

Purpose for Christians

by Alan Redpath

The purpose of a Christian's life is to be a light of the Gentiles and a witness to the world, proclaiming the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Duration: 57:06

Topics: "Purpose"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the transformation from being a mission field to becoming a missionary. The key to this transformation lies in the message that is proclaimed. The speaker emphasizes the importance of paying attention to repeated phrases in scripture, as they indicate God's intended message. Additionally, the speaker highlights the joy and empowerment that comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. The sermon also touches on the concept of grace and government, emphasizing the need for both in preaching the word of God.

Transcript

This is Alan Redpath's message entitled, The Purpose of God for Christians, and his Bible reading is Acts chapter 13, verses 44 to 52. Now the purpose of God for the Christians, what are we all here for? I don't mean at this meeting, but I mean what are we all down here on earth for? When we're born again and have received eternal life, why doesn't the Lord just take us right off to heaven? We're left here for a purpose, and what is that purpose? Well I don't know that can be expressed anywhere in scripture more wonderfully, more completely, than it is in the 13th chapter of the Acts and the 47th verse. It would be helpful if you have your Bible with you, because usually I speak from the Bible, strange as it may seem.

But I do, and so it will help you both tonight, tomorrow, and perhaps you'll bear it in mind. If your New Testament will do tonight, Acts 13 and 47. Listen to this.

So hath the Lord commanded me, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. I have set thee to be a light. When I read that today again, and thinking and preparing for this meeting immediately, my mind went back to that wonderful day when the Lord Jesus looked full in the face a few very unlearned and ignorant fellows whom he'd called to be his disciples.

And he said to them, ye are the light of the world. That must have shaken them to the core. How on earth could they be the light of the world? I couldn't help reflecting it must have some connection with the

tremendous claim which Jesus made for himself.

I am the light of the world. Now here we've got a puzzle. For Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

Then he said to a few, just a handful of his disciples, ye are the light of the world. And here the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light. Now let's just sort all that out a minute.

What's it all mean? I think I'll try to sort it out by way of illustration. Last March I was visiting my daughter, who is a missionary with the African Inland Mission in Central Africa. And I went out for a walk one evening on one of the jungle paths.

There wasn't a sign of life, not a sound, except this strange sound that you hear in an African jungle of animals and birds. And I looked up for a moment and the moon was shining brightly. The sort of night that makes people who are in love want to hold hands.

Because I believe the moon controls the tide as well as the untide. And, excuse me, that brilliant moonlight night and the stars were shining, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. And I kind of got thinking to myself, I was all alone, and away in that African jungle it all seemed so remote and yet so real.

And I stopped a minute and just looked up and I thought to myself, Lord, what a wonderful world this is. I mean, after all, when you think about it, I wonder who it was that launched this great spaceship on which we live into space. And from what launching pad and sent it round the sun at a rate of about 56,000 miles an hour every 24 hours.

And I wonder who thought of putting a little slant to its axis so that every part of the world has summer, winter, autumn and spring. And I wonder who, for all these thousands of years, has kept it in orbit, not getting near to the sun enough, sufficiently, so that we're all roasted alive. Though, having been in Australia, I'm beginning to wonder whether it's getting near that way.

And on the other hand, not getting it far enough away from the sun, so we're all frozen to death. Who's kept it in orbit? And then I looked at that moon and I thought to myself, who's put the atmosphere on this world? So gentle an atmosphere that it suits tiny little birds and tiny little children. And yet so powerful an atmosphere that all of the 100,000 meteors that are launched from outer space towards this earth are burnt up as they enter the atmosphere.

Our astronauts can tell us all about that. And who put that great big moon up there, just far enough away, not too near, in case we would all be submerged in a tidal wave? Who did it all? Who was the architect and who was the great designer? Well, I know who it was. In the beginning, God.

And the Christian, by faith, he knows that the worlds were framed by the word of God. And that our Lord sustains all things by the word of his power. And I got to thinking, you see I was doing quite a lot of thinking that night.

My, I thought to myself, isn't that moon shining brightly? Then I suddenly thought to myself, you're wrong, because the moon doesn't shine at all. It's just incapable of shining. It's composed of some kind of lacklustre material which can't shine.

But I'll tell you what it does. It keeps in orbit in relation to the sun, and it catches something of the reflection of the sun, and the glow of the sun, and the glory of the sun, and it shines with the reflected light of the sun

into the darkness of this world. I am the light of the world, said Jesus.

Ye are the light of the world. I have set thee to be a light unto the Gentiles, and for salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth. And do you know this? With all the progress and advance that this world has made over thousands of years, the only hope of anybody having one glimmer of light concerning God and Christ and reality is if they catch something of the glow of Christ in you.

And what a wonder what it is that you've got that they haven't got. My friend, have you got any of the glow tonight? Any of the glory? Have you turned your eyes upon Jesus and looked full in his wonderful face and caught something of his glory? And you're reflecting it by the way you live and by what you say in the world seven days a week. I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, and again I underline threefold with emphasis that's the only light the world can ever have.

That thou shouldest be a light for salvation unto the ends of the earth, there's no limit to that. It's the same word as is used in the first chapter of Acts and the eighth verse. Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the world.

So then you see the church begins to function, and only begins to function, when it stops playing at church, and it stops meeting within four walls of a building, and realizes that it isn't here to build up a work, but to build it out, and to spread it out, and let the light shine through. Now I want to talk about that purpose of God for your life for a moment tonight. Because you see the fact of the matter is that everybody listening to me in this building this evening is either a missionary or a mission field.

Got that? Either a missionary or a mission field. You don't become a missionary by getting a passport and a visa and going to another country. That isn't how you become a missionary.

If you have looked full into the face of Christ, and caught something of the reality of the glow and glory and power of the risen Lord in your life, you're a missionary. Right now, where you are. If you haven't, you're a mission field.

And I don't care whether you're a Baptist, you're an Anglican, or you're a Methodist, or you're a Plymouth brother, or you're anything else under the sun. If you haven't really caught something of the glow of heaven in the face of Jesus Christ, you're a desperately needy mission field. Well, what involves in being a missionary? I mean, what does it take to be a missionary? How does one change from being a mission field to a missionary? I intend to stick closely to this passage of Scripture because the answer's all here.

And we change from being a mission field to a missionary, first of all, by the message we proclaim. Do you notice in this chapter, four times over, there's a little phrase repeated in the reading this evening? You know, I have a very simple mind. I'm not a bit clever.

And when I turn to my Bible, I always look for the things that are repeated over and over again. Because I presume if God says something to me many times, he wants me to listen. Did you catch a phrase that was repeated four times in this portion of Scripture? Well, in case you didn't, let me give it here.

Verse 44. Almost the whole city came together. By the way, that verse makes my mouth water.

The whole city together. My. 750,000 people in Brisbane.

Together. That would be terrific, wouldn't it? Almost the whole city came together to-- Do you notice the next phrase? Hear the word of God. Verse 46.

It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken unto you. Verse 48. They were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.

Verse 49. You underlining them, or are you noting them? The word of the Lord was published throughout all the region. Four times over, the word of God, the word of God, the word of God, the word of God.

And it was this message that burned like a fire in the hearts of Paul and Barnabas there at Antioch. It was the message of authority. The word of God.

Listen, it's one thing for you to go through your Bible. It's another thing for the Bible to go through you. And that's what the word of God had done to these men.

It had lit a fire in their hearts. Captured them. Transformed them.

They weren't nominal Christians. They were men absolutely sold out to Christ with a message which burnt in their hearts. And because of that, the Lord multiplied the church.

Well, you say we believe in the word of God. Well, that's good. I'm glad you do.

But do we really? Are you quite sure that today you are a missionary because in your heart there is the word of God? What is the word of God? I find over and over again in the Acts of the Apostles, and especially in this chapter, the early church fired the gospel broadside with a double-barreled gun. You see, they believed in the grace of God. You looking at this portion in your New Testament, verses 38 and 39, Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin.

And by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. So that's one barrel of the gun. And that barrel is very popular in evangelical circles today.

The undeserved kindness of God, by which all who believe in a crucified risen Lord are justified from all things. The grace of God. But they had another barrel.

And this was not merely the grace of God, but it was the government of God. Oh, you need to go home tonight and read this chapter through to catch the thrill of it. But I just read one or two verses.

Here is Paul retracing God's government over his people through all history. Verse 17. The God of this people of Israel chose our father and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt.

And with a high arm brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lots.

And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of 450 years. And then look on to verse 29. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a sepulcher.

But God raised him from the dead. So you see, these two men, with all the city around them, were preaching the word. And the word of God to them was grace and government.

Not one without the other. This is our message. A free salvation which is based upon his absolute authority.

Sovereignty, listen to me, is one of the essential attributes of the character of God. And it is a terrible divorce from God's character. When we say that we can receive Jesus as Saviour and then later have him as Lord.

That is absolutely without authority in the Bible. We are saved by the grace of God for submission to the government of God. Got that? I'll repeat it.

We are saved by the grace of God for submission to the government of God. Now you know that theme is developed and emphasized in all of the New Testament. Shall we continue in sin that grace should abound? God forbid.

Romans 6.2 Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey? His servants you are whom you obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness. Romans 6.16 In other words, putting it in modern language, you've got a perfect right to choose your master. And Jesus will never impose himself upon an unwanted heart.

You've a perfect right to choose your master, but what you have no right to do is to wear the uniform of one master and do the bidding of another. The New Testament makes no allowance for that. And all of this, of course, only supports the words of the Lord Jesus, who said, if any man would come after me, let him deny himself, let him leave himself behind and take up his cross and follow me.

He asked a question once, which I have never been able to answer. If you have, I would like you to give me the answer. This is the question.

Why called he me Lord and do not the things that I say? Is it not lawful, he said? Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Why should I complain with God's way in my life? So you see, a free salvation demands a full control. And I will never experience the riches of the grace of God sufficient for every need of my life, seven days a week, unless I'm prepared to submit to the government of God in every department, in every area of my personality. If I'm prepared for God's government, I'll always enjoy God's grace.

I remember speaking some time ago at a Youth for Christ meeting in a town in England called Stoke-on-Trent. Horrible place it is. Dirty place, smelly place.

But I say, folks, if you have any wedgewood china in your home, just you turn the plate upside down and find out where it was made. For the real stuff, the genuine article usually comes from Stoke-on-Trent. Strange thing how lovely china comes from dirty surroundings.

That's another parable, but I won't go into it. But you know, there was a man who was in the Salvation Army who gave his testimony that night, and I shall never forget it. He was very large, carried his presents well in front of him.

And he told how he's converted at a Salvation Army open-air meeting. And when he came home, he was so thrilled that the next day he decided he'd go to the holiness meeting the next morning. And he came back absolutely miserable.

And his wife said to him, what's the matter with you? I thought you were converted last night. Oh yes, he said, I was. But you see, everybody else had a colossal jersey on, sweated, and I hadn't got one.

Oh, she said, that's easy, I'll knit you one. She bought some red wool at Woolworths, and knitted him a huge jersey, because he was a big man. And he went out the next Sunday with this great thing, more like a tent than a jersey, on him.

And he came back just as unhappy. And she said, what's the matter with you now? Oh, he said, they all had white letters on their jersey but me. And I hadn't got it.

And I felt so out of place. Oh, she said, goodness knows what I can do about that, what I can do about that, because, poor soul, she couldn't read or write. So she sat down the next morning and wondered, and she looked out of the window, and just across the road opposite to her, there was a man who brought a ladder along, put it up against a shop, and he began to climb up.

And he began to paint a sign on the shop window. So she thought, my, that's my cue. I'll copy everything that that man puts on that shop window on my husband's jersey.

So he went out the next Sunday morning, and do you know, he came back so happy. He said, you've done it, my dear, you've done it. Everybody said I'd got the best jersey of anybody.

Do you know what he had on it? He said, this business is under entirely new management. I'd like you to smile at the story, because then I know you see the point. But I say, that's not the end of Christian experience, it's the beginning.

The end of a regime in which I have gone my own way, and I have made my own decisions, and I have chosen my own career, and I have done everything. That's all stopped now, and now Jesus has come to do it all for me. Sovereignty.

The end of one sovereignty, the beginning of a new one. The end of a sovereignty of a big capital I in my life, and a new sovereignty in which he has taken control. And when that happens, the Christian life is not drudgery, but luxury.

For all the grace of God is poured into a man who is ready for his government. Are you a missionary? Are you a mission field? If that hasn't happened to you, you're a mission field. If it has, you're the makings of a missionary.

For Jesus Christ is your undisputed master. And it's wonderful the things that begin to happen in that life. For not only does the missionary have a message to proclaim that Jesus is Lord, but inevitably he precipitates a movement.

Look, it's very thrilling. Verse 45. They were filled with envy and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Verse 48. With me? Are you? When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. See? Some were glad, and some were mad.

But nobody was indifferent. Now I always desire that God would enable me to preach like that. That somebody in the congregation, and I trust many, will be mighty glad for the message.

Other people might be mad, get their heckles up. But nobody's neutral. And in the New Testament day, there wasn't one person who sat on the fence.

They all got off the fence, some of them on the wrong side, but they were all off the fence. And wherever the grace of God and the government of God is preached and lived by a Christian, it is impossible for anybody to remain neutral in your presence. Listen.

In your home, in your college, in your school, in your office, in your job, what's the impact of your witness? Are people happily indifferent? Or are some mad, and some glad, but nobody neutral? At the risk of you getting very cross with me from the very beginning, I'll say this to you. That if everybody around you, where you work, are neutral about your Christianity, there's something wrong with your witness. Something wrong with your witness.

You're failing to be alike. You see, this is the kind of thing that Jesus said. I am come not to bring peace, but a sword.

And someone who has been born once will always persecute somebody who has been born twice. That's a principle of Christianity. And if you've experienced the new birth and the sovereignty of Jesus, I tell you, you're in for a hot time.

And you'll find it in the most sacred relationships of life. Oh, it's always so much easier to take a line that doesn't cause anybody any offense. And let's be quiet about our Christianity, you know.

Don't let's offend anyone. Just take it quiet. Perhaps you might hurt somebody.

Don't let's do that. Don't let's do. And so Satan neutralizes us.

And somehow we're very silent and we compromise just sufficiently to be popular with everybody. But we're very unpopular in heaven. It is absolutely impossible for a Christian ever to be on good terms with God and good terms with the unbelieving world at the same time.

His sheer testimony to the reality of Christ is bound to mean friction at one end of the line or the other. And you can choose which. You can choose to play it easy, to take it soft, to soft pedal, and to make it gentle and nice in your home or in your office.

And you will grieve the Lord and you'll lose out in all power in your heart. Or you can determine at all costs to be true to him and to his word. And then, my, a hornet's nest is around you and you'll find that in your own home and perhaps between husband and wife, parent and child, the husband deliberately creeps quiet about his Christianity for peace sake, and the wife decides she won't say anything about it in order that she maintains the harmony of the home.

And she doesn't realize that the only way of really winning her husband for the Lord is that she is clear-cut in her testimony. You'll never win your children for Christ by compromise. You won't win your parents for Christ by compromise.

You'll only do it as you yourself stand absolutely unashamedly for the grace and government of God in every area of your life. And of course, you see, that's where Satan gets most worried. And that's where

people begin to be a menace to hell.

And the devil has a wonderful counterfeit. He says, now be careful. Don't say anything else.

You'll put your foot in. Give people everything. Give them orthodoxy.

Let them be evangelical. Let them believe everything all right. Let them accept the Bible as the word of God.

Let them have all that. Let them have everything but Jesus. There's only one person of whom Satan is afraid.

It's the Holy Spirit indwelling the child of God. And the devil knows that the Holy Spirit has him beaten. But if he can persuade the Christian to be silent in his witness, to compromise, to refuse to pay the price of obedience, he's perfectly happy.

We read in verse 46 that on the one hand, the Jews filled with envy were judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life. That doesn't mean they thought they didn't deserve it, but they thought they were too good for it. Not that they were good enough.

Not good enough, but they were too good. They passed sentence on themselves, made themselves unfit for heaven. And that's one effect that always takes place in the lives of people to whom we witness in the power of the Spirit of God.

Oh, people will take the message of grace. They love to hear about forgiveness through the cross. But they won't have government.

Oh, we want our liberties, our right to choose, our right to live our own lives, make our own friends, and choose our own career. And we're not prepared to humble ourselves before almighty God, and the church today has lost out in all its power in witness simply because of that thing. I remember some little time ago, I was speaking at a church in Florida in the States on the Lordship of Christ, and a group of young people came up to me after the service, and they were absolutely mad with me.

And the leader of the group said to me, in the hearing of about 30 others, young people, you don't preach the gospel. And before he had time to amplify it, a girl, I'm not very good at guessing, but I would think about 25, said to me, you don't know my savior. So I said to her, well, now that's interesting.

Tell me about him. Oh, she said, he's so wonderful. I said, that's strange, because so is mine.

Oh, but you don't know my savior. Well, tell me about him. Oh, she said, she said, he forgives me so freely.

I said, give me an example. Well, she said, you know, I'm an awful liar. Oh, I said, interesting.

When did you tell the last one? Last night, she said. Did you? Do you mind telling me what it was? Oh, I told a lie to my mother where I was. I didn't want her to know, so I told her a lie.

Oh, what did you do about it? Oh, she said, I just went up to my bedroom after I told the lie and I knelt down on my bed and I said, thank you, Lord Jesus, for your precious blood that cleanses from all sin and thank you for forgiving me for telling the lie. And I got up again and I was perfectly happy. And I said to

her, young lady, I don't know your savior.

You're quite right. But I'm sorry to say this to you, your savior is not in the Bible. There's no such thing as a saved liar.

We are saved from lying. See, my friend, listen, the greatest Baptist preacher of last century was C.H. Spurgeon. And he said this, if our life is unholy, it's because our heart is unchanged and therefore our soul is unsaved.

The grace which doesn't make us different from what we were before we received it is counterfeit. Do you believe that? So you see, are you a missionary? You believe in grace and government? You acknowledge that in your life? All right then. Has it begun to precipitate a movement in your home, in your business, in your office? Is there a stir? God forbid that you should be happy with a testimony that leaves everybody neutral.

Saints go on slumbering and sinners go on sinning. You're not saved for that. You're called to be a light.

Oh, and it's so much easier to avoid that issue. Just to compromise sufficiently and live below the standards of New Testament Christianity so that you won't cause any disturbance in your home or in your office and you'll avoid hurting anybody and you become desperately ineffective in your witness. One of our great preachers in Britain last decade or so was a man called Robert Cook, great evangelist.

And he was going on one occasion to conduct a campaign at an East Anglian town of Norwich. And the week before he went there he was due to stay with a very wealthy family in the town. And they had staying with them a German girl who'd come to England to learn the language and the customs of the country.

And this girl wasn't a Christian, but the lady and gentleman, the very keen Christian. And she was very horrified to find herself in a Christian home, hated the whole business. So the lady and gentleman called her into the room and said, Now look here, we have a preacher coming to stay with us next week and we want to give him VIP treatment and we want to look after him.

So I want you to go down and order some meat at the butcher's shop. And they gave her the actual portion of the animal which she had to return with and gave her all the details. And so she went down to the butcher's shop and ordered the meat very carefully.

And the butcher was quite impressed and he said to her, Got somebody very important coming to your house this week or something? And with a scathing voice that you could have really cut with a knife. She said, Oh, it's only some preacher rather. And swinging round with the parcel of meat under her arm, she left a parting shot and said with all the cutting edge that she could command, You would think the good Lord himself was coming the fast they're making.

And the butcher was quite shocked. Well, the week went by and a further week and the next weekend she came in again to order the meat. And the butcher gave her the meat and he recognised her.

And he was so interested by her previous encounter that he said to her, By the way, how are you getting on with your preacher friend? And she said, You remember that I said to you, you would think the good Lord himself was coming? He said, I certainly do. Well, she said, He came. That was all.

Could that preacher have been you? A man who not only in the pulpit but around the family table was a Christian gentleman, gracious, courteous, kind and considerate. And carried about him even something of the savour and fragrance of Christ into that home. And in a matter of days the Lord had used him to break down that stubborn, cynical heart of that German girl.

Could that have been you? You see, you don't have to be a great theologian. You don't have to understand a lot of theology or a lot of scripture. You just have to be someone who has submitted to the government of God and knows the grace of God in your life.

And because you've done that, everybody sits up and takes notice. Now I have just one more thing to say to you, so cheer up. If you are thinking of having a sleep, I will only be about five minutes more.

So it's worthwhile just waking a minute and being with me for five more minutes. You see, if you're a missionary, if you're a missionary, there's a message that you're proclaiming. There's a movement that you're precipitating.

And one more thing, and we'll take on from here tomorrow, because it's the most thrilling thing of all. There's a miracle for which you're preparing. I get so excited about this.

Look at verse 52. The disciples, that is, the converts, they'd only been converted about a week, you know. The disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Now what's gone wrong, or what's gone right? What's happened? Has there been a great revival? Well, I don't find any sign of it. Have Paul and Barnabas decided to stay in Antioch and take charge of the situation until the church is strong and the converts are built up? I mean, have they got Bible study groups for converts and they're giving them lessons in how to study the Bible and they're following them up and they're watching them and they're doing everything? No. No.

Look at verse 51. For here you find what's happened. Paul and Barnabas have gone.

They've departed altogether, shaken the dust off their feet. Every human prop has been removed. And when every human prop had gone, the Lord came in and filled them with His Spirit.

Now, I want to be careful that in stressing a point and getting it home, I don't go overboard because in connection with the Billy Graham crusade, one of the most important things about it is the follow-up work and the care of converts. At Moody Church, where I was pastor, I left 48 converts of the Chicago crusade under the instruction of one of the assistant ministers regularly every week so that they may grow in the world. It is important.

But I want you to see this at the same time. That Paul and Barnabas had the sheer sense to make room for God to move in. Now, I don't want to be rude because I don't know anything about Brisbane, but I wonder if it's very different from Edinburgh.

Where on a Sunday, let's see, at 11 o'clock and 7, this is what happens. Introit. Hymn.

Prayer. Hymn. Reading.

Announcements. Collection. Choir piece.

Solo. More announcements. Sermon.

Prayer. Hymn. Benediction.

And then everybody goes home. And that happens twice a Sunday, year after year, and there's no room for God to break through. And some Christians would be absolutely amazed to see Christianity really work.

And see the Holy Spirit really move in. For most of our churches in our country, you would never know if the Holy Spirit was there or not. We've organised out God.

And one of the favourite texts for a Gospel preacher, for an evangelistic preacher of 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. And Jesus spoke those words to a church from which he'd been put out because they thought there was no need for him.

But he still says, if any man hear my voice, I will. And the wonderful thing in this chapter to me is to see how it finishes with young convicts simply rejoicing and filled with the Spirit. For the simple reason the human prop had been removed.

Are you missionary? Or are you mission field? Grace and government? Not 90% of government, but all of government. Totalitarian regime of Christ in your heart. Grace and government? You're precipitating a movement.

All props have gone, but you've been filled up with the fullness of God. God's going to do wonderful things through your life. I'm stopping with a little story about a little town in Northern Ireland that's called Ballymena.

If you ever come to Northern Ireland, be sure to go to Ballymena. It's the most Protestant town in the world. Roman Catholics have an awfully tough time there.

And there's a lady I know in Ballymena who had a series of cottage meetings every Wednesday for three weeks. You know, Bible study. And she lived next door to one of the few Roman Catholics in Ballymena.

So she asked her to the first meeting. And the lady said, Sorry, I'm not allowed to come. But the following morning, they had a little chat over the garden fence.

And the Roman Catholic lady said, Did you have a good time last night? Oh, wonderful. How many did you have? 27. And my little house was full.

Do come next week. Not allowed to come. Next meeting was held.

The following morning, same conversation. Had a good time last night. Oh, thrilling.

Thrilling, yes. Absolutely thrilling. How many did you have? 51.

My house was full. Come along next week. No, not allowed to come.

So the Roman Catholic lady departed in the next week and by the next meeting and the following Thursday, following morning, same conversation. Had a good time last night. Oh, tremendous.

How many did you have? Absolutely the best, yes. Well, she said, How many did you have? 62. And my house was full.

Well, that was too much for an Irish Roman Catholic. So she said to her son, Now, hi. Hi.

You told me that your house was full and you only had 27 in it. And then it was full and you had 21. And then it was full and you had 62.

Sheer impossibility. Oh no, it wasn't perfectly easy. Well, what did you do? Well, didn't you hear us? What do you mean didn't I hear you? Well, she said it was perfectly simple.

All we did was to move every stick of furniture out into the gut. And I have a feeling tonight that before God can break through in this city in real mighty power there's got to be furniture cleared out of our lives to make room for His Holy Spirit. Let us pray.

O Lord, we long that we might be missionaries, not mission fields. We confess to Thee that we have a deep sense of need, deep sense of our own poverty. But O help us and teach us tonight that we may and must submit to the authority and sovereignty of the Lord Jesus if we would know His sufficient grace in every situation.

Then through our lives we'll have the wonderful thrill of seeing people ceasing to be neutral. And some will get mad with us and some will be so glad that they ever met us. And everybody will get off the fence.

And dear Lord, we just ask Thee that we may dare to remove every prop that we make room for Thee to come in, in all fullness of Thy power. Jesus, fill Thou with Thy spirit heart that fools surrender now that the streams of living water from our inner man may flow. We ask it in Jesus' name.

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