

# God's Anyone

by Vance Havner

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for a dedicated minority of Christians to rally around Jesus Christ and bring about a revival in the church and the world.*

**Duration:** 25:15

**Scripture:** Judges 7:2, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 13:1, Revelation 3:20

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher starts by referencing 2nd Corinthians 13:1 and expresses concern for those who are not fully committed to the message. He then quotes Revelation 3:20, emphasizing the importance of opening the door to Jesus and allowing Him to come into our lives. The preacher highlights the need to discover God's plan for our lives and to prioritize His work over worldly pursuits. He emphasizes the unique role of the Church in society and encourages radical action to meet the needs of the Church today. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging listeners to ignite the fire of faith and dedication in their hearts and communities.

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## Transcript

I think my text tonight ought to be 2 Corinthians 13:1 which says this is the third time I'm coming to you. I pity all these outstanding folks that are now sitting back of me. I'm afraid the back of my head is not a very edifying spectacle.

They say there are four stages to the growth of hair. Ball, fuzz, is, was. I've got around the was, but if you will permit me one more word of exhortation.

I would like to begin with the words of our Lord in Revelation 3:20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.

The biggest business we have these days is to discover God's program for this age and our part in it. In other words, to find out which way God's going and get going that direction. I heard of a lady who was getting a little worried over the fact that the years were going by and she hadn't found a husband.

She went to her pastor about it and he said, well, you know, the Lord has a plan. One man for one woman. One woman for one man.

That's God's plan. You can't improve on it. She said, I don't want to improve on it.

I just want to get in on it. So best thing we can do today is to find out what God's plan is and get in on it. We have no time as preachers to be chasing up blind alleys and exploring dead-end streets.

We want to do the most good in the best way in the shortest time. We have only a few years to spend for Christ and the gospel. Only one life will soon be passed.

Only what's done for Christ will last. What's the best way to go about it when most people already claim some sort of church connection? After all, the devil is not persecuting Christianity in America. He's professing.

He's not fighting churches. He's joining them. What are we going to do when the spiritual minority in the average church is outnumbered by a host of Sunday morning glories who bloom at 11 o'clock and fold up for the rest of the day? What are we going to do when suburbia molds the church more than the church molds suburbia? Can we renew Christian faith and life in the midst of a country club Christianity? Can we expect revival in death in a shallow generation? Almost every preacher shares this concern today, unless he's a professional looking for a soft spot where he can feather his nest.

And if he's that kind of preacher, he ought to get converted or quit the ministry. Our Lord stands outside the Laodicean lukewarm church, rich, increased with goods and needing nothing, a church that nauseates him and which he is about to spew out of his mouth. And yet he says, if anyone will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in.

I've heard of churches and pastors that were so desperate that they threw away the membership rule and started over. We can't do that very well, but it's just about what the Lord does here in Laodicea. In fact, Dr. Campbell Morgan says he excommunicates the whole church.

And Dr. Morgan says, the moment a man opens the door to the excluded Christ and Christ goes into communion and fellowship with that man, then that man and Christ excommunicate the church. How does the church return to fellowship by joining Christ and that man? Dr. A. J. Gordon said, a few spiritual disciples are sufficient to save a church. The Holy Ghost acting through these can and does bring back recovery and health to the whole body.

So our Lord stands at the door of the church today, Lord Jesus, thou art standing outside the fast-closed door, in lowly patience waiting to cross the threshold. Shame on us, Christian brothers, his name and sign who bear. Oh shame, shame upon us, to keep him standing there.

He's gathering a new church today. I like to call it the assembly of the anyones, who will hear his voice and open the door and let the guest become the host. This is the true church, the rich, prosperous, lukewarm world church he would spew out of his mouth.

This is the Savior's pattern. And if we follow it, it doesn't mean pulling out of the old church. Nowhere did he advise that.

It means starting a new church in the same church. It doesn't mean thinning out the church by excommunicating the inactive, he didn't advise that. But it does mean gathering around Jesus Christ the church within the church.

And with that faithful minority trying to reach the unfaithful majority on the inside of the church and the unbelieving multitude on the outside. Some years ago I stood in one of our great churches while the crowd

was assembling for the evening service and I said to a preacher friend of mine, this would be a good time and place for a revival to begin. He said, yes, only they don't begin at times and places like this.

Somehow we have the notion that if we have enough members and money and methods and means, we could win the world. God doesn't work that way. God can do more with a dedicated few than with an indifferent host.

We have mobilized or maybe mobilized an unwieldy multitude until our size has become our embarrassment. We can't reach the goal for stumbling over our own team. We furnish our own greatest interference.

God is in the remnant business and always has been. Noah and his family, Gideon and his band, Isaiah and the small remnant, Elijah and the 7,000, uh, Ezekiel and Daniel in the captivity, Ezra and Nehemiah in the restoration, Nalakai and those that feared the Lord and thought upon his name, Simeon and Anna and Joseph of Arimathea and Sardis with its faithful few. God magnifies the few.

Straight is the gate, narrow the way that leads to life and few there be that find it. Many are called, but few are chosen. Where two or three are gathered in my name.

If two of you shall agree, mind you, the promise of prevailing prayer is not given to a crowd, but to a few. One shall chase a thousand, two put 10,000 to flight because lawlessness shall abound. The love of most, it really says, shall wax cold and that leaves the love of the few.

Our Lord did his greatest work, not with a host, but with a handful. He viewed the crowd as shepherdless sheep. He viewed them not with condescension, not with criticism, but with compassion.

And yet he didn't commit himself to that crowd. The teacher never did trust the throne. Nothing is more undependable than a crowd of people.

One crowd wanted to crown him in John six, but the day came and another crowd cried, crucifying. He challenged the crowd and Luke 14th ended out with his preaching in John six and called out of the crowd, a little band of disciples. Now that's the program of Christ and of the Christian and of the church.

You have, of course, the classic example with Gideon and his 32,000. And God said, you have too many of the kinds you have. I suppose that a promotion expert would have said what you need is 50,000.

Marshal Fauche said the battle is won the day before. That's the day Gideon won it, the day before. He did it by eliminating 22,000 cowards and 9,700 galleys.

And that left 300 competent and committed. And the ratio is just about the same today. Uh, the present unwieldy mass of nominal Christians is making no impact today because mediocrity only produces more mediocrity.

We must rally a core of expendables who are willing to be the scum of the earth and the spectacle to the world for the scandal of the cross. We must challenge this age, not by criticism of it, certainly not by conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the spirit of God. Now a band like that upset the world one time and they didn't do it by hiring a liaison man in Jerusalem, nor by setting up a lobby in Rome.

They were just Christians in all the fearless implications of that word. They were a faithful few on fire. There were a few, 120 of them, a glorious band of chosen few on whom the spirit came.

They were faithful. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication. They were on fire because cloven tongues like as a fire sat on each of them.

Now it isn't enough to be just a few. Sometimes I get in a prayer meeting where some dear brother starts off with the promise where two or three are gathered. Now I have a feeling that he's more conscious of the absence of the people than he is of the presence of the Lord.

After the Wesleyan revival, you remember, little society sprang up all over England and changed the course of English history. They were a faithful few on fire. Brethren, we have bigger business today than to sit huddled in church basements, sipping coffee and listening to the minutes of the last meeting.

When Paul started on his voyage to Rome, he didn't spend his time in the cabin bemoaning the storm. He got on deck and took charge of the situation. We are in a world tempest tonight, and too many churches are in their elegant staterooms discussing Euroclidan, and too many Christians are seasick in their bunks.

We belong on deck. We have a message from God for this hour. We can't save the boat.

Civilizations are goner, but we can save the passengers, and that's our business. And if we're going to make any impression for Jesus Christ on this wild, weird, warm world, we must quit adjusting our schedule to fit the program of the community. I go to churches for meetings, and before it even starts, sometimes they begin apologizing.

This is a bad week for the revival. When was there ever a good week for a revival? The circus is coming on Monday night. The sons and daughters of I Will Arise are having a little get-together on Tuesday night.

Thursday night, the ladies' club is going to discuss how to grow African violence. Friday night, the ball game, whatever kind of ball is in season. And, of course, there's always Ed Sullivan.

We need the kind of revival that will make the other crowd do the worrying once in a while. I know we're outnumbered today, but that's no excuse for defeatism. I heard of an old Army captain whose little band was entirely encompassed by the enemy, and he shouted to his men and said, Men, we're surrounded by the enemy.

Don't let one of them escape. That's the spirit. Instead of stopping our study courses on Thursday night so as not to conflict with the ball game on Friday night, we need revivals that will postpone the ball game.

The early Church in Rome didn't move up its evening service because they had a gladiatorial contest on at the Coliseum. We were here first. We have the answer, and we were never meant to take a backseat to any projects of Earth.

When we begin to take the leftovers from the programs of this world, the work of God loses priority and we lose our initiative. And when we cease to initiate, we begin to imitate, and we become just another local project like the civic club and the community church. The Church of Jesus Christ has a solo part to play in this world and was never meant to play the accompaniment to anything.

If we ever regain the ground we've lost, it will be when we recruit a persecuted minority, stoning the values of this world and living by stringent discipline. Dr. Torrey used to say, in order to have a revival, let a few

members of any church get thoroughly right with God. Dr. Hughes of Trinity Church, New York, said no parish can fulfill its true function unless at the center of its leadership there is a small community of quietly fanatic, changed, and truly converted Christians.

Long ago it was said, give me ten men who hate nothing but sin, fear nothing but God, and seek nothing but the salvation of lost men, and I'll set the world on fire. The hope of this hour is not in massive projects in which we try to enlist the half-hearted church members like Gideon's first army, but in dedicated bands like his, little 300 who will be torches for the truth, and faggots for the faith, and fuel for the flame of God. Dr. Finley Edge has said, Christian history indicates that the Church has never changed the world by having large groups of uncommitted members, but rather by small groups transformed and transforming.

And he rightly contends that only a radical, drastic, and daring action can meet the needs of the Church today. We're getting a little weary today over all this hand-wringing about the fix we're in, the decline in this, and the recession in that, and the slump in something else. After all, we know what the trouble is, and we know what the answer is.

We're afraid to do much about it. If talk could have settled it, it would have been settled a long time ago. Some time ago, one of our Senators lost his voice temporarily, and Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina said, That's too bad.

He said, You don't have to have any brains to be a Senator, but you must have a voice. We've had plenty of talk, but the answer is simply this, and it sounds trite, but this is it. To be New Testament Christians, preach New Testament Christianity, and build New Testament churches.

But just try, in dead earnest, and see what happens. A mighty howl will go up, and they'll all say the same thing, You can't have a perfect Church. Nobody's talking about a perfect Church.

We're talking about a New Testament Church. New Testament churches were not perfect, but they had a standard, and it was not imperfection. They tried to live up to it, and they dealt with anybody who tried to lower it.

We have standard time. We set our watches by it. I'm glad everybody doesn't keep his own time.

We have standard pitch in music. We tune our instruments by it. I'm glad everybody in the choir doesn't sing in a different key.

I've heard some that almost did. It's about time we got back to a strong New Testament age, and if we ever do, we'll find how flat we've been. We are so subnormal that if we ever became normal, everybody would think we were abnormal.

I heard of a couple that had danced in the foul air of a nightclub, and in the morning they came out on the street. One of them sniffed and said, What's that I smell? The other said, That's fresh air. The fresh air of New Testament Christianity would be a shock to the average Church member.

The experience of most of our professing Christians is at such a low ebb today, you'd have to backslide to be in fellowship. The flag has gotten way ahead of the regiment, and I'm not for bringing the flag back to the regiment. I'm for making the regiment catch up with the flag.

To insist on normal New Testament Christianity, we'll have to stop passing resolutions and begin promoting revolutions, the Acts of the Apostles kind. We're so afraid of a little excitement. I heard of a dear brother in prayer meeting some time ago who got mixed up in his figures of speech and said, Lord, if there should be a spark of fire in this meeting, please water that spark.

We are so afraid we shall create a commotion, but either we are going to start over and put self-denying, cross-bearing New Testament discipleship in bold type instead of fine print, or take down our sign, and God will begin somewhere else across the railroad tracks with some humble crowd to our shame. Every great religious movement starts in a cave and ends in a cathedral. You remember that little band in the cave of Adullam whose only business was to make David king? It's about time we gathered another band in another cave of Adullam whose only business is to make the son of David king of kings and Lord of lords.

This is a day of minority groups. The world was set on fire for communism by little bands, completely sold out to Karl Marx and the devil. Lenin said, I want fewer but better disciples, not men who will give us their spare evenings but the whole of their lives.

It was a minority group that brought about the Supreme Court decision on prayer in the schools and thereby established the beachhead. And there are other loudmouth fringe groups who would obliterate every reference to God in our national life. Minority groups are turning the world upside down.

Many of them are inspired of the devil. Their success is due to the failures of the Church. Whitaker Chambers said communism is no stronger than the failure of other faiths.

And I would say the failure of Christians. The only way we shall ever meet this demonstration of the powers of darkness is by demonstration of the Holy Ghost and power. The answer lies in a minority group of dedicated Christians.

And I don't mean run of the mill church members. I mean true Christians who are a minority group in pagan America. Dr. Malick said Christians must accept the sad lot of belonging to a permanent minority.

I'm glad to see this idea of a dedicated minority taking fresh hold today. It's nothing new. Some of us remember how Dr. Levels' book of years ago, *The Master's Minority*, blessed us.

The expression caught fire and it ought to be applied today, not only to our young people, I think, but to the whole Church. Let me say here that this dedicated minority doesn't have to be a band of experts. Gilbert Chesterton said our civilization was very wise when it decided on a jury system in our courts.

He said when the life of a man is at stake, we don't use specialists. We call in 12 ordinary men standing around. He said the same thing was done by the founder of Christianity.

If I were on trial for my life, I wouldn't want 12 experts on the jury. They'd hang me for sure. I'd want 12 ordinary men.

And I'm glad the Lord Jesus Christ didn't start out with 12 specialists, just ordinary fishermen, tax gatherers, and the like. Let me utter this word of caution. These little groups must not become self-righteous clubs and a society of super saints looking down their noses in pharisaic exclusiveness at all who don't dot all their I's and cross all their T's as they do.

Sometimes the assembly of the anyones imagines that they're the only ones and forget their obligation to everyone. Imperialism began with colonies. Communism began with cells.

Christianity begins with churches. But sometimes churches need to take stock and locate the church within the church. Call it what you will, master's minority, the company of the committed, Gideon's band, the faithful few.

It's the way our Lord began. If anyone, notice how broad that is. Anybody in the church can start it.

Notice how narrow it is. Only the one who hears my voice and opens the door. That anyone could be the pastor.

Revivals do not always begin with a series of sermons on the subject. Sometimes they begin when a preacher hears the voice and opens the door in a new experience of Jesus Christ and gathers around him a faithful few on fire. When Hitler sent his best and his worst against England and that little handful of the RAF rose to meet them, you remember those immortal words of Churchill, never did so many owe so much to so few.

If I may change those words a bit, I'd like to say of this master's minority, debtors as we are, to Greek and barbarian, to wise and unwise, never did so few owe so much to so many as we do today. I've been going up and down the country now for a long time trying to gather a little kindling wood to start fires for Jesus Christ in hearts and homes and churches and communities. You don't start the fire with the backlog.

If you wait until that backlog of unsaved or undedicated church members catch on fire first, you'll never have a fire. It begins with kindling wood. Anybody can be God's kindling wood.

Forest fires begin with just one spark sometimes. John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed and he set England ablaze. There's too much false fire.

I've read of a kitten that wandered into an open door on a cold wintry night. Nobody home. Somehow the door was left open.

The kitten wandered into the fireplace and there was one of these imitation fires. The wood in order and an electric light bulb back of it. The kitten sat there and froze to death.

Something like that happens in a great many churches over America on Sunday mornings. We've never had more experts and more study courses and more seminars on how to build a gospel fire. What kind of wood, how much oil, what kind of matches, everything but the fire.

We don't need better methods on fire. We need better men on fire. Human kindling wood anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit set ablaze with the love of God.

Available, inflammable, expendable, a flaming faithful few. God's any ones to reach everyone with the simple gospel for these sinful times. If this pastor's conference is only a glorified Chautauqua featuring Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, we have met in vain.

But if there could be kindled somehow a flame of sacred love in these cold hearts of ours, and if at week's end we could scatter like human sparks all over this land, we might have just one more chance to set this world on fire.

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