

Easter Conference 1979-02

by Aldy Fam Fanous

Jesus Christ is our city of refuge, providing divine provision, protection, and position for those who seek Him.

Duration: 41:33

Scripture: Psalm 49:6, John 10:27, John 13:8

Topics: "Easter"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prayer and the filling of the Holy Spirit in the church. He uses the example of Elijah, who prayed and saw great miracles happen. The preacher also highlights the need for maintaining fellowship with God and avoiding sin, as it hinders the power of God in our lives. He then shares principles for discerning the will of God, emphasizing the importance of aligning our actions with God's word and seeking individual guidance through fellowship with Him.

Transcript

God sent his Son, Jesus. He came to love, heal and forgive. Because he lives, because sweet to all he gives.

And in one day, a river with pain will say, Because he lives, because just. Turn with me, if you please, to Joshua, chapter 20. The book of Joshua, chapter 20.

The Lord also spoke unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, Whereof I speak unto you by the hand of Moses, That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither, And they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. When he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, And shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, They shall take him into the city unto them, And give him a place that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, Then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hands, Because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, And hated him not before time.

He shall dwell in that city until he stand before the congregation for judgment, And until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days. Then shall the slayer return and come unto his own city, And unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. They appointed Keresh in Galilee, in Mount Nephtali, And Shechem in Mount Ephraim, And Kiriath Arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

And on the other side, Jordan, by Jericho eastward, They assigned Bezer in the wilderness, On the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, And Ramoth in Gilead, out of the tribe of Ger, And Golan in Bashan, out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, And for the stranger that sojourned among them, That whosoever killeth one person, any person, As unawares, might flee thither, And not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, Until he stood before the congregation. The Lord will bless to us the reading of His words.

We read here about the cities of refuge appointed unto the people of Israel. And as I read this passage, I must have read it thousands of times, But very recently it was all new to me. For every people in the world, there are certain characteristics and traits.

For the people of the Middle East, these people are not any exception. There are a number of characteristics. For instance, they are hospitable.

They are good to deal with, if you know the way to their hearts. But one very outstanding trait, one very outstanding characteristic of the people of the Middle East, and I'm one of them, I'm talking about the persons who don't know Jesus Christ as their Savior. They are very revengeful.

They will not forget an evil done to them. It may last with them for years. And the Bethus feud, which lasted for forty years, and thousands of people fell victims to the war, and the feud that has lasted for forty years, is a witness to what I'm saying.

They are revengeful. Now, here's a case of a person who killed another person unwittingly, unawares. He was falling a tree, for instance, and the axe head flew and killed the person, unawares.

What would you do there? The avenger of blood will not forget it. He would try to get even with the slayer, but he killed him unawares. God said that they would appoint six cities.

Cities of refuge. And here we see a number of things that are noteworthy concerning those cities of refuge. First of all, they were divine provisions.

Divine provisions for the man who killed another man unawares. But what about people who transgressed willingly? Who are we, like sheep? All we, like sheep, have gone astray. Why? We committed murder.

No, not necessarily. We have turned everyone... We have turned willingly, willfully, everyone to his own way. But praise God for His divine provision.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He, Jesus Christ our Lord, is our city of refuge, and we flee thereto and are safe.

And our safe friend who does not know Jesus Christ as your Savior, now is your opportunity. Today is the day of salvation. He is our city of refuge.

Turn with me, please, to Psalm 49. We're going to read a tremendous statement there. In Psalm 49, I like to speak out the word of God out of the Scriptures, because they really show you the mind of God.

Look at verse 6, please. They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceases forever. It's impossible for any man to redeem another man.

Who can redeem me, therefore? Who can save me? How do I know that my sins are forgiven? We praise God for him who has made sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. In the city of refuge, in Jesus Christ our Lord, you find divine provision for all our sins. Secondly, we find there divine protection.

Divine protection. In 2 Samuel chapter 3, we read of a tragedy, a great tragedy. Joab killed Abner.

Why? Because of a feud. Revengeful. He was the avenger of blood.

But David mourned the death of Abner, and he said in his lamentation, Abner died like a fool. Why? Why did Abner die like a fool? Because he died at the gate of Hebron. And Hebron was one of the six cities of refuge.

He was just one step away. He could have taken a step inside Hebron, and would have been utterly safe, completely safe, protected. But he died like a fool, because just one step short of safety.

Is there anyone here just this afternoon who is just one step away? Christ is standing here pleading with you. Behold, I stand at the door of knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and talk with him and he with me.

Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Divine protection. You are safe forevermore.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them. And I give unto them what kind of a life? Eternal, everlasting life. And they shall never perish? Neither can any man pluck them out of my hand.

My Father who gave them to me is greater than all. And no man can pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.

Praise God for this great fact of the eternal security of the believer. I was telling someone who did not believe in it one day about the eternal security of the believer. And he said, Yes, Brother Adly, it is true that no man can pluck me out of Christ's hand.

But I can choose to jump out of His hand. I said, Teller, I am a member of His hand, of His body. How can a member of my body choose to jump out of my body? Let me try.

Please jump. Please jump. For my sake, jump.

For my wife's sake, jump. Would it jump? Am I glad it does not obey me. It would not jump.

I am a member of His body. We are members of His body. And His body is a living organism, the Church of God.

How can a member of my body jump out of my body? My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and I give unto them eternal life, divine protection. Praise God, I am saved forevermore in the hand of Jesus Christ, my Lord. Thirdly, I can see their divine position.

Not only divine provision and divine protection, but divine position. Those six cities were to be accessible, so located that they would be absolutely accessible throughout the land of Israel. As the Slayed who killed anybody unwittingly could flee to one of them very easily without much effort.

And today, Jesus Christ is calling to you, come unto me, but not only come unto me, behold I stand at the door. At the door, and knock. Behold I stand at the door, and knock.

Friends, be wise today, and come to the Savior. But, you know, we people of the Middle East attach great, great importance to names. Names are very important to us.

They really summarize the ambitions and the aspirations of the parents for the child. Before the child is born, we think of the name that we give to him, to it, to him or to her. And this name would summarize the hopes we have for the child.

I would ask you to pardon a personal experience. We were married in 45, the first child arrived in 55, a girl, and followed by a girl, two girls. But Lily, the first born, when she was five and a half years old, came to us one day from school, and she was most unhappy.

She wouldn't talk. But Lily, why, what's the matter? No. What's the matter? No, no.

She wouldn't talk. She was pouty, she wouldn't talk. At last she opened up, said, every girl in the class has a brother.

I don't have one. I said, bless your heart. Didn't say bless your desert this time.

Why don't you pray, and the Lord will give you a brother. Really that? If I pray, would the Lord give me a brother? Why would I say that? I said, well, yeah, yes. Yes, if it is God's will, he will give you a brother.

But pray. And you know, she started praying. God, please, give me a brother to be a friend to me.

As simple as that. Give me a brother to be a friend to me. So we decided if it were a son, we'll call him Samir, S-A-M-I-R, which means brother, good friend, good brother, good friend.

And when my wife was expecting, we had no shadow of a doubt that he was going to be a Samir, a boy. And he was a boy. He's still a boy.

And we called him Samir, S-A-M-I-R, which means good friend. So we think of the name that would summarize the hopes and the aspirations of the parents for the child. Those cities were not chosen at random.

There was not an accident. They have names, and the names mean a lot to you and to me. Let us study the cities and the names of those cities.

Look at verse 73. They appointed Kiddush. Kiddush is an Arabic word, and I'm glad it is.

And a Hebrew word too, which means sanctuary. Sanctuary. And what a tremendous message there is in this name for you and for me.

I really pity the people who call the chapels or the churches they go to the sanctuaries. There is no sanctuary on earth built with hands now anymore. There are many sanctuaries.

You, I, every believer in Christ, every child of God is a habitation of God by the Spirit. God lives in me, in you, through His Spirit. Know ye not that your brothers are temples for the Holy Spirit, and that not you are all, you are not your own? Yes, friend, it is a tremendous privilege and a tremendous responsibility.

Know ye not, young man, know ye not, not so young, that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? This is the Kiddush. This is the sanctuary. This is the holy place where God will see to it that God's temple is holy.

Yes, my house is the house of what? Prayer. My house is the house of prayer. How much time do you spend in prayer every day? How much time? Yes, friend, this is the need of the hour today for the child of God.

Do you believe really that prayer changes things? The Holy Spirit wrote the biography of Elijah, the man of God, in two words, only two words. Know what the words were? He prayed. Elijah was a man subject to such like passion as you and I are, and he preached the great sermon on Mount Carmel, right? No.

And he prayed. He prayed. It is no more pews we need in the church.

It's no more money we need in the church. There's plenty of money. It is the filling of the Spirit of God in the people who pray to God.

Yes, we are fond of organization these days. We have many organizers, but few agonizers. We want people who agonize in prayer.

You're right, where is the God of Elijah today? But where are the Elijahs of God today? Where are the people who know the mind of God, and bend the knee before God, and change the course of nature? He has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. And I believe in the God of the impossible.

I believe in the God of the impossible. Friends, pray. Pray.

Keep the temple of God holy. Separate unto Him. Kiddush.

Secondly, second city mentioned in verse seven also, is called Shekin. And Shekin means shoulder. Shekin means shoulder.

And this brings a message of consolation and comfort to my heart. In the Old Testament, the high priest bore the names of the children of Israel on his two shoulders and on his breast. On the shoulder pieces of garment, and on the breastplate.

And he bore the names of the children of Israel before God in the sanctuary. And I praise God, I have a high priest, not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek. He does not die, he ever liveth, to make intercession for me, and make intercession for you.

Friends, take courage. Never give up. Your Savior is living today.

He is alive. He knows your difficulties. He knows the circumstances you are passing through.

He knows the need you have. He knows the want you have. He knows all about you, much more than you know it yourself.

And He is not only knowing, but He is all-powerful. He knows, and He loves, and He cares. Yes, second, you are carried not only on His shoulder, but on the palm of His hand in His heart.

He appears before the throne of grace for you and for me. Thirdly, I cannot stop too long on each one, but the third city is also mentioned in verse 7. Hebron. Hebron.

And Hebron means fellowship, made of two syllables, hob, love, and ron. Hebron. Fellowship.

What is fellowship? As I said some time ago, it's one of the richest words in Christian literature. Fellowship can be defined best in this way. It's a common joy in a common object shared by God's people.

Common joy in a common object shared by God's people. And what is the common joy for you and for me? We have fellowship with God, and we have fellowship with each other. And see to it, friend, that this greatest, highest privilege of yours is maintained unbroken.

Fellowship with God. Therein lies the secret of your power. Therein lies the secret of my power.

If this fellowship is maintained, I know you are saved. I know nobody can take your salvation away from you, but someone can take that fellowship away, break it. And when the fellowship is broken, the power is gone.

Do you remember what happened in John chapter 13, when the Lord came to wash the feet of His disciples? He came to Peter, and Peter said, You wash my feet? No, I wash yours, not you wash mine. And what did the Lord say to him? If I don't wash you, you have no portion, what? Not in me. With me.

Portion in Him we have. Nobody can take it away from us. But portion with Him should be maintained all the time.

If something comes in between, this portion with Him is forfeited. Yes, as you walk, and as I walk day by day in this world, we get dirtied, and we need to be washed. Not washed from my sin, not washed by regeneration that cannot be repeated, but washed day by day to maintain the fellowship with the Lord.

Do you remember what happened in the life of David? One day when he was in fellowship with the Lord, he was so sensitive, he was alert, he wanted to have this fellowship always maintained. And he cut off part of the hem of the cloak of Saul, when he was chased by Saul. What happened? His heart beat, smote, he felt convicted.

I touched the Lord's anointed, even it was only a bit, a very far away bit, from the cloak of Saul. But later on, he killed, and he committed a heinous sin, and there was no conviction. Why? Because he was out of fellowship with the Lord.

The trouble with you, maybe it is that you are out of fellowship with the Lord. See to it friend, come back to fellowship with the Lord, so that you may be able to enjoy the blessings of God that He has in store for you. Yes, or think of the life of Jacob.

Yes, he was coming back to meet Esau, his brother. The Lord told him to go back to his own land, but he knew what awaited him. He knew what he had done to Esau, his brother, and he dreaded the encounter very much, and he thought his need was for more tactics.

So he played some tactics, how to meet Esau. He thought he needed some wisdom, and why? He depends upon his own wisdom. You know Jacob? Again, names.

Jacob is Ya'qub in Arabic, and Ya'qub is taken from the root Aqib. Aqib means healed. Ya'qub is a person who takes people by the heels.

A healer, not H-E-A, H-E-E. It's a person who takes people by the heels. Actually, it is now idiomatic in our language.

A person who is given to trickery is a Ya'qub, is a Jacob. It's not a good name. We choose good names for our children.

You do too, don't you? Iris, Margaret, Rose, Violet, forget-me-not, and all these good names you choose for your children. But Ya'qub is not a good name. Not a good name.

And on in Genesis 32, he was left alone. And a man with a capital M wrestled with him all night. You know who the man with a capital M was? He came to show Jacob his need.

And he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, and all his plans tumbled to the ground. He cannot run anymore.

And he yelled on to this man, I will not leave thee, except thou bless me. You cannot get away. Now I cannot run.

I will not leave thee, except thou bless me. Then came the most critical question, far-reaching, far-searching in Jacob's life. What is your name, Jacob? What is your name? Where? That opens a very big topic.

He could have answered according to our custom in the Middle East, I am the son of Isaac. You know, if you ask me my name if you were 7,000 miles away, what's your name, I say? Ben-Pham. Ben-Pham means the son of Pham.

Ben-Bella. Ben-Gorion. Ben-Gordon.

Son of, son of, son of. Ben is son. And son of Ben-Gordon.

Ben-Gorion. He could have said, son of Isaac. Ben-Isaac.

And that was glory to him. And really, the truth. But he understood the meaning of the question, what is your name? Ah, my name is Jacob.

Swindler. Tricker. Tricky person.

Ah, your name shall be no more Jacob, but Israel. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just. Forgive us our sins and cleanse us from how many? All unrighteousness.

Friends, the man with a capital M is standing in our midst this evening. And he's asking you the same question, what is your name? You want a blessing, I'm sure. You don't want to leave this conference without the blessing.

And he is more willing to give the blessing that you are more willing to receive it. What is your name? What is your name? In the quietness, in the silence, in the hush of this hour. Answer it before the Lord, between you and him.

Lord, my name is prayerless. My name is gossip. My name is sluggish.

My name is lawful. My name is stingy. My name is cold-hearted.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just. And if you don't confess your sins, he abides faithfully and can never deny himself. How? How? We misinterpret this.

We misunderstand it. He can never deny his holiness. He can never deny his holiness.

It's a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God. He is willing to give you the blessing now. If you are willing to receive it in the right way, yes, Hebrew means fellowship.

And you can keep this fellowship unbroken, maintained unbroken, between you and the Lord. You can do it right now. We come to the fourth city in verse 8. On the other side, Jordan by Jericho, eastward they assigned Bezer.

And Bezer means stronghold. Stronghold. We say bazur in Arabic now, but Bezer, bazur is the same word.

Stronghold. And Jesus Christ, our Lord, is my strength. Is my strength.

He is your strength and weakness. He protects. He keeps.

He gives you power. He gives you power, but on condition. Keep the fellowship maintained, unbroken.

I don't know whether I told some of you about the experience I had back in Lebanon. I had bought a beautiful tape recorder, four tracks, stereophonic. Oh, it was just beautiful.

One of my brothers came from Egypt to visit me. My son then was about three years old, three and a half years old. And he, believe me, was very, very interested in putting his hand to everything.

Right. And I wanted to show my brother what a beauty of a tape recorder I had bought. And I got it for him, put the tape, Jim Reeves, pushed the button, nothing happened.

I pushed all the buttons, nothing happened. Nothing happened. I'm no mechanic, and I'm not electronically binded.

So I tried to fidget with it, you know, so I began to perspire and feel too small. Oh, this son of mine, he spoils everything. He spoils everything.

Of course, it was a good time to escape because the poor boy could not justify himself. And then we wanted to dismiss it this way. But I just by accident looked behind and I discovered a secret.

It was not plugged in. Not plugged in. No power.

No fellowship. No power. Why is it that our Christians today that are living a defeated life, no power? Because fellowship is not maintained with the source of power.

There is something called sin. S-I-N. In between.

In between. Is there anything in between? Jesus. Stronghold.

And he has not changed. He is my strength. The Lord is the strength of my salvation.

He is my stronghold. Let me continue on. The city number five.

Ramos, in verse eight. Ramos in Gilead. And Ramos means high place.

Ramos means high place. Rama or Ramos means high place. And, brother and sister, as I said this morning, you and I are seated together with Christ in the heavenly places.

If ye therefore be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. Seek those things which are above. Seek the will of God.

For your life. For anything. For everything you do.

You say, well, I've been praying for the will of God. I don't know. It is most difficult to know the will of God.

Listen, friends. It is not most difficult. It's not easy.

But it's possible. If the fellowship, again, is maintained between you and I. Let me give you a few experiences of mine in these years I have known the Lord. How do I know the will of God? Here it is.

Should I travel or not travel? Should I marry her or marry him or not marry her or marry him? Why? How? How can I know God's will? Let me give you a few principles that may help you to find out the will of God in a number of matters in life. A. God never leads contrary to his words. No.

Never. It's a principle that can never be changed. God said, thou shalt not tell lies.

You will not tell lies. Don't pray and say, most of all, I tell lies or not. God never leads contrary to his words.

Secondly. God does not lead all his children alike. There is a special leading for every person.

It depends upon fellowship, as I said, maintained between you and the Lord day by day. Tune your ear to his voice. My sheep hear my voice.

And I know them. Thirdly. God does not always lead us in the same way in every circumstance.

There is a special leading for special circumstances that therefore keep the fellowship unbroken. Fourthly. Don't trust your emotions.

Emotions are very subtle and deceptive. Very often because you want something, you think this is the leading of the Lord. He does not.

Don't trust your emotions. No. 5. No.

5. There will be a deep peace when God's leading is given. A deep peace when his leading is given. No.

6. When peace is given, don't doubt the leading. Shut the door. Take it from the Lord and act upon it.

Yes. This is a help to know the Lord's leading in the circumstances of life. But remember general principles for knowing the will of God.

This is the will of God for you, even your sanctification in all things. And this is the will of God for you, that you give thanks in all things, giving thanks for this is the will of God for you. What I said about the principles are principles for his leading, for God's leading.

No. 6. City No. 6. In verse 8. Golem of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

And simply golem means joy. Golem means joy. Yes.

There is joy for you today. And always. And at all times.

The joy of the Lord. It does not depend upon circumstances. His joy and his peace.

Not as the world gives, give I unto you. My peace I give unto you. Think of Philip, or rather Stephen, a bigger father.

The first martyr in Christianity. He stood before those people. He knew exactly what was going to happen.

It was a foregone conclusion. He could see the stones. He knew the verdict.

He knew the outcome. But he was not shaken. Why? His face shone like the face of an angel.

Why? Because he could see the Lord Jesus in front of him. I see heaven open. And Jesus standing.

Not sitting. Standing. At the right hand of God.

Why? Welcome home, Stephen. Welcome home. Therefore he was filled with joy.

He could even pray for the enemies. Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. Filled with joy.

Filled with peace. Why? Fellowship with the Lord. He could see the Lord Jesus.

Yes, Moses could see him too. And he was not afraid of the wrath of the king. He despised the treasures of Edith.

Because he looked to the recompense. And he went undaunted. Not afraid.

Because he knew before whom he was going. Think of Elijah before Ahab. Physically speaking, he was standing before Ahab.

But what did he say? I'm not afraid of you. As the Lord liveth before whom I stand. As the Lord liveth before whom I stand.

Standing before Ahab. But he was really standing before the Lord. Talking to the Lord.

And hearing the Lord talking to him. Friends. Fellowship with the Lord.

Golan. The joy of the Lord is your strength. All these are possible.

Because Jesus Christ is my city of refuge to me. Are you living in Kiddush? Are you living in Shechem? Are you living in Bezos? Are you living in Hebron? Are you living in Golan? Are you in Jesus Christ? Then you are in the source of peace. And joy.

So we pray. Our loving Heavenly Father, we praise Thee and we thank Thee. For the Son of Thy love.

Jesus Christ, our Lord. He who spared not His Son. But delivered Him up for us all.

How shall He not with Him also? Freely give us all things. We thank Thee that all things are mine in Christ our Lord. Father.

In the quietness of this hour. Speak to each heart. And help us to be in the center of Thy will for us.

Until the journey is done. Until the race is run. Until the crown is won.

For Christ's sake we pray. Amen.

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