

# The Man Who Kept Looking Up

by Warren Wiersbe

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of looking ahead to God's promises and not getting bogged down by our past, and the need to be separated from the world while still living in it.*

**Duration:** 1:06:30

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, John 7:34-36, Hebrews 11:1-12

**Topics:** "Heavenly Motivation", "Trusting God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of being motivated by heaven. He emphasizes the need for believers to have a clear understanding of their ultimate destination and to live with the knowledge that they will one day be in heaven. The speaker highlights the repetition of phrases in the Gospel of John, where Jesus repeatedly says 'lift it up' and 'where I am,' referring to heaven. He uses the example of Peter, who was able to sleep soundly and face impending death with an untroubled heart because he knew he would never be killed, as Jesus had already told him. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the power of trusting in God's promises and how this trust can motivate believers to live an uncompromising witness.

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## Transcript

We just came. My wife is here someplace. Betty, you better get up because I always get scolded for nothing.

And Joe and Maureen Guthrie are here. They have been our hosts and our chauffeurs. Up, up, up, up.

Pastor Guthrie's retired now, although he's quite busy. He and his wife, but I first met him in 1948. That goes back a few years.

Some of you were just a gleam in somebody's eye back in 1948. I want you to know that your friends in the ministry are going to enrich you. Don't be a loner.

Don't be a loner. You can't raise a preacher anymore than you can raise a bee. You take a hive.

And so don't be a loner. Get yourself some good, close, praying preacher friends. And if there is in your area somebody just a mite older, who can kind of mentor you a little bit, I thank God for the people in my life who enriched me.

For some reason, I was smart enough to listen to them, how that happened. We just came from Dallas, and I've been ministering to about 800 of our black pastor friends. And we had a high and holy time.

We just had a high and a holy time. And God moved in, and we just praised Him for His faithfulness. What I'd like to do during these times that we're together is chat with you on the simple subject of how do we keep going.

How do we keep going? Some years ago, I sat down with my Bible, and I talked to myself. If you were going to be in my study at home, or my library at home, you'd hear me talking to myself. I talked to my Bible.

And I found that when I talk to my Bible, my Bible talks to me. And I said, Lord, what kept the people going in Scripture? What kept them going? I'm going to start a unitist society for all the dropouts. I'm also starting a meeting, a group for the most neglected and abused people in the church, the janitors, the custodians.

I'm calling it premise keepers. But I tell you, the battle, the battle is raging. And I thank God it is raging.

Spurgeon used to say, I didn't hear him say it, but I read it. Joel heard him say it. Spurgeon used to say, the devil never kicks a dead horse.

Dr. Culbertson, when he was president of Moody Bible Institute, occasionally snuck into Moody Church when I was there. He'd come up to me and say, well, how goes the battle? And I better be able to say, it's going. That's when God blesses.

That's when God blesses. So I began to go through my Bible. Lord, what kept Abraham going? At the age of 75, most of us are hanging it up.

He's just getting started. What kept Moses going? Eighty years old. God says, I'm calling you.

By the way, youngsters, God is still calling and using some older folks. You knew that. You knew that.

Sometimes he goes and gets a young Samuel, or a young David, or a young John. And sometimes he gets a hold of a Moses, or an Abraham, or Joshua, or Caleb. Because we need all.

A friend of mine some years ago, bless his heart, he said, I tell you, church is changing. I said, hallelujah. Like a mighty tortoise moves the church of God.

Brethren, we are treading where we've always trod. He said, I'm going to start a new church in this town. I said, really? He said, yep, for everybody 60 and older.

I said, I've got a suggestion. He says, what? I said, put an undertaker on the staff. Betty and I make it a point to make friends among younger preachers and preachers' wives, because they teach us.

I learn so much from them. And I'm glad for younger folks who try to get to know some older folks. Because according to the Bible, it takes both.

We have digital watchers now, but we used to have the old-fashioned kind. Remember the old, with the hand? You remember those? They were popular when radio was popular. And the church is something like those hands.

We older folks, we're like the hour hand. We kind of move a little slowly, but we can tell you what time it is. And then some folks are like that minute hand, goes a bit faster, like the second hand.

It takes all three to tell the time. And I thank God for the church where there is a balance. A balance, where we learn from one another.

So I began to study the lives of these great people in the Bible. What kept them going? I discovered an interesting thing, that there are in the lives of these people, in each one of them, one key truth that kept them going. Terrific.

We're going to start with Abraham. Abraham. And the thing that kept Abraham going for a hundred years, walking by faith, the thing that kept Abraham going was he saw the city of God.

Hebrews chapter 11. Would you turn there with me? Hebrews chapter 11. Now, I'm going to have occasion to refer to Hebrews quite a bit during this conference time.

If I were back in the pastorate, I'd be preaching the book of Hebrews. It's a book we need today. The book of Hebrews was written to people who were going through shaking.

According to Hebrews chapter 12, God was shaking everything. Now, the saints don't like to be shaken. They open the service with, we shall not be moved.

God's shaking things today. He's shaking his church today. And the writer of the book of Hebrews, some folks think it was Paul, tells us the reason he's shaking things is so that the things that you can't shake will stand and people will say, hey, we've been fooling around with the scaffolding.

We've been messing around with the scaffolding. And the scaffolding's all gone. You know, the church is still here.

A lot of churches are wasting a lot of time and money just on the scaffolding instead of building the building. The book of Hebrews chapter 11, verse 13. Talking about the patriarchs.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, that is, the things that were promised, but having seen them afar off, and were assured of them, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. That's one of our problems today. The saints live like this is home.

Folks, I've got news for you. This is not home. A fugitive is running from home.

A vagabond has no home. A stranger is away from home. A pilgrim is heading home.

And we're God's pilgrims. This world is not our home. That's why Abraham, who was a wealthy man, and could have built himself a mansion, lived in a tent.

And when he wrote his will, we've written our will, it says, being of sound mind and body, I'd spend it all. When Abraham wrote his will, he said, Dear Isaac, there is my will. I'm leaving you a tent.

Jacob, a tent. That's where Lot got in trouble. He gave up his tent.

Settle down. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland, a fatherland. And truly, if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return.

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. What was it that kept Abraham going? He was looking for a city.

When you get to the end of the book of Hebrews, the writer says, Now I want to remind you folks that we here, here on this earth, we have no continual city. You say, Well, I don't live in a tent. Oh, yes you do.

Oh, yes you do. For we know that if this earthly tent, tabernacle, in which we're living, is taken down, you live in a tent, 2 Corinthians 5. You don't live in a house, you live in a tent. And that means you're temporary.

Abraham, you're a wealthy man. Why do you live in a tent? This isn't my home. Where are you going? Right up there, you see it? A city.

He's preparing for me a city. And it was the vision of heaven that kept Abraham going. Now, there are three cities involved in Abraham's life.

And there are three cities involved in every believer's life. Now, the unbelievers only have one city. There are three cities involved in your life.

I don't know what city you come from to come to this conference. But every one of us, spiritually speaking, spiritually speaking, is involved in three cities. First, Abraham had a city behind him called Ur.

Ur of the Chaldeans. And then Abraham had a city beside him called Sodom. And the thing that kept Abraham from going back to the city from which he came was the fact that he had a city before him and beyond him, heaven.

I want to talk about these three cities in your life and my life. First, there's a city behind us. Every one of us, as a believer, has turned his back on the past.

That's important. If we don't, if in our hearts or our minds we're still attracted to the past, the pull of the past, we're heading for trouble. The writer says, Abraham, if he had thought about that homeland he came from, that place he came from, he could have gone back.

He could have gone back. Did you know that the greatest judgment God can put upon any of us is to let us have our own way? It's the greatest judgment. We had Romans 1. He said, we just gave them all the time.

You want to live that way? Go ahead. Go ahead. But you can't change the consequences.

Abraham had a city behind him called Ur of the Chaldeans. Now, we get the idea that this ancient history describes people who lived in caves and walked around like they were gorillas. Don't you kid yourself.

Ur of the Chaldeans, according to Sir Leonard Woolley, the great archaeologist, was no mean city. Population of over 300,000. They had water conduits.

They had figured out square roots and cube roots. Some of us can't do that today. Lush country.

It was not in the middle of a desert. Lush country. Vast buildings.

Some of the wealthy people had 14, 15 room villas with running water. And Abraham was a wealthy man. Let me quote Sir Leonard Woolley, just in case you may doubt me.

Abraham was the citizen of a great city and inherited the traditions of an old and highly organized civilization. Wealthy. He had status.

Comfortable. His neighbors would say, boy, we're like Abraham. Man.

And then one day, Abraham had one of those life-changing experiences by the grace of God. You know what? Stephen says it this way in his sermon in Acts 7. The God of glory appeared to Abraham. That's happened to you, hasn't it? And God says, get out.

Leave your family. Just get out. Just take Sarai, your wife, and get out.

He didn't obey. He took Sarai. He took Terah, his father.

He took Lot, his nephew. And he got as far as Haran. And there he stopped.

I don't criticize Abraham. There have been times when God has asked me to take giant steps. And I've taken little baby steps.

I don't know what there is about us that we don't want to trust God. I mean, he saw the glory of God. God said, get out.

Well, Terah died. He left Haran, Abraham, and Sarai, and Lot did. And God had said to Abraham, go to a land I'm going to show you.

Now, I like to read the books that the secular press puts out on administration, business. I like to be efficient. I'm one of these people.

I carry a card in my pocket. If I get an idea, I have to write it down. I'll forget it.

Right next to my dead stand, I've got a stack of notepaper, and I've got a ballpoint pen with a flashlight in the point. Now, folks, how efficient can you get? Pen makes eight carbon copies and no original, but it's a good pen. And if I wake up at night and I've got a great idea, I have to write it down, because I'll lose it.

I like all these books on efficiency. And all these books on efficiency say, now, you plan. You know where you're going.

You have a one-year plan, a five-year plan, a ten-year plan, all the while James is saying, you don't even know if you're going to be alive tomorrow. So God, Abraham goes to Sarai. Abram goes to Sarai, and he says, my dear, we're moving.

Where are we going? I don't know. You don't know where you're going? No. Well, how will you know when you get there? God will tell me.

IBM would never accept that. Abraham marched off the map. He didn't even have a map.

And I want you to know, there are times when God calls us and says, now, start moving, and doesn't always tell us where we're going. Now, I'm the kind that likes to know where we're going. That's why my wife travels with me, because I get lost in a phone book.

We're driving down the interstate, you know, and she'll say, didn't you see that exit? I said, well, you've seen one. You've seen them all. That was our exit.

Oh, there's another one down here. So when we travel, she does the planning, figures out what's going to happen, and I like everything to work on schedule. But if you have all day, you fly the American way or the Delta way.

Anybody who would believe the announcements in an airport would believe anything. So God called Abraham to go to a country he'd never seen, and he went by faith. I said, Abraham, I want you to know something.

This is not your final destination. Now, if you lift up your eyes higher, I'm going to show you. Out here, there's a city, a country, a homeland.

And Abraham, I've written your name down in heaven. Isn't that great to have your name written down in heaven? I like that Greek verb there in Luke where Jesus says your name has been written down, it is still written down, it stands written down, and always will be written down. That bothers some people, I know, but that's all right.

There's a new name written down in pencil. Abraham, you're going to heaven. And Abraham, if ever you think about Ur, your comfort, your well, all of these things you had in Ur, don't look back, look up.

Everything that Abraham ever dragged with him that he wasn't supposed to bring with him got him into trouble. Lot got him into trouble. Abraham went down to Egypt, got Hagar down there.

Hagar got him into trouble. That's why the Bible warns us, don't look back. Jesus said, anybody who puts his hand to the plow and looks back isn't fit for the kingdom of God.

Then he said, remember Lot's wife. That's what she did, she looked back, turned into a pillar of salt. Paul said, what? Forgetting those things which are behind.

That was the whole problem with the Jewish nation. God delivered them from Egypt, and the minute they got into any kind of difficulty, whether it was the Red Sea, or what are we going to drink, or what are we going to eat? Anytime they got into any difficulty, they sang the same song. Let's go back to Egypt.

That used to be our home. Oh Moses, we want the leeks and the onions and the garlic. That's one crowd you wouldn't ask to sing Breathe on Me, I'll tell you that.

And the problem with the Jewish people was, their philosophy was, whenever you're in trouble, go back. And for us as Christians, whenever we're in trouble, the answer is, go forward. Every one of us has a city behind them.

And every once in a while the devil says, you know, you'd have it a lot easier if you were back where you used to be. I mean, you gave up your job, you did this, you did that, and here you are serving the Lord. And, yeah, but just think of what you'd have if only you would have stayed in Ur.

Why don't you go back? Why don't you go back to Egypt? And Abraham would say to that, as Paul would say, no, I got my eyes on a city out there. That's where I'm going. We have a city behind us, and we've got to be careful about the pull of the path.

Peter said, you've had enough time in your old life to satisfy yourself with that, now forget about it. Move ahead. Move ahead.

The older I get, the more comfortable I want to be. I'm becoming more and more artificial. I'm wearing artificial eyes, trifocals.

I've got some artificial ears. Betty and I have an interesting ritual at night. I take out my hearing aids, and she puts in her earplugs.

I have moved into the AIDS syndrome. I have hearing aids and band-aids and roll-aids. But I'm getting more and more artificial.

I can't run like I used to run and carry luggage like I used to carry luggage. But God keeps stirring me and saying, don't get comfortable. Don't look back.

Look ahead. Look ahead. Now, Abraham had a city beside him.

It was called Sodom. You and I are living in the midst of a society where Sodom is our next-door neighbor. What was Abraham's relationship to Sodom? The book of Genesis says Sodom was an exceedingly wicked city, so much so that throughout Scripture, whenever the writer wants to talk about judgment, he says he knew about Sodom and Gomorrah.

What was Abraham's relationship to Sodom? Well, number one, he was separated from it. He lived in a tent over here. They lived in a city over there.

But he was separated from it. It is possible, dear friends. It is possible for us to be in the midst of an evil society and not be tainted by it.

It's tough. It's tough. John wrote, Love not the world.

He didn't say don't live in the world. Jesus said, I have called you out of the world. I'm going to send you back into the world, even though you don't belong to the world.

Since we have been called out, and one day we're going to be called up and get to that city. Meanwhile, between being called out and called up, we've been called to live in a wicked world. We are the light of the world.

We are the salt of the earth. And down through the centuries, the thing that has killed the church is that it has become an exclusive club. And we have forgotten that we are light to shine in the darkness.

We are salt to be applied to that world around us. Love not the world. James said, keep yourself unspotted from the world.

Then James went on to say, friendship with the world is enmity with God. That's the way we usually go down the drain. First there's friendship with the world.

Then when you start getting friendly with the world, the world's going to spot you. Get a spot here, a spot there. And we're spotted by the world.

Before long, we love the world. It's like two kids falling in love. First there's friendship, and before you know it, they're both wearing identical t-shirts.

And then before long, they're in love. And of course, the result of all this is Romans 12, 2, conformed to the world. Now you see this in Lot.

Lot was, what a privilege Lot had. I think one of the great tragedies in Scripture are the people who miss their opportunity. What would an opportunity Lot miss? To be able to walk with the friend of God.

I mean, I'd be going around saying, hey, do you know who my uncle is? Do you know who my uncle is? He's God's friend. God talks to him. But instead, you find Lot pitching his tent towards Sodom.

Blessed is the man that walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful. Pitches his tent, and before long, he moves in, and he's at the gate. He's one of the aldermen, one of the mayors of Sodom.

And he lost everything. Lost his tent. He lost his altar.

He lost his fellowship with God. He lost his fellowship with his godly uncle. Lost his testimony.

When the angels came and said, get out! We're going to blow this place up! He went and told his family, and they laughed at him. He lost his testimony. It was his own family.

And he lost his wife. He lost his daughters. He lost his purity.

Ends up committing drunken incest in a cave. I mean, that's Lot who used to go to church with Abraham. He said, that can't happen to me.

Don't kid yourself. Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. That applies to me.

Now, what was Abraham's relationship with Sodom? He was separated from it. But brothers and sisters, separation is not isolation. Because in chapter 14 of the book of Genesis, when those kings came down and swooped down upon Sodom and Gomorrah and the three other cities of the plain, and took them captive, somebody came running into Abraham's camp and said, everybody in Sodom and Gomorrah and those other three cities, everybody's been captured by the king! Abraham said, what about Lot? They said, Lot's one of them.

Now, you'll forgive me for being just a little bit carnal. I wouldn't do it except you do it occasionally. If Lot had treated me the way he treated Abraham, and they came and said, Lot has been captured, you know what I would have said? Let him stew in his own grease.

That's what he deserves. But Abraham's a better man than I am. Because Abraham knew that one day, Lot was a saved man.

Didn't look like it, but according to Peter, he was a saved man, just Lot. Abraham knew that the day would come when he and Lot would be walking on the streets of the city together. And Abraham didn't want Lot to turn to him and say, Uncle Abraham, why did you desert me? See, some of the people you don't get along with are going to be in heaven.

Now, you may want in and out privileges because of that, but Abraham said, get the army! And so over 300 of his men trained and armed got on their horses and camels, and away they went at night. And they won the battle. You know why they won the battle? Abraham was a man of faith, and this is the victory that overcomes even our faith.

And this man with 300 and some soldiers whips four kings, brings everybody back. Would you have done that for the people of Sodom? I have Christian friends who are praying that God will blow up all these

sinners. Some of them even go so far as to shoot a few of them.

Abraham wasn't that way. When the prophet Jeremiah, my favorite prophet, was ministering in Judah, Babylonians had come down and taken a bunch of exiles before they destroyed the city. Jeremiah wrote them a letter.

It's in Jeremiah chapter 29. It's a great letter. He wrote and he said, now you dear exile, this is from Jeremiah, how should you behave as God's chosen people now that you're in Babylon? Here's the way you're supposed to behave.

Number one, get married, have children, plant gardens and farms, and pray for the peace of the city, and do good. Don't carry protest signs, don't blow up buildings. Just pray for these people and do good.

Now when Peter wrote his first letter, he'd been reading that. When you read 1 Peter, he tells us how to get along with the government. How to get along with a world out there that thinks we're crazy.

He said, now here's what you do folks. You honor the king, you pay your taxes, you respect authority, and you do good. You do good.

You find some hungry people, feed them. We, in our churches, and we ought to, and I hope it continues, are sending young people out in the summertime to mission projects. They go to Mexico and build buildings and go to someplace else.

But they all can't go. And somebody has to stay home and do something. I once asked our youth pastor, I said, what are the kids doing this summer? Well, this, this, this, and this.

I said, what about the ones that aren't going any place? Well, I guess they'll just, you know, do something. I said, why don't you go down to the park commissioner and find out what needs to be done in the parks in Lincoln, Nebraska. There may be fences to be painted or restrooms to be cleaned.

Wouldn't it be neat if the word got out in the body politic of Lincoln, Nebraska, that a hundred young people from Berean Church cleaned up Holmes Park. Do good. That's what Abraham did.

See, if I'm driving down the highway and I see a man in the ditch in his car and I pull over, I don't walk up and say, are you saved or unsaved? I say you're driving a Cadillac, you must be saved. Are you Presbyterian, Baptist, independent, charismatic? You don't do that. If somebody's lying there in a car, you help them.

As one human being to another, you help them. So Abraham not only was separated from Sodom, but he ministered to the people of Sodom. And then when it was over, all the prisoners of war came back and all Abraham and his men came back and Abraham's standing there.

Up comes the king of Sodom and says, look, take all this wealth. Just give me back the people. Abraham said, uh-uh.

See, we don't serve other people for what we're going to get out of us. He said, I don't even want a shoelace from you. If I borrowed a shoelace from you, that would affect my walk.

I'm not interested. What a testimony to those people. It's possible for us to do good for unsaved people and be a witness to them.

Then up came Melchizedek with the bread and the wine. The Lord Jesus shows up. Before the battle, he shows up, Joshua.

Before the battle of Jericho, Jesus showed up with His sword. After the battle, He shows up with the bread and the wine. He said, Abraham, Abraham said, I'll give you all the tithes.

See, you can acknowledge Jesus before unsaved people if you've done good. So he was separated from them. He served them.

And he prayed for them. The Lord Jesus showed up and sat with two of His angels and said, we're heading for Sodom, but I've got to tell Abraham what's going on. He's my friend.

He's my friend. Abraham said, now look, if you find fifty righteous people, will you spare the city? Yep. And you know the story.

Down to ten. Lot, Mrs. Lot, they had four daughters. Two were married.

Two were unmarried. The two were married. They had husbands.

That's eight. If he had just gotten two people saved, he could have spared the whole city. Lot, Mrs. Lot, four daughters.

We don't know about the sons-in-law. Yes, he'd gotten two people saved. He spared the whole city.

But Lot wasn't a witness. You know how to change this world? Get people saved. Get people saved.

How do you pray for unsaved people? The people aggravate you. The neighbors, two o'clock in the morning, turn the amplification up. The Bible tells us to love our neighbors and love our enemies because they're usually the same people.

Abraham was separated from Sodom. Abraham served the people of Sodom to the glory of God so he could give his witness. And Abraham interceded for the people of Sodom.

Our pastor got up one day, one Sunday morning a few years ago, no, it was several years ago now, and said, I want everybody in this church to have a hit list. Now, I grew up in Chicago where on a clear day you could see your feet. And a hit list in Chicago meant, you know, call the undertaker and get an estimate because you are on the list.

But what he meant by that was make a list of the people you know who are unsaved, people you're close to who are unsaved and start praying for them. Start praying for them. Well, Abraham had a hit list and on that list was Sodom.

Folks, we are not going to change this world. But we can let God use us to change people in this world. The sewage is going to get deeper.

The smell is going to get worse. But sometimes things aren't too fragrant inside the church. It wasn't St. Augustine who said the church was something like Noah's Ark.

If it weren't for the judgment on the outside, you could never stand the smell on the inside. Now, let's focus on the main thing we want to get from the passage. Abraham had a city beyond him and before him, the city of God, Heaven.

I want to talk to you about Heaven. It's too bad that in our churches today, the only time people talk about Heaven is when somebody is very sick or badly injured and is going to die. We don't talk about Heaven.

Let me read you a quotation from C.S. Lewis. If you read history, says Lewis, you would find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were precisely those who thought most of the next world. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they've become so ineffective in this world.

And that's true. That's true. You see, in order to do good here, I need perspective.

And the only way to get perspective is to look beyond. And those in the Bible and those in church history who had their eyes on the city were the ones who said, we've got to do something about the situation here. Whether it was the British evangelicals who fought slavery or the abuse of children during the Industrial Revolution or those who built hospitals or those who went to mission fields, those who were the most concerned about the next world had the greatest concern for this world.

To put it in one simple sentence, and I hope you'll preach it, brothers and sisters, heaven is not just a destination. Heaven is a motivation. And if I am motivated by heaven, I'm going to keep on going.

Abraham had his dark moments. Lot was a disappointment to him. Broke his heart.

Anybody you've ever ministered to broken your heart? Life wasn't easy for Abraham, but he said, I'm going to keep on going. There's a city up there. Now we're going to leave the Old Testament and move to the New Testament to the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John. Chapter 7. When you are studying your Bible, notice the repetition of phrases in the Bible. Those are important.

Three times in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, lift it up, lift it up, lift it up. Why? Four times in the Gospel of John, Jesus uses this phrase, where I am. He's talking about heaven.

Four times he says, where I am. Jesus was motivated by heaven. John chapter 7. If I become a believer, a pilgrim, who's motivated by heaven, how can I tell? How could anybody tell if Warren Wiersbe is motivated by heaven? If I wake up in the morning and say, today may be the day we go to heaven.

If I put my head in the pillow at night and say, well, I may just wake up in heaven. What difference does it make? Verse 32. John 7. The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take him.

Have you ever been arrested for preaching a sermon? I wish I had been arrested before preaching some sermons on history. Then Jesus said to them, I shall be with you a little while longer. And then I go to Him who sent Me, and you will seek Me and not find Me.

And where I am, you cannot come. And the Jews said among themselves, where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the dispersion among the Greeks? A lot of Jews have done that and teach the Greeks. What is this thing that He said? I shall be with you a little while longer.

And you will seek Me and not find Me. And where I am, you cannot come. You ever notice in the Gospel of John, every time Jesus talked about something spiritual, people interpreted it as something physical.

Destroy this temple, three days I'll raise it up. Well, it took 46 years to build this temple. Next time you're in a building program, remember that.

It will encourage you. You must be born again. How can I get back in my mother's womb? I will give you living water.

You haven't even got a bucket. Except you eat my flesh and drink my blood, this man's a cannibal. Isn't it that way today? You talk to people about the wonderful spiritual truth.

They just can't see it. Jesus knew He was going back to heaven, and He knew there was only one way to heaven. When you know you're going to heaven, that motivates you to an uncompromising witness.

I do not have to tell you this because you know it already. I only do what Peter did, stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. One of the greatest battles that is being fought in the evangelical church today is being fought on this question.

Is indeed Jesus the only way to heaven? In the past couple of years, I've read four books wrestling with if a person is a sincere Hindu, will not God forgive him and take him to heaven? How much faith is saving faith? How much knowledge is saving knowledge? And the theologians are wrestling with this. Now, whatever the theologians wrestle with and write books about, in about five or six years, percolates down to the saints. And if the saints start believing that Jesus is one of many ways to heaven, there goes evangelism, there goes world missions, and there goes the church.

We're going to heaven. Jesus knew He was going to heaven. He knew they weren't going to heaven.

So He told them so. He said, you are not going to heaven. The woman at the well, the bad Samaritan, said to Him, oh, our fathers worship in, you worship in Jerusalem, but we worship here, on Mount Gerizim.

We have our own worship, our own priesthood, our own temple. And that would have been a place for Jesus to say, if it were true, terrific. Hey, go ahead.

You worship one way, we worship another way. It's different. We all have different ideas.

Many roads lead to Rome. He didn't say that. He said, you don't even know what you're worshiping.

Then He said, we know what we're worshiping, meaning the Jews, for salvation is of the Jews. If you weren't saved by a Jew, you aren't saved. Because Jesus came as a Jew.

I was sitting in the airport in Kansas City one day, and a man came up with a briefcase. I'd spotted him. I knew exactly what he was up to.

He wanted to sell me a book. And he sat down and he said, I have a book here I'd like you to see. I said, what's it about? He said, it's about how the world can be saved.

I said, that's interesting. Who is the Savior that's going to save the world? And he gave me the man's name. I said, where was he born? He said, Korea.

I said, I'm not interested. My Bible says, salvation is of the Jews. And I reached in my briefcase to get my Bible, but he didn't see it.

Off he went. When we really know we're going to heaven, we do what Moses did. He turned to his father-in-law and said, why don't you come with us? That's what he said to his father-in-law.

Why don't you come with us? We'll do you good. God has spoken great things concerning us. Come on with us.

That's all you do when you witness. You just end up saying, hey, I'm going to heaven. Why don't you come with me? It's the motive for an uncompromising witness.

Now we turn to chapter 12 of the book of John, the Gospel of John. Some Greeks came to see Jesus in verse 20. And Jesus says in verse 23, The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it produces much grain, much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it.

And he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. By the way, that's repeated six times in the Gospels, in one way or another. If anyone serves me, let him follow me.

And where I am, that's heaven. There my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, him my Father will honor.

Knowing that you're going to heaven is not only a motivation for an uncompromising witness, it's the motivation for an unselfish life. We have a generation coming along whose slogan is, Me first. Me first.

Unselfish life. Now, you and I are seeds. A seed doesn't look like much, but it's got life in it and power.

A seed can wreck the foundation of a building. A seed can wreck a driveway, a street. And the Lord says, I want to plant you.

Now, if you ever get discouraged, and the devil comes along and says, Boy, God loves you and put you here. God loves you? He never brought you to this church. You just remind the old enemy, God does not bury us, he plants us.

In the parable of the tares, the seed, the good seed of the children of the kingdom, and God plants it. He planted me in East Chicago, Indiana, then he planted me in Wheaton, then he planted me in Covington, Kentucky, then he planted me in Chicago, and then Lincoln, Nebraska. He plants us.

And he said, Now, you bear fruit where I plant it, and wherever I lead you, you bear fruit. And sometimes it's rough. You say to a seed, Do you want to be planted? No, it's dark down there.

You put me down there, man, I'm going to die. Do you want to be alone? No, I don't want to be alone. Well, then, let's go.

A crazy world. We have six billion people in the world, and psychiatrists tell us the biggest problem is loneliness. Loneliness.

Boredom. I can't recall... Well, I've heard some boring sermons, actually. I think I've preached a few.

Jesus says, Hey, you want to be beautiful and fruitful? Let me plant you. Die to yourself. And if ever you worry about, Boy, I'm down here dying.

Just remember, you're going to heaven. And one day I'm going to stand with you in heaven. And my Father's going to honor you in heaven.

When Jesus got to the garden and prayed that great high priestly prayer in John 17, Oh, what a prayer. What a prayer. He says, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your Son so your Son can glorify you. I have glorified you on the earth. I finished the work you gave me to do.

Folks, that's all I want to be able to say when I get to heaven. I just want to honestly be able to say, I've glorified you on the earth. I finished the work you gave me to do.

I can't do your work. You can't do my work. We've got to finish the work He gave us to do.

And what keeps us from getting discouraged? He plants us and we're dying to self. And then out comes the shoot, and then the beauty, and then the fruitfulness. And then, knowing that you're going to heaven motivates you to an unselfish life.

What difference does it make what sacrifices we make here? It's only for a short time. We're going up to heaven where forever and ever and ever sacrifice will be turned into joy and suffering will be turned into glory forever. Chapter 14 of the Gospel of John, very familiar.

Knowing that you're going to heaven is the motive for an uncompromising witness, and it's a motive for an unselfish life, and for an untroubled heart. Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father's house are many mansions.

I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself. But where I am, there you may be also.

Now, we Christians, and especially we Christian leaders, do not worry. Oh, we're concerned, burdened, but we don't worry. We don't worry.

Or do we? It was Peter Marshall who said that among Christians, ulcers are the badge of their faith. We worry. I'm not saying everybody has ulcers as a worry wart.

No, no, no. Other things can cause it. You go to bed and you can't sleep.

You're worrying. You have a meeting coming up, a board meeting, a committee meeting. A committee is a group of people who individually can do nothing and collectively decide nothing can be done.

And you've got an officer in the church who's painted a target on your back. I heard about a pastor's son who did not know any cuss words and he was being persecuted by the school bully and the boy was groping for something to say to this bully and finally he said, Oh, you board member, you! Ever feel like that? I'll tell you one of the best ways to get your heart calmed down is just say to yourself, You know what? I'm going to heaven. I'm going to heaven.

Let not your heart be troubled. Be still and know that I am God. That word be still means take your hands off.

Some of the things you're meddling in, just take your hands off. Let God do something with it. The secret of an untroubled heart, we're going to heaven.

Now, it doesn't mean pie in the sky, by and by, therefore neglect your responsibilities now. No. D.L. Moody said, Some Christians are so heavenly minded they're no earthly good.

No, no. But just knowing that we're going to win the battle, knowing that we're going to make the trip, knowing that the journey is going to end in glory, even in the midst of the trenches, we're going to have an untroubled heart. Please don't ever criticize Peter in your preaching.

This would be a long line up in heaven, preachers, to apologize to Peter. He's a great man. Peter was a great man.

And Herod arrests him, and Herod gives four soldiers to guard him, three different changes of the guard, and he's chained, and the next day he's going to have his head chopped off. I tell you, if I were in those circumstances, what would I do? And Peter looked at his watch and said, Well, it's time to go to sleep. Good night, men.

And he went to sleep so soundly that when the angel came in to wake him up, he had to hit him. Wouldn't it be terrific to have an angel for an alarm clock? That'd be great. That'd just be great.

He said, Get up. Let's go. Why was Peter able to sleep so soundly with an untroubled heart? Because he knew they weren't going to chop his head off.

Jesus had already told him, when you get old, they're going to crucify you. He knew he'd never be killed. I'll tell you folks, it's amazing what happens when you trust God's promises.

Where I am. Where I am. The secret of an untroubled heart.

Quickly to John 17. Jesus prays. Verse 24, Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.

Why? Verse 22, The glory which You gave Me, I've given them, that they may be one. Oh! Knowing that we're going to heaven motivates us to an undivided church. To live above with saints we love will certainly be glory.

To live below with saints we know, that's another story. And here's my brother who criticizes me, and here's my brother who doesn't like me, and I'm tempted to let him have it in Christian love. And the Holy Spirit says, you know what? You're going to be in heaven together.

I mean, John Calvin and John Wesley are in heaven together. I once asked a professor friend of mine who is an ardent, ardent Calvinist, I said, did God predestine Wesley to be an Arminian? Brothers and sisters, it gives me great comfort to know that while here on earth there are people with whom I cannot see eye to eye. Thank God I can walk with them arm in arm because we're going to heaven.

We're going to heaven. And our people need to know that heaven is not just a destination, it's a motivation. And whenever I can't get along with somebody, I've got to stop to think, I'm going to heaven.

We'll be there together. Whenever I don't want to make a sacrifice, hey, you're going to heaven. Whenever I've got to worry, you're going to heaven.

Whenever I'm tempted to compromise my witness, you're going to heaven. I tell you, the future is secure, folks. Jesus knows what He's doing.

He knows where He's going and where we're going. Beware of that city behind you. Don't look back.

Be cautious of the city beside you. Pray for them. Minister to them.

Witness to them. But don't compromise with them. And keep your eyes, as did Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, keep your eyes on the city because you're going to be there a long, long time.

And so, our Father, help us to be truly heavenly minded in the right way. And grant that we shall serve you acceptably in this godly fear. Here we have no continuing city.

There we have a city that never will end. Hallelujah. Amen.

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