

Repairing the Breach

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon emphasizes the urgent need for personal reconciliation with God and the church's role in addressing spiritual and moral breaches in society.

Duration: 45:16

Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-4, Romans 10:1-2, Romans 10:4

Topics: "Recovery"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes that the convention is not a time for religious entertainment, but rather a time for serious reflection on one's spiritual journey. The message is intended for a diverse audience, including missionaries, skeptics, and those struggling with personal conflicts. The speaker highlights the importance of the Christian faith in finding a way back to God and living a transformed life. The sermon also addresses the brokenness of the world and the need for healing and restoration through belief in God and His call.

Transcript

As you listen in many parts of the world to this service broadcast from England, you may be wondering what is the state of religion in this country today. For this is a land that has been accustomed to call itself Christian. I want to explain, first of all, that we are meeting in an enormous tent.

You may hear the rain pattering down on the roof, though otherwise this is a delightful spot in the Lake District at Keswick, nestling among the hills around Lake Derwentwater. We have come here to seek the face of God. This is the 82nd time that the Keswick Convention has met.

Perhaps we've never been more conscious of the gap between the materialistic people seeking the good things of life and those who regard spiritual priorities as of paramount importance. We live in a day when the very foundations of our faith have been called in question, even by professing Christian teaching, when the whole nation has been shocked by instances of a disastrous decline in public morals and integrity. And this is inevitably reflected in the private life of those who no longer acknowledge the sovereignty of a holy God.

We have to acknowledge humbly that we must share in the blame. As the Bible puts it, righteousness exalts of a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. At any rate, we who gather in this lovely place, some 7,000 of us, including Christians from all over the world, have no doubt whatever, because of our

What we ask for ourselves this week, we ask for them, so that everywhere, in these days of turbulence, of anxiety, of spiritual death and moral decline, thou wilt thyself intervene in sovereign power, that once again this world may know the moving of the spirit of the living God.

We thank thee for thy word around which we are gathered this week. The entrance of thy word giveth light, may its light shine into our hearts, if it be a revealing light, help us not to shrink from its rays, but rather to yield ourselves in penitence, gladly forsaking all that is shown to be wrong. If it be a guiding light, grant us the faith to respond to its beckoning, and with a glad surrender and wholehearted obedience, put our lives at thy disposal for the doing of thy perfect and redemptive will.

Above all may it be the light in which we shall come to see more clearly the glory and absolute sufficiency of our Saviour, so that to us he may become the altogether lovely one, that in our lives, in all things, he may have the preeminence, and that we may come so to know the power of his risen light in our lives, that he will turn every defeat into victory, thus commending him as the only Saviour able to meet the needs of men of all nations throughout the world. Hear us in these our prayers, and when thou hearest, forgive, as we further pray in the words which Christ hath taught us, saying, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen. Hear the word of God as it is written in the 58th chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my way, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. They ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God.

Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high? Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a borer, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy help shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearwards.

Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer. Thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity, and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as a noonday.

And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fast thy bones. And thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places.

Thou shalt rise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. We welcome the Reverend Alan Redpath, Minister of Charlotte Baptist Chapel, Edinburgh. Dr. Redpath has recently returned from the charge of the Moody Church, Chicago, where he founded the Mid-America Convention on Catholic Life.

He has traveled in many parts of the world, and his voice may be familiar to many who are listening. Before he speaks to us, we shall sing hymn number 365 in the Catholic hymn book, omitting verse four, Lord, in thy presence we are met. O come, Bethlehem.

The several thousand people who are met at this convention are here on serious business. This is not a time of religious entertainment, it is a week of spiritual thought-taking. We're not here to escape reality, but rather to face it, and to return to the tasks of life with a new conception of the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to meet the need of every human heart.

My message will reach the ears, no doubt, of a brave but tragically small group of missionaries who are in the front line of the spiritual battle. It may well also be heard by many who have little, if any, place in their lives for the Christian faith. There may, too, be a large number of listeners, baffled, beaten by conflicts and problems, who are longing for an answer to the battle of life in the context of their individual circumstances.

My question is, what has God to say to each and to all of us? He is not dead, he is alive. The greatest fact of history is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and that fact demands the future judgment of God, an event to which the world is moving rapidly. We need to be stabbed awake to the urgency of this hour.

In the chapter read to us from the word of God, he was speaking to a people through whom he had a world purpose to fulfill, provided they were prepared to accept his terms. They were to be repairers of the breach, restorers of paths to dwell in. God has a purpose yet to fulfill in the world, and he does it through those who believe him, and those who respond to his call.

But time is fast running out. Contemporary events underline clearly the imminence of our Lord's return. We live in a broken world.

There are breaches in every direction which are wide and deep. Broken hearts, broken homes, suspicion among nations, prejudice between races, obliteration of any standard of right and wrong, so that sin is no longer called sin, but merely self-realization. All of these are breaches which, unless they are healed, will mean the ruin of our civilization.

We talk about a free world, but a free world cannot remain free if it's held in captivity by its own inner corruption. The greatest peril confronting the Christian Church today is not that of being crushed by some materialistic power of some human foe, but of being cut off from the almighty power of God because of our own sins, and therefore failing to communicate the gospel in its saving power to this day in which we live. If we're to see another spiritual awakening before it's too late, then every one of us needs to apply the message of the gospel to our personal life.

All human breakdown stems from one fundamental breach, that which exists between men and God. Made in the image of God, for fellowship with God, we are in fact alienated from him by sin. It's a sin of

disposition which has led to all other sins of behavior.

It's the sin of setting up our own kingdom within our own life, and rejecting the kingdom of God. A man will train himself, educate himself, sacrifice himself, but he will never yield himself. He insists on being his own master.

We are here to declare that the only hope of the world is to say, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you be ye reconciled to God. In other words, give up your kingdom, surrender the throne rights of your life, capitulate to Jesus Christ as Lord. The great obstacle to reconciliation with God has been removed at the cross, where Jesus gave up his throne rights for us.

To receive him as Lord is to receive the atonement, and therefore to renounce our rebellion. It is this which repairs the breach, and therefore is the key to repairing all others. It means the collapse of a regime in my life in which I am my own king, and the opening up of another regime in which Jesus Christ is Lord.

For the essence of sin is rebellion, and the secret of redemption is submission. But something more is needed. The repairer of the breach, and the restorer of paths to dwelling.

An army must maintain its line of communication. But because of the breach between men and God that line with heaven is cut, there is no way through to the throne of God for a rebel. There is no access to light and power and joy.

All roads have been destroyed by enemy fire. The message of the Christian church, and particularly that of the Keswick Convention, is not only that there's a way back to God, a pathway to the throne which has been paved by the precious blood of Christ, but also that to tread that path is to be introduced into a new principle of life altogether. A life in which in response to my submission to him, he impart his nature to me, to live within me by his spirit, to make me holy.

This is a guided life, for the scripture says the Lord shall guide thee continually. It is a satisfied life, for he shall satisfy thy soul in droughts. It is a fragrant life, like a watered garden.

It is a freshly sustained life, like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. My what wonderful paths those are to dwell in. You see, when the breach with God is repaired, then the life with God begins, and what a life it is, the life of Christ reproduced in us.

But the tragedy of our day is that the love of God, the life of Christ, the power of the Spirit, shall seldom get through to the world, because the church, or the Christian if you like, while paying lip service to the truth, is not living in the reality of the experience. A lost contact between the church and the world, which we all deplore, is because of our loss of vital communication with heaven, and that's because of our sin. We are here to face this issue at Keswick, the priority need of our day, to get right with God, but there's a price to pay.

It's pictured in this chapter, where the people whom God spoke were maintaining an active outward form of religion without any basic reality. They had to be shown that the way of experiencing God's blessing is the way of forsaking of sin. The operation of the grace of God in life is never in conflict with the demands of His holiness.

If sin is to be forgiven, it must be forsaken. The tragedy is that so many of us have learned to live with it. The urgent call, personally, nationally, individually, is to repentance in the church, to face the jealousy, the

discord, the sin within our ranks, for in days like these we cannot afford the luxury of civil war, or the tragedy of defeated living.

This is an intensely personal matter for every one of us. To get right with God is going to have personal effect in the lives of every everyone. For to restore a line of communication with the throne in heaven, will be to ensure the life of the Spirit of God flowing from the throne into our hearts.

What I forsake, He forgives. What He forgives, He cleanses. What He cleanses, He fills.

And what He fills, He uses. And what follows, the fragrance of a Spirit-filled life, which has a wonderful attractiveness, and is the only secret of power to re-establish the line of communication with the world in such a day as this. The only thing which can resist a force of spiritual evil, is the mighty power of the Spirit of God released through a repentant and believing people.

May our prayer be in the words of John Wesley, Lord, cure me of intermittent piety, and don't let me go on another moment in any sin of which I have not thoroughly repented. For thy name's sake, Amen. We shall sing as our closing hymn, number 10 in the Keswick hymn book, God save the King of glory, Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hateth nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent, create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you falsely before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

Amen. Let us pray. Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank thee for this great privilege of sending out the message of full salvation to the world outside.

Thank thee for the privilege of taking part in this service in prayer and praise, and the preaching of thy word. Grant that those who have heard this message already in many parts of the Mediterranean and the East, those who later will hear it recorded in the West, may respond to thy voice speaking to them through thy word, and grant that it may mean a means of blessing to many, restoring the breaches, repairing those who have fallen away from thee, or who have lost heart in the fight. Grant that some may for the first time place their trust and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask it for his name's sake. Amen. He is the Lord God Almighty.

He is the Son of the King. He is the only begotten Son of the King. He is the Son of the King.

He is the Son of the King. I always think that last verse is one of the most wonderful verses of anything that we sing. He breaks the power of cancelled sin.

He sets the prisoner free. His blood can make the foulest clean. His blood availed for me.

And as the offering is now completed, I think we'd like to rise and stand and sing that last verse over again. Let us all pray. Our loving Heavenly Father, we come to thee at the end of another day of worship, a special day of worship in most of our lives, when we felt the presence of thy Holy Spirit so very near to

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