

Family of God

by Vance Havner

Vance Havner's sermon emphasizes the importance of the Family of God, the cost of true discipleship, and the joy of community in Christ.

Duration: 43:14

Scripture: Matthew 16:16, Matthew 16:23, Mark 10:29

Topics: "Family Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on their childhood and the importance of keeping the faith like a child. They talk about their father always hosting the preacher and the deep conversations they had about faith. The speaker also mentions hearing great black preachers and emphasizes the importance of eternal life. They discuss the need for genuine conversions and commitment to the faith, rather than superficial or temporary beliefs. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging listeners to reconcile with others and express gratitude to those who have been a blessing in their lives.

Transcript

The prayer led in 1919 in Luke 18. We read from Mark, and it goes like this. And it follows, as I mentioned earlier, the account of the rich young ruler and his refusal of the great call of our Lord to discipleship.

And as he walked away, because he loved his money more than he loved God, Peter was standing there with the rest of the disciples and saw what went on, and he can see the connection, as though Peter was saying, well now, Lord, we didn't do like that. Verse 28, then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all and have followed thee. And Matthew adds that Peter asked, What shall we have? What's the payoff? And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land for my sake and the gospel.

I know this very proof of what comes next, that he shall receive an hundredfold, not in heaven, but now. In this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and land, with persecution. And then comes the next world, and in the world to come eternal life.

But many that are first shall be last, and the last first. Peter was the sort that you'd expect to say, Lord, we've given up everything. Now, what do we get out of this? He was the most American, somebody has said, of all the disciples.

And I think that's a pretty good definition. Nearly everything in the gospels that he said was a mistake. Let us do here three tabernacles.

This shall not be unto thee. Thou shalt never wash my feet. I will not deny thee.

All the mistakes. No wonder the Bible says he said, not knowing what he said. But he did hit a high water mark one time in Matthew 16.

And Jesus asked, who do men say that I am, and then who do you say? And he said, thou art to Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus said, as I had indicated earlier, you didn't get this from out of your own head. Flesh and blood does not reveal this unto thee.

Not by reason, but by revelation. And yet a few verses further down in the very same chapter, the same Lord who had said to this same man, flesh and blood did not give you this, said thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. How fast you can fall in a few verses.

All the way from the mountain peaks of confession to the swamps of contradiction in a few verses. Well, Simon Peter was like that all his life, and I'm glad we have a character like that in the New Testament. Have you ever wondered why did Jesus kick out such a crowd anyhow, of twelve men, nobody ever heard of them, fishermen, tax collectors? Why didn't he get some rabbis converted? Somebody with an education.

Why did he pick up that crew? Nobody would ever have given them a second look. And they were always making mistakes. In the garden of Gethsemane, you remember that Peter sliced away with his sword and cut off one of the ears of one of the servants of the high priest.

And as busy as my Lord was with the whole world to save, he had to take time out for a repair job right here in the garden of Gethsemane. And even after Pentecost, Peter wavered at Antioch and had to be publicly called down by Paul, which is illuminating. He was filled with the Spirit now.

He had already spoken with tongues at Pentecost. If being filled with the Spirit and all the rest is a guarantee against backsliding, it didn't work, because he made one of the greatest mistakes of his life. Now the rich young ruler had walked away, and Peter was saying, we haven't refused you, we've left all.

And he got out his pencil to figure out the fringe benefit. What do we get out of this? We always hear preaching about what you get in heaven for serving Jesus. That's not what Jesus is talking about here.

He mentions that when he said, and in the world to come, eternal life. I know he said you'll be repaid in the next world too, but this is not pie in the sky that I'm reading about tonight. What does he mean? Well, it was spoken to a certain group.

Not every Tom, Dick, and Harry comes in on this. And if you will go over to Luke 14, you will find something else very much like this. Verse 25, And there went great multitude with him, and he turned and said unto them, If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Now, three cannot here in a row. Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. Then he gave two little illustrations of what he meant.

For which of you intending to build a tower? Now watch this. The Holy Spirit throws in this little phrase. Which of you intending to build a tower, sit it not down first.

God wants you to know what you're doing. There's too many snap judgment conversions these days. Sort of popcorn religions popping all over the place that hasn't sold out anything.

Sitteth not down first and counteth the cost. Whether he hath sufficient census, lest haply after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all that behold, begin to mock him, saying this man began to build and was not able to finish. And then illustration number two.

Or what king going to make war against another king, sit it not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand, or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage and desireth convictions of peace. So likewise, this is ten off number three. Whosoever he be of you, let forsake not all that he hath.

Keep ten off, and he might be some. Now that intermean footage says it doesn't mean anything. And Jesus made it very severe.

A.T. Robertson, the great Greek scholar, said this is the language of exaggerated contrast. But don't water it down, he said, until the point is gone. We preachers very conveniently explain it, and everybody seems to accept that explanation that Jesus simply means that we should love him so much that all other love should be as hatred in comparison.

And that sounds good, and that sort of lets us off the hook. But think again now about this. There's a lot wrapped up in a statement like this.

There must be a radical difference between our love for Jesus in degrees, as well as every other way, and our love for the dearest one in this world. I don't know many people I think have gotten around to that. Peter and others had left all, but that wasn't much, an old boat and a few fishing nets.

And Peter was talking like he'd given away a million dollars to Father Jesus. Sometimes this loss is actual. You have to give away everything.

Sometimes, as with the rich young roomies, Jesus had just asked him to sell out Lock, Stock and Barrel. Sometimes in heathen lands you have to lose your family and friends, and sometimes anywhere, position and possessions. And if it's not an actual loss, it must be an attitudinal loss.

It must be an attitude, if not an act. Turn to 1 Corinthians 7, 29. But this I say, brethren, the time is short.

It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none. All down through these verses, as though, as though. And they that weep as though they wept not.

And they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not. And they that buy as though they possessed not. And they that use this world as not abusing it or using it to the full, for the fashion of this world passeth way.

Now, he didn't say here that you had to give up your wife. He didn't say you had to give up your money. But as though.

And that's about the same thing as this other one. And Jesus said there are not many rich people going to heaven. That's not because God's got anything against rich people.

But it's mighty hard for a rich person to be poor in spirit. And they are the ones who inherit the kingdom of heaven. Now, there are some wealthy people who manage to do that.

But not many. And then Paul said not many wise, mighty, and noble would make it. The wise are the intellectuals trying to get their head first and you get their heart first.

The only thing I know of with its head and heart in the same place is cabbage. And you're no cabbage. And then the mighty.

How many presidents of the United States can you think of that you believe were spirit-filled, born-again, New Testament Christians? I'm hard put to, it's run up much of a roll. I think that there's one that comes to mind when William McKinley lay after his assassination. The doctor who attended him said, until now I always said you couldn't be a Christian and a politician.

And he said, I've had to change my mind. Because McKinley was a devout Christian. We had some of it.

But not many. And not many noble. That's the blue blood.

Always bragging about their ancestors. And the trouble with this ancestry business is it's like sweet potatoes. The best part's usually under the ground.

And they're not going to heaven in droves, my friend. They're just not going in great numbers. Now these early Christians knew what it meant to give up everything for Christ and the gospel.

They lived in danger and in persecution and death always close at hand. And despised and scorned and pilgrims and strangers, exiles and aliens in this world. We don't live like they had to.

This has become a rather plush and a rather posh generation. We stand in our elegant churches and I almost run a chill. And I see our Sunday morning crowd singing to the old rugged cross.

I'll ever be through with shame and reproach. Gladly there. Most of them might as well be singing Mary had a little lamb.

I've been in this business a long time. And you eventually wake up or you better to the superficiality of most of our religion, isn't it? Now what did Jesus mean? In this life you get all of this. You say, well, what do you mean? How do I get more brethren and sisters and fathers and mothers and all the rest of it? Well, he meant this.

That while these disciples lost this world, they gained a new one. Not in the hereafter, but here and now in the church. They found the new family in the Lord.

And they met in homes that didn't have any church buildings back then. And they had love feasts. The Methodists used to have love feasts.

And it preceded the Lord's Supper sometimes. And they found when they became Christians that although maybe their father and mother had turned their back on them, they found new fathers and mothers in Christians who took them as children and were unto them as fathers and mothers. Jesus said in Matthew 12, 50, Whosoever shall do the will of my Father in heaven, the same as my brothers, my sisters, and my mother.

And Paul said in Romans 16, 13, Give my greeting to Rufus and to his mother and mine. He didn't mean his own mother, but Rufus' mother had been like a mother to Paul. That's what he meant.

I have found in the church a new family. I have found in my earlier days as a boy preacher, I found mothers and fathers in the Lord, and down through the years, sisters and brothers, and also sons and daughters in the gospel. And that's a wonderful family.

Not related. I don't know how many namesakes I had. I'd be interested to know now.

I hear of a new one every once in a while. I wish I could get that tribe all together, but they'd have to come from all over the country, and I don't know how you do it. And I appreciate that family, but I belong to the family and the children of God, wherever they're born again, and know Jesus.

And I hear from them all over the country. Last Fourth of July, a year ago, I was supposed to preach at Moody's Church in Chicago. You know, it was on Sunday that year, and they were going to have a great meeting there and expect you to have a full house, and it seats 4,000.

And we were going to have a patriotic religious rally, and I got up that morning and got ready to go and was teased with some kind of cramps that doubled me up, and I thought, well, maybe I'll get better. And I got on the plane. The farther I went, the sicker I got.

And I got up there. I said to Warren Wierse, the pastor, you'd better get a doctor. I don't think I can preach tonight.

And we got one, and he said, well, I can't give you an attitude check now. He took me to the airport and put me on the next plane going south. And I had me a good \$200 trip up to Chicago and right straight back, never preached till late up there at all.

And that's a frustration, believe me. And I was to be at Winona Lake next week at that great conference there, and of course I missed it. And when I got back and got out of the hospital after a few days, and they couldn't find anything, said, well, it could have been one day flu, may have been domain.

And then that good old word, when they don't know what's the matter with you, a virus. I can tell you've had one. When they don't know what it is, that's what it is.

They give you a pack of pills and send you home and hope you'll probably survive. So I came home, and when I got back to my apartment in the hospital, there was a sack of letters and cards. You never saw such a thing.

The only bigger batch I ever got was when my dear wife had passed away four years ago. And it was from the family. My Winona Lake family from Illinois and Indiana and Michigan and all that radius around.

And I just have that all the time, and it's a wonderful experience. That's the family of God. If they know Jesus, I don't care what denomination they belong to, if they know Jesus, and you think the Baptist's always going to be on one street in heaven and the Methodist's on another, well, I hope you'll visit some of them at any rate.

They do. Brother, I'm a Baptist. I have Baptist convictions and all that.

I don't believe some things some Baptists believe and I don't like some things some Baptists do, but I think their original position, what they started out believing, is pretty close to New Testament standard. But, wherever any man knows Jesus Christ, he's my brother and sister in the Lord, and I'm not going to wait until I get to heaven to recognize it. I think it's a pretty good time here.

And when you said, but he says here, that we're going to get possessions and property, you know, I walked around this summer, I got back to Winona Lake, incidentally, before I move on. This summer, I made it this time, and was to preach and drink for two weeks ago and had another cell of the Krents. They always hit me on the holidays.

No doctor can be found, you know. This time it was Labor Day. But, I don't know how that is, but I went back to Winona Lake and I strove, I used to go there years ago, and nearly every one of those great preachers that were there in the days gone.

I walked by Billy Sundy's old home and thought of the days when he lived there. Went down where Homer O'Deever used to live, and I had many a wonderful meal in that home. Thank God I made it one more time.

We had a great time. But, some folks say, well now, yes, well, I can see then, there's father and mother and so on, but it says houses and lands. What does God do with it? You mean we get in on some real estate down here? Well, yeah.

I've been in many a place where they said, our home's yours. You're a brother in Christ. Why, you know the Bible says, the meat shall inherit you.

Somebody said that's the only way they'll ever get it. Well, we're going to get it, because it belongs to God's people. I have a big time when I get to a new place sometimes and I want to get out in the residential area and start walking.

I run into some of these fancy places that say, keep out, keep off the grass, private property. And I say, well, that's all right. You can have it now, but it's coming back to me one of these days.

Oh, I have the best time, brothers and sisters. I say to them, now you've got the lease, but I've got the deed. Now, who owns this land? It belongs to the people of God.

Now, that won't hold up in court. But it will hold up in God's court one of these days. Unlike old Dr. Lockridge, that great black preacher, he said, these folks would say, God is dead.

He said, if God is dead, why wasn't I notified? I belong to the family. And you do feel that way about it. And then it says, having nothing and possessing all things.

That's the lot of the Christian. Do you know that a Christian hasn't got anything and a Christian has everything? That's what Paul said. I've suffered the loss of all things.

All things are yours. Paul, Apollos, Jesus, the world, life, death, things, present things to come. That is the paradox of the Christian life.

He has nothing, he has everything. The devil can't do a thing in the world if anybody's got everything and nothing moves. The devil will say, I'll give you this, I'll give you that, and you say, no, thank you, I've got everything.

And then that makes the devil mad and he says, I'll take this, and I'll take that, and the Christian says he can't or don't have anything. Now, what are you going to do with a fellow like that? You can't hate him off if you take off his head. All things are yours tonight if you're a Christian.

Everything but you. And you are Christ. And Christ is God.

Every church ought to be a happy family. The most wonderful fellowship this world's ever known. It started out that way and it ought to be like that.

I know they have problems, families have problems, and they still have, the early church did. But you ask any brand new Christian who hasn't been a Christian long enough to find out about us church members, and you ask him and he's happy as can be. He's like a kid with a new toy because this is it.

My, my. Everybody is my brother and my sister. I was in a meeting in Grove Avenue Church in Richmond years ago and a fellow joined the church on Sunday morning.

He didn't know much about all this. But he was a Christian. He came every night.

He didn't know any better. He thought you're supposed to go to church every night. And I hope he didn't try to locate some of the deacons.

But there he was. And I tell him when I pray I feel like saying Lord don't let him catch on. Keep him like a child in his faith and really believe this because that's the way it ought to be.

Oh, I am so glad I'm part of the family's God washed in the fountain cleansed with the blood joined as this Jesus as we travel this thought. When one has a heartache we all share the tears and rejoice in each victory in this family today. I grew up in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in western North Carolina.

Our home was the preacher's headquarters in those horse and buggy days. Always stayed at our house when he came over on Saturday before the fourth Sunday to preach. We only had a sermon a month in those days.

Didn't get much preaching. Of course, some of those sermons were long enough to last a month. But we only had one sermon a month.

And my father always kept the preacher. And he let me sit up late that night while he and the preacher talked about the things of God. And my father loved nothing better.

He should have been a preacher. He had two brothers who were preachers. One a Baptist, one a Methodist.

That preacher earned his bed and board when he came to our house. Because his father asked him Bible questions till midnight every time. Got all the information he could out of him.

But my father loved the things of God. And I remember one thing. No preacher who ever came down home ever called him Mr. Haddon.

Nobody ever called my mother Mrs. Haddon. Just Brother Haddon and Sister Haddon. And that's preaching.

We better get back to that happy fellowship. All the family is gone. People talk about church suppers.

I know we overdo it sometimes. I've heard about poor as a church mouse. I don't know if anything's getting fatter than a church mouse is these days.

But it's a leftover from the old love feast. There isn't any reason why we shouldn't have a blessed time of preaching. We don't just come down and do nothing but eat and gossip like they do anywhere else.

Some of our church suppers might as well be at the Rotary Club or anything else in town. The PTA and the XYZ and all the rest of it. Because they're not talking about Jesus.

But you don't have to talk religion all the time. They'll misunderstand. We can talk other things.

But there ought to be something distinct about it. And today it's too much like the century club. I go from church to church and I find strife and divisions and contention.

They had it in the New Testament, yeah. But that doesn't excuse it. The church ought to be a melting pot.

People ought to be melted down to fires of love. Most of the churches I'm in, more like a pressure cooker. It's a wonder they don't explode with all the divisions.

I know there are no perfect churches. Corinth, Ephesus, Sardis in the New Testament. But they also had Smyrna and Philadelphia.

And those two churches were poor and persecuted. And they didn't need a revival. The others had money and had a reputation of being busy churches.

Jesus said you're dead, lukewarm, and so on. I know we don't get along. Families drunk sometimes.

And that's a shame. I heard of an old couple in an old folks home. She couldn't hear.

And he was trying to cheer her up. And he said, I'm proud of you. And she said, hey.

And he said, I said, I'm proud of you. And she said, I didn't get it. And he said, I'm proud of you.

Oh, she said, I'm proud of you too. Well, I hope it's not that way if you've not. Now, it oughtn't to be that way.

It really shouldn't be that way. As I get in churches that are, we're not proud of each other. We're tired of each other all too often.

And we ought to repent of it. Now, you see this family of God spirit in revivals when you have a real revival. It blooms out of you.

New churches, new movements. Christians love each other. We've lost that simple faith and that pilgrim character and that blessed hope.

Jesus said, Lord, I am with you. If he's along, and if every time we meet he's there, don't you think that ought to do something to us? I wonder what would happen if I could ever get in a meeting where this could change the congregation to believe Jesus is there. And yet, if he's not here, the greatest lie in all history is it's not true.

And what business have we got here tonight if he isn't here? He didn't teach his word if he's not here. What are we doing here? He either is or isn't. Is it just a pretty phrase to roll under our tongues and close up shop? We might as well join the infidels.

If it's not true, nothing matters. And if it is true, nothing else matters. I wonder if we really believe in the presence of the Holy Spirit.

I heard of a boys' school where every morning before classes, the boys had to line up and recite the Apostle's Creed and each one was given one separate statement and agreed, I believe in God the Father Almighty and so on down the line. They got about halfway down the line there came a sudden stop and they looked around and finally one boy spoke up and said, the boy who believes in the Holy Ghost is not here today. Well, I've been in some firm meetings where the people that believed in the Holy Ghost were not there, it seemed to me.

Oh, we used to get mighty happy in the house of God. And I grew up in old-fashioned meetings where Baptists used to shout. That may be news to some of you.

But those country folks would come there every morning in the revival and they were so shy they couldn't have made a public speech for love or money. But when they got to thinking about being members of the family of God and children of the Lord and on the way to heaven, they lost their inhibitions and some of them went all over the place shaking hands, I suppose. And I used to marvel at that.

I sat there, a little old country boy with my feet dangling off the end of the bench and watching, rejoicing in God. We had one old lady go up and down the aisle with her eyes closed, never did run into a bench. I don't know what kind of radar she had.

But she got over the place, happy in the Lord. And that impressed me. Now, I don't believe in running that in the ground, you understand, but Baptists are in no danger of whatever it did in that.

I can be sure. One reason today, beloved, we don't have enough of that joy. And if it's not in your heels, it ought to be in your heart.

And the reason we don't have this is because too many of our church members are not members of God's family. So they don't know anything about that. And just being a church member won't do.

We're a new race in the holy nation and a royal priesthood. The Jews were God's chosen people and they've never been assimilated. And Christians were God's purchased people.

It means to make a ring around. When God saved you, he made a ring around you and said, this is mine. And you were never meant to be assimilated.

No Christians. Jesus said in John 17, we've been saved out of the world. We're in the world, but not of the world.

But we've been saved out of the world to go right back into the world and win other people out of the world. And that's the only business we have in this world. Now, that's where we belong as Christians.

I was over here at Hampton Institute about three years ago. A great black college. They asked me to come along with their black preachers and preach for three days.

My, I never had such a time. Yeah, they preached my chest to death over there. And I preached so hard, I lost my cochlear ink one night and never did find it.

And the last night, all that great throng sang farther along, we don't know all about it. And you know how they can sing it. No use trying to sing it like that, and I hope they never try to sing like us.

And I sat there and patted my foot and bowled. They sang about 20 verses of it over and over and over, and I wouldn't have cared if they'd have sung 50. And I was so sorry that I didn't have my recorder along that night and take that down and get anything worth.

I had a recorder in there. And I said, this crowd's going somewhere. They belong to the family of God.

I believe they were. I heard some great black preachers too. And in the world to come, eternal life.

That's the last thing on this list of what's yours if you're a Christian. It's not the least, but it's the last in the row, of course. Now, you talk about a homecoming, this is it.

This is a family reunion. All of us are old a little bit, but the next world, we're human. This is the only world we've ever known.

And you get thinking about dying, and you're a little bit sobered by that, and you wonder, what'll I be like when this body of mine goes out of business? And the rest of me, the rest of me, that's left in, what'll that be like? Now, we don't have a lot of information in the system. But Jesus made it very homey in John 14. Said in my father's house, there are many dwelling places, and I'm going to get one ready for you, and I'll come back and get you.

It's for you. That makes it sound homey to me. It's a place, somewhat.

It's not just a state of mind. Jesus went home in a body. He didn't go home as a ghost.

You could touch him. He could eat. He could talk.

And you will, too, in your new body. He was visible. Now, when somebody dies who's a Christian, you put the body in the grave, and the spirit goes to be with Jesus.

You say, well, is it a disembodied spirit? What do you mean by disembodied spirit? Old Alexander McLaren said, if God can locate the spirit in the body, I suppose he can without the body. I don't know what puts your life in if you're with Jesus. Do you have consciousness? I don't believe in soul-sweeping the soul.

You'll be aware a thousand times more than ever you were here. Moses came back. Elijah came back.

After the resurrection, we'll be bodies in a place. And we're headed for a big family reunion. Some time before my wife passed away, we were down in Charleston, my old church, and we were down on the waterfront on the battery, and I took a picture of her, and I didn't have it developed, left the film in the camera.

It didn't take any more after that for a year and a half. And then all at once, I thought, well, I've got some pictures in me. And I had them developed, and there she stood.

And I got to thinking. I said, just as that picture of her lay for a year and a half in the darkness of that camera, just so her body lies in a little Quaker graveyard in North Carolina, for one of these days, the great photographer is going to change negative into positive. And when he does, mortal shall put on immortality, and death be swallowed up in this.

Had you thought about this later? We used to go to grandma's for homecoming. A lot of people did. Do you realize that in this day of broken homes, there are millions of kids who don't even know who grandma was? Some of them don't know who mother was.

The father. They can't go back. But thank God they can belong to the family of God.

And I was down in Florida two winters ago, and one night in the service, they brought some youngsters from a children's home over to sing. I never heard Little Throat sing better in my life. And they didn't guess what they sang.

Well, this brother sang it a while ago. From the door of the orphanage to the house of the king, no longer an outcast, a new song I sing. From rags under riches, from the weak to the strong, I'm not worthy to be here, but praise God I belong.

You know, I got a lump in my throat as big as an apple when those kids sang that. My heart goes out to these millions of kids today. They can't be normal kids.

They don't know what home is. And if you're uneasy about your dear ones, well, if you're in Christ and they're in Christ, you haven't lost them. You haven't lost anything, and you know where it is, haven't you? You know where they are.

And don't let that verse, they asked Jesus about that woman who had seven husbands. She must have been a Hollywood actress. And wondering, now whose husband, whose wife will she be? And he said, well, in heaven they don't marry, given in marriage.

And that worries a lot of people that have been married more than once. And they say, well, how do you figure that out? Well, we read more into that, or out of it, than we need to. And he said, if you have married in the Lord, that's the main thing.

And then he says, in the Lord, our Father will not dash that love to the ground in the world to come, because it was sanctified. And you mean to tell me that the Lord will take anything as precious as a true love of man and wife and dash it to the ground at death, and the no more? Dr. Broder said, there is nothing to forbid the persuasion and that the relations of earthly life will be remembered in the future, the persons will be recognized and special affections will be cherished for eternal life. I don't see anything, well Brother Charlie and I were talking about that this morning, this war is going to be done over when Jesus comes to reign.

This same earth, now let's talk about heaven, that's the new heavens and the new earth, that comes along later, this earth right now with all its pollution and corruption and sin and we've just about ruined the looks of it even, the beautiful part of it, God's going to make it over because he is not going to let the devil get away with it. And I don't see anything to forbid the fact that our dear ones and ourselves may walk again in the new earth, done over, eternal life in the world to come, but listen friend, it begins now, if you don't have it now you won't have it then, if you don't have it here you won't have it there, you don't have to die to get it, you get it now, he that believeth on the son hath, and doesn't say shall have, everlasting life.

So, I'll see you at the reunion, one of these days when we all gather at the great getting up morning, put on our Easter outfit, meet we must, because Christians never meet for the last time, so you're telling Christians goodbye, we're going to meet again, you can't meet for the last time, save your life, now we've got one more meeting coming up and then of course there's that wonderful old song, blessed be the time, that binds our hearts in Christian love, the fellowship of kindred minds is like that, but that's what it ought to be, before our father's throne we pour our ardent prayers, our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, well I wonder, they certainly ought to be, our comforts and our cares, we share our mutual woes, do you feel for others, our mutual burdens bear, and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear, when we ascend apart it gives us inward pain, we should still be joined in heart and hope to meet again, now here we are tonight, and regardless of what church you came from, everywhere I go I preach to a lot of visitors, because folks have read my books, and I've been out a long time preaching, and they come from other churches, other denominations, and I'm not just preaching to this church here this week, I'm here to get to this church, and of course the first emphasis is on this local situation, but if you're the only one from your church, I'm preaching to your church through you, in the hope you'll take some coals to fire back and start a fire there, I'm preaching to everybody, you're not a visitor, I don't consider you to be a spectator, tonight you're a participant, so we're all in the family for Christians, but how do we act like it?

We know that we fast in death and life because we love the brethren, do you love everybody in your church? Do you love Christians, or is it somebody you just can't stand, and you don't lose any time letting them know it, maybe, or certainly asking it, do you know what it is to act like a Christian? Listen, when you tell them you're sorry, I heard of a woman who was a teacher of a legit Bible class for 10 years before she ever got right this job, she said, I went to an old Methodist altar one night in the meeting and said, Lord, I'll go anywhere you want me to go, go to Africa, go to India, and the Lord answered back and said, I don't want you over there, I want you to get right with Susan, right here in the church, she said, I hadn't thought about that, so she said, it started all over, Lord, I'll go to Africa, she said, I'd rather I went to Africa than get right with Susan, and the Lord said, I want you to get right with Susan, right here in the church, and I had to get right with Susan before anything happened, and that's the way revivals start, revivals start when you get right with somebody.

She said, it's their fault, Jesus said, it doesn't matter whose fault it is, if our brother hath fought against thee, you go, if you broke your envelope to church and the orphan, hang on to it, till you get right with your brother, you see, that sure would ruin a lot of orphans on Sunday morning, over the country. We ought to ask like this, folks, and I've been asking this all over the country, last spring was the first badness of Charlottesville, Virginia, their church burned down, they had to meet in high school, and then another badness church through the week, but they were drawn together by that loss, and we had a wonderful time, and one night I talked about this, in Charlottesville, it's a historic place, and when the building didn't burn up, that church is the one where Thomas Jefferson used to play his fiddle, it's a very historic place, but this brought them into one fellowship, and it was like an old-timey meeting, and I want to ask you now, how long's it been since you ever went to anybody to get right with them, or how long's it been since you ever went to anybody and thanked them for what they've meant to you, if they've been a blessing, go to tell it, give them the roses now, how long's it been since you did that? Now I sometimes get tired of everybody just sitting and listening, doing nothing, but I always say let's do something more, and I'll tell you what I want us to do tonight, two things, would you be Christian enough to go to somebody that's been a blessing to you, surely there must be somebody around here, tell them, hum them up right here in the church, thank you for what you've meant to me, as a Christian, some husband ought to tell his wife, and or vice versa, take it easy, you're not used to it, but it'd be a good thing, surprise her, surprise him, and surely

there must be somebody around here, it's been a blessing to you, you've never said, brothers, sisters, we're members of the family, as a member of the family, I want to thank you, see that, now that's holy disorder, when you get to doing that, they're in the holy spirit behind it, I'm in favor of that, and then if there's anybody in here that you ought to go to and say, I've not been acting right towards you, my heart's not been right towards you, and I want to ask you to forgive me, now that calls for sanctified determination, but God will bless us, and I don't know of anything we need to do more than that, I imagine that some folks share this, the two people here in Minya case, that ought to get together on that, so if he's coming to church, if we're going to do nothing about it, let's put teeth to it, and hunt up somebody back and tell them, you've been a blessing to me in my Christian life, so I'm going to send you some, if you brought any false dignity here, well, throw it away, unless you glorify God.

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