, is for you. For he has made his son a city of refuge. Oh, come then, come.

Come, sinner. Why should I have to have greater concern for your soul than you have for your own? Why should someone else have to have greater burden than you have? Surely it's your soul. Surely it's your need.

Surely it's your life. And surely when you hear that there's pardon and deliverance and forgiveness, no one need plead with you to come. There are gaping wounds carved in the hands of the Son of God that reach out to you tonight, and every wound says, come, come, come, sinner, come.

Come and live. Come and be delivered. But to you that have not, have come, every wound in the body of God's Son says, go, go and tell them.

Go and tell them. Go and tell them that a Savior died. Will you come? You that know him not, shall we pray? There's only one word we can say to you that have come without Christ.

You can't make yourself better. The avenger of blood is on you. There's nothing you can do but rise and flee.

Flee to the city of refuge. Flee to the rock that was cleft for you, to the lamb that was slain for you. Come to Christ.

Come as you are. Come without tarrying. Come without waiting.

If you make yourself fit, you'll not come at all. Just come. Throw down the arms of your weapons, the arms of your warfare, and sue for peace.

For you've slain by your sin the Son of God, but yet he waits to receive you, to pardon you, and to give you life. Come, come, come to Christ. Will you come? Just a moment, we're going to sing.

Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come. I want to say just a wee word to the Christians. Keep your eyes closed.

You can see it better that way. But can you see the blood of men on your hands, the people you've worked with, to whom you never spoke, never pled with them to flee from the wrath to come? They could say of you in that day, rising up from the lake of flame, you never cared for my soul. You knew my plight, you knew my crime, you knew my doom, and you never warned me to flee from the wrath to come.

Can you see your sin? He said, if you warn them not, they will die in their sin, but their blood will I require at thy hand. This is serious, my dear. The Christian life is not a game children play, but it's a responsibility that men carry, who pledge themselves to serve the risen Christ.

Have you served him by pleading with the lost to come? Have you served them by earnest prayer for those around you that God has thrust you into contact with through your work and your residence? Have you? Or is there blood on your hands? If it'll help you any tonight to deal with the failure and the weakness and the sin of a silence that dooms men, why don't you come and by your coming say, I must, I must, I must be released to warn men and plead with men to come to Christ. Will you do it? Father of our Lord Jesus, now to see us in eternity bound men and women, some among us that are still under the sword of thy wrath. Oh, we plead with all outside of Christ to come.

Thy spirit is pleading, thy word is entreating. Move them to come tonight, to come and cast themselves wholly at those nail-torn feet. But then, oh God, we're burdened for thine own, who've been so careless and indifferent to the plight of the lost, so unconcerned, so prayerless, so loveless, and have the stains that time will never erase of the blood of men on our hands.

Oh God, give us Calvary love and Holy Ghost wisdom and boldness to witness for thee as dying men to dying men, in the name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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