

(John - Part 8): Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer emphasizes the importance of preparing our lives for the coming of the Lord by addressing spiritual and moral obstacles.

Duration: 42:20

Scripture: Luke 3:3-4, John 1:21-23

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the four things required to prepare for the charity of God to move in. He uses the book of Luke and companion scripture from John to explain these requirements. The first requirement is to straighten out the path, meaning to remove any obstacles or distractions. The second requirement is to fill up every valley, symbolizing the need to address and overcome any shortcomings or weaknesses. The third requirement is to bring down the mountains and hills, representing the need to humble oneself and remove any pride or arrogance. The final requirement is to make the rough ways smooth, indicating the need to eliminate any roughness or harshness in one's character or behavior. The preacher emphasizes that it is up to each individual to fulfill these requirements in order to experience the fullness of God's charity.

Transcript

The book of John, first chapter, verses 21 and 22-23, they ask him, that is the Levites and priests, Are thou a life? And he said, I'm not. Are thou that prophet? And he answered, no. Then said they unto him, What art thou? That we may give an answer to them that send us.

What sayest thou of thyself? And he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah. As you know, in the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, there are no punctuation marks. You have to punctuate as you are able.

Fortunately in our English, we can punctuate so that we're not forced to take a whole sentence at once. We can break it up and know where the emphasis lies. So when we come to this, make straight the way of the Lord, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, there isn't any punctuation to assure us whether John said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.

Or, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make scrape the way of the Lord. Then we read a little more on this story from Luke, the third chapter. He, that is, John, came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

You will notice in that wondrous number, and the glory of the Lord, which the choir sang tonight, they incorporate these words. All flesh shall see the salvation of God. And then go on to the part of the verse not found here, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.

Now, the Messiah has come to be sung at Christmas time, and it leaves the impression that it is all most exclusively, if not altogether exclusively, a Christmas cantata, oratorio. But the fact is that it was sung at Easter more than Christmas was originally sung for the first time at Easter. And the text here of the glory of the Lord has nothing to do with the baby manger aspect of our Lord's coming.

It has to do with his coming again, if we are to be prophetically accurate. But now, with these words, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, let us go on briefly. Now, John was called the forerunner because he ran before.

When old kings in those old days used to travel, they sent a man before them. Now you can telegraph ahead and say the President will arrive at such a station at a certain hour, and there will be a band to meet him and crowd gather. But in those times they had no telegraph, no radio, no telephone, so they sent a man, a swift-footed runner, who ran before the king, not too far ahead, but just far enough to alert the populace that the king was coming.

That was the forerunner, the herald, they called him. Now, John was the herald of the coming king, the forerunner of the king. He ran before to alert the populace and to say that he is coming.

And John is not to be understood simply as a herald, as an ancient and religious Paul Revere. He did more than that, he was a preacher. He was a preacher of truth, and the nature of his preaching was to alert the people to the coming of Christ.

Now, his preaching is of age-long and universal significance. There are some things, and when once they are said, that is all there is to it, you can put them down as history, but they have no meaning for anybody following. But the preaching of John the Baptist was of age-long significance, because until Christ comes back and the glory of the Lord is revealed in all places, see it together, and the millennium is set up, John's preaching had moral, binding application to us all.

And then it's of universal significance in that it's for everyone. Now, John's message was that the kingdom of the Lord was coming, the kingdom of God, that the king, the Lord himself, was coming. And that he was coming to fulfill the ancient prophecies, the prophecies made by Moses and all the holy prophets since the world began.

And John said he is coming, and in announcing his coming, just behind him on the way, he reached out and gathered up all of the ancient prophecies, and those prophecies presented him as being everything that the human race could want and everything the human heart could want. It presented him as the sun,

and said he will come as the sun shining in his strength, the sun to light the way for the traveler, the sun to warm the earth and brighten the landscape, and he was to come as the star of the morning as we sing, the landscape adorning, the horizon adorning. He was to be the star that should rise and lead his people on their long way, and he was coming as the shepherd to lead his sheep in the desert and to lead them by green pastures and where the waters were still and sweet.

And he was coming as a physician to heal, for the hearts of men were lacerated and sick, and they needed healing, and he came to be the physician that could heal men, and he came as the priest to forgive and to give complete freedom and to offer the sacrifice, and he was all that, and he was so much more that I can't hope to explain all that Jesus Christ is. You can read your Bible, and every page, almost every verse, if you turn it over, you will find some bit of gold there, you will find some new wonderful thing that our Lord Jesus Christ is, and he was to come riding upon his chariot. Now, John was a great user of figures of speech, and John quoted Isaiah, another great user of figures of speech.

Metaphors and similes burst out of Isaiah like water out of a fountain, and when John came, he gathered, he picked up these similes and used them, and he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. And by a simile he characterized the moral state of Israel as being a wilderness, wild and disorganized and overgrown and pathless. Now, that was the figure that described the moral condition of the people of Israel.

It was not overstated. A figure of speech never overstates the truth. It may modestly understate it, but it never overstates it if it is used by a master.

And Bible writers were masters of metaphor, so that John did not overstate it. When they said, your moral state is that of a wilderness, and they were a farming people, and they understood that instantly. It was wild and disordered and overgrown and pathless.

And there must be a highway for the coming King. Now, John was the herald of the coming King. He said, he is coming.

And then he raced into the wilderness and said, get away ready for him. You can't expect him to drive his chariot over these fallen logs and over these jagged rocks and through the tangled wealth of wild stuff. You will have to have a highway for him.

Now, here is the startling fact, my friends, that the Lord would not come to a wilderness unless there was a satisfactory way prepared. And God will not prepare that way. Now, that was John's message.

He said, there is one coming after me, and he will not come unless you prepare. He will not come to you unless you prepare the way. He will not come into the wilderness of your life.

He will be riding his shining chariot, and from that chariot he will be dispensing light like the sun and beauty like the star and healing like the physician and guidance like the shepherd. And sweet, wholesome health like the rain. He will be all this.

And he will dispense it from his shining chariot, but he will not drive his chariot into the muddled, tangled wilderness of your immoral lives. And then he said to you, he will not come and build a road. God is not a builder of roads.

He drives his shining chariot through, but he will not build a road. That's the business of the people who invite him in. Now, God will not himself, I say, prepare such a way.

It would be morally and psychologically impossible for God to prepare the way of the Lord. He said, you prepare the way of the Lord. I am coming, you get ready for me.

I'm driving my chariot through, you build the highway. That was the burden of John's message, the voice of one kind to the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. It would be, if God himself were to get out of his chariot and build the way, it would be to violate his own nature, and it would be to violate the nature of man, so that man himself must prepare the way for the incoming of the Lord.

Now, what were the results in Israel? The results were very plain. Some prepared the way for him, and to them he came, bringing his life and his health and his healing, and saying, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee, saying, Daughter, go and sin no more, saying, Wake and rise and get up, Daughter, to the little dead girl, turning the water into wine, stilling the waves, forgiving sin, giving life to the little dead girl, and giving hope and encouragement, bestowing eternal life. He did all that to them who believed, because they had prepared the way of the Lord.

But there were others who rejected the exhortation of John, and they remained blind and hard, and refused to receive Christ. The result was they opposed him, they blasphemed, and finally they crucified him, for they did not all receive Jesus when he came. They did not all obey the voice of John.

It is written in one place that certain ones had rejected the preaching of John, and so they had frustrated the will of God for them. That's what happened to those who would not prepare the way. I suppose they wanted God to do everything.

And we are living in the time when God is supposed to do everything. What a peculiar and confused theology buzzes in and out of the heads of the people today, that God has been reduced to the size of a good-sized man, and we become offensively personal and intimate in our dealings with God, and joke about him, and call him our business partner and our pilot and what-have-you, and our left hand, or our quarterback. And we make out of the High King and Prince of Light and Glory, we make someone who is scarcely worthy of more honor than Churchill or I. Eisenhower might get.

And yet at the same time we expect him to do everything. At the same time we fully expect he will prepare the way, he'll do our repenting for us, he'll straighten out our lives, he'll undo our evil deeds, he'll get right with our neighbor for us, he'll pay our debts for us, and he'll do everything. John didn't teach that.

John said he is moving in, but he's moving in on a prepared way. And he's not preparing that way, you're preparing that way. Therefore, prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make your paths straight.

Now, that's the teaching of the Bible, and that's the teaching of the historic Church as well. Now, today and tonight, and right here, the Lord is ready to move in to the lives of every last one of us, and to be to us the sun and the star and the rain and the dew and the shepherd and the priest and the light and the healing. He's ready to move in and be all that to us.

But our lives are a wilderness. That's why we're not getting more than we're getting. Our lives are a wilderness.

That is why even believers are not getting what we ought to get, and are not progressing in our spiritual lives as we should, and are not living the kind of lives we should live. Because we've allowed our lives to become a wilderness, and even the old paths in some instances over which the Lord moved in the day when we first believed on him have grown over somewhat, and some have left their first love and need to repent again. And the way of the Lord is not smooth, and God can't move in as he wants to move in.

But we say, he'll do something about it. No, he said, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and that ye is the subject of the sentence, and it means the one who performs the verb, performs the act, and that act is prepared. So that we are told that if we are to see the glory of the Lord revealed, we're going to have to prepare our way to the Lord.

Now, in the book of Luke, from which I got companion scripture for my text from John, I find that there are four things required there, and everybody who's ever thought a bit about it will recognize this figure. And every engineer will know what it means, and every road builder will know what it means, and every man who's even scraped his own driveway to get his car out will know what it means, because it's so simple. It says that there are four things wrong with the wilderness, and four things you have to do before the chariot of God will move in.

Make his path straight. You've got to straighten out the path. God is not going to run around spirals or corkscrews.

Make his path straight, that's one. Second is, fill up every valley. And in the modern language they call that making fills.

You know how they go across, they find a valley, they don't run down into that valley, fill it up. And then the mountains and hills shall be brought low, they call those cuts. In making a railroad, instead of going up over the bump and down into the hollow, they just cut the bump off and fill the hollow up, which is very good road building.

And then they are to make the rough way smooth, to take out the rough things and smooth up the road so that the chariot can run over it. Those are the four things. Now it lies with you and me whether we are to do this or not.

We can sing about Christmas until we get calluses on our vocal cords, and we can sing heart the herald angels sing until we never want to hear it again, and we can celebrate Christmas just as long and loud as we will when it's all over. You may be just as barren as you are tonight, and the wilderness and the green fires may grow over your soul, and God may be unable to get where you are, and he may terminate his victorious progression toward your inner life somewhere out on the borders because he comes to the crooked ways that are grown over and while where there is no smooth way. Now make his path straight.

Simply all crooked ways shall be corrected. If any of you, I say again tonight, if any of you like to do something really helpful to your mind, a little more helpful than to work the crossword puzzle, I recommend that you make a little private study of analogies. That is, comparing one thing with another thing.

They're so wonderfully beautiful. All poetry is built around it, and all fluency of speech is built around it. The comparing of one thing with another thing.

For instance, we say that the man is upright, and we compare him to a tree that stands straight up and down. Yet we don't mean that he stands straight up and down. He may be fat, or he may be crippled, but yet you can say about the man that he's upright because we're talking about a moral quality in the man.

And then we talk about a deal that is crooked, and we don't mean really that it's crooked in the sense that a crooked stick would be crooked or some other physical thing, but we're drawing a sharp and quick analogy between something crooked in nature and something crooked in the heart. So a man who is crooked is a man who is living a life that is not morally upright, not morally straight. That's the beauty of an analogy.

You can say so much without going into all the details. You want to know the difference between a well-used analogy and a laborious and headache-y description, read Isaiah and then read a lawyer's statement. What a lawyer has to say.

They won't use analogy in their figurative speech because somebody would get up in court and prove it wasn't so. So in order to save themselves in court before judges and juries, they make the party the first part here and after to be said and so on, and it's just horrible gobbledygook. It's awful to listen to, and I suppose it's one of those necessary evils, but it never lifts your soul.

Nobody ever handed a contract to another man and said, read that brother, that'll brighten your day. You never brighten your day by reading anything a lawyer wrote. You get a headache in trying to figure out the fine print because he's not going to be caught in a metaphor.

He's going to have it so that everybody knows exactly what he's talking about, and yet he's talking about infinitely less than the man who daringly said, the crooked way shall be made straight. Give that to a lawyer, what'll he do with it? Why, he'll prove that the whole thing is antiquated and out of order and null and void and move to squash the indictment. But give that to the man who thinks more of his inner life, and he'll know what it means.

The crooked shall be made straight. Straighten up your life, man. Everybody knows what that means, and you don't need a Philadelphia lawyer to help you.

Straighten up your life, man. You want God to bless you? Straighten up your life. You want to have the joy of God? Straighten up your life.

And you don't need two courses in Moody Bible Institute to know what that means. Straighten up your life, you know what's wrong with you. Oh, the chariot of the Lord shines as it moves forward toward your heart's door, and finds there only a wilderness, finds there no path for the wheels to move over.

John simply says the crooked shall be made straight. Straighten it up, and God will move in. And all the burden of the evangelist, from Stephen to this hour, from Philip to this hour, all the burden of the evangelist has simply been straighten up your lives.

You say, it's an analogy. What does it mean? It means straighten up your lives, and don't tell me you don't know what it means. People that are running a business, and they're running an under-the-table business, or under-the-counter business, straighten it up! The man who has a real estate business, and he's learned how to turn a pretty dollar, straighten it up! And those who are playing foolishly with the truth, stop it, and straighten up that life.

You know what it means, and I know what it means, and before the judgment bar, God will know what it means. So if the Lord is going to move in on us in blessing and revival power, there must be a straightening up of the life. And then every valley shall be filled, that is, making the fills, so that there are not ruts and hollows in the way of the chariot.

And that means the sin of omission, where it's too low. Sin of omission must be filled up. And what does that mean? It means the things that we don't do, the no sin.

No prayer, no study, no giving, no witnessing, no communion, no seeking God, no pursuing of God, things we don't do. And the things we don't do, we've got to get some, we've got to begin to do them and fill up the hollows. The chariot of God can't move in where there are hollows and ruts.

John says, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, fill up the ruts, fill up the hollows, the things we don't do. No prayer, no study. You know, my friends, we have the notion that if there's something wrong with your life, buy a book.

If you're studious, buy a book. I know just lots of people whose lives are all wilderness, and they say, what book would you recommend? Books can't make a highway for you, friends. I don't recommend any book except the book of God.

But that we still have the fallacious idea in our heads that when we're backslidden and cold and dry and barren, buy a book. And then there are others who, when they find themselves barren and cold, and God seems a million eons away, they take a course. Before I go, somebody says, I'd like to take a course.

Do you recommend anybody to give me a course? I told somebody in New York last week, I'd like to take a course. Well, they said, Moody has a nice course. You can get one at Nyack if you'd like a course.

You can also buy a book. But then I don't know what good it would do you. It'd do you as much good as taking a course.

What we need is not taking a course. We need to stop the things we're doing that are wrong and begin to do the things that we're neglecting to do. People of God, we insist upon putting religion up on a plane where it helps to be a bit off.

We do insist upon putting it up there. If you were to go to a doctor and he would say you're a victim of malnutrition, you wouldn't take a course. You'd say, doctor, give me a diet.

I'll eat better from now on. But we won't take a course in something or buy a book. I say you might as well buy a book because it'll do you no more good to take a course in something when you're not obedient and you're not doing the will of God and you're not straightening your life out and you've got your bullhead set to have your way and you're stubbornly going your own carnal, abdominal way and then you hope to get around it by going to hear a big evangelist.

That's another way people are getting straightened out. Oh, so-and-so will only come to this town. In the meantime, I'll let the briars grow.

In the meantime, I'll let the rocks remain there. In the meantime, I'll leave the hollows unfilled and the bumps untouched. In the meantime, I'll lie like a red lizard in the sun and let the green briars grow all over me, and I'll wait for the evangelist to come.

And if I could just hear him once, what a policy it all is! How foolish it'll be in the day of Christ when the eyes of Jesus, like burning flames, go into our motives and discover our hypocrisy there! How terrible to think that we have fooled ourselves and said, I'll wait for an evangelist, or I'll go to hear this wonderful praying man. How many people have come to hear our friend and gone to hear our friend Tom, I don't see. But how many people have thought that Tom could give them a pill and would do their praying for them.

And they've come from everywhere to hear the man talk about prayer, thinking he could give them a little secret, a little pill they could take with a glass of water. And after that, they'd be praying saints, forgetting that the only kind of teaching Tom can give is hard work and sacrifice and long hours on your knees. People are disappointed when the great Saint of God moves into a neighborhood.

They expect him to have some trick pill or some capsule filled with amazing power. Take this, sister, goodbye. Sister takes that, but it doesn't do her any good.

The things of God aren't gotten that way. God doesn't give his stuff to trick pills. It's like that lesson that you see in the cheap magazines.

Ten easy lessons to become a concert violinist. Ten easy lessons on how to sing like Gellert Kirche in ten lessons. Well, a lot of foolish people buy that stuff, and they put those ads in for foolish people.

People who need a keeper with a visor on his cap. And they get rich off of fellows who don't know you can learn to sing in ten lessons and you can't play a violin in ten lessons. But we imagine in religion, just take a course, some carnal goat from the plains of Texas, just converted, will come up, and he'll say, if I can take a course at Moody's or Guignan or Nyack or St. Paul, oh, this will be wonderful.

But he's never died and he's never surrendered, and he's as stubborn as a mule and as pay-strong as Hitler. What he needs to do is not take a course, at least not at first, he can take that afterwards. But what he needs is to just begin to undo some things he's doing, and do some things that he's not doing, and straighten out his crooked life.

And it's amazing what one or two texts will do for you if you'll straighten up. And it's amazing and shocking how little the whole Bible will do for you if you insist upon being crooked. Know what I mean? Oh, I've met some dear Saints of God who didn't know very much scripture.

They didn't know very much, but what they did know, they really knew it well. They lived it. They'd gone through it.

It was in them. It was in their bloodstream. They didn't know many texts, and they thought God inspired the original scriptures when he gave to King James.

And they wouldn't think God reading anything else. But God knows their hearts, and so he's blessed what little they know marvelously to their hearts. But you can run on to men who are walking by bosom, and yet they'll shock you with their carnality and worldliness and frivolity.

Then he says, we're to cut down the high places. I've already touched that. That's the sins of commission.

Then we're to make the rough ways smooth by humility and obedience. And then we shall see the salvation of God. Do you believe we can have revival before Christ comes? Well, it lies with us.

It lies with us whether we do or not. I've said before and repeat now that on the larger subject of universal revival, I am not able to pronounce, I do not know quite yet, whether I believe that it's possible or within the will of God to have a universal revival around the whole world. I don't know about that before Christ comes.

But I do know it's entirely possible to have a personal revival. I know you can have that. And if enough people have personal revivals, that would mean a universal revival finally.

Now, it's possible for you to have a personal revival. I want to ask you, are you satisfied with the way you lived last week? Now, really, are you satisfied? Are you satisfied with the degree of light you had and the degree of power, the degree of fellowship, the purity of your life, the power in your life? Are you satisfied? Well, if not, you can have a personal revival and have just four little things to do, straighten up, begin to do the things that you're not doing and should. Stop doing the things that clump up here, that you tear that down, and then take the rocks out and smooth up the highway.

And in moves God, the shining chariot of God moves into a human life. And not only do I believe in personal revivals, but I believe in church revivals. I believe it's entirely possible to have a church revival.

I believe it's entirely possible, and I don't think it's as hard as some preachers make it out to be. I've heard preaching that made out a revival to mean that there must be a unanimity that was one hundred percent. I don't believe it.

I don't think it's absolutely required that there be one hundred percent unanimity. If it were so, I don't think any revival could ever come to a church. But if we approximate unity, if we approximate oneness of accord, if we get happily near to oneness of accord, God will let some people sulk around the edges.

Sure, there will always be some sulkers around the edges. When the Holy Ghost came at Pentecost, there were sulkers that were not with that 120. They were sulking around the edges, criticizing and finding fault and saying it shouldn't be done this way.

They had no suggestions of their own, but they just found fault with the way things were done. They were there, always they were there, in the days of thinness. And in the great days of revival, there are always the sulkers around the edges.

But we can afford not to overlook them if we can get a nucleus, an inner core of people that are united in one thing. God will send the Holy Ghost upon us, and we'll have a church revival, a personal revival anybody can have. You can have that before you go to bed tonight.

I recommend, go home, get on your knees somewhere with a pad and pencil, put down the things that have grieved God and forsake them forever. Take forgiveness for them. Promise him to do the things you've been neglecting to do.

Straighten out that crooked thing in your life, and by humility smooth the highway for God. And you shall see the salvation of God certainly before the morning sun rises. And the same is true of this Church, of its board, its young people, its prayer band, and its membership, if we'll take this seriously and expect to see the salvation of God without any cost to us, without any big advertising, and without any drama.

For just the Holy Chariot of God moving in over the highway prepared by repentance and faith and obedience, it will revive us again and perpetuate true Christianity for another generation of Jesus-terrors.

Some will say, I don't see anything. God moves through, dispenses blessings, and there are happy hearts and healed bodies and blessed souls every place, and a sour old scrooge says, I don't see anything.

What's good about it? I don't see anything. Well, I know what's good about it, and the man with the opened eyes knows what's good about it. He's seen.

You know that when Jesus came and went, I suppose there were lots of people in Jerusalem that never admitted a thing. They'd never admitted anything had happened at all. They said, I didn't see nothing.

You talk about healing, I never saw anybody. You talk about stilling the waves, I never saw anybody still the waves. The old scrooge was busy somewhere, and he never saw a thing.

And you could bring a revival to the Church of Christ, bring a revival to this Church, and I have no doubt that there are grouches and frustrated fellows around the edges that would never believe a thing had happened. They look at a miracle and say it's thunder. But you don't have to be one of them.

You can come in where the fountain is flowing. You can come in where his grace runs free. You can come in, or to change the figure back around to where we started, you can straighten up the highway, and the Lord will move in.

You don't have to coax him. You don't have to send a messenger to plead with him. He's coming in, and he's just waiting to get a chance to move into your life and change everything.

Are you ready to have him come into your personal life now, to have him move in on you with health and life and warmth and peace and what you want and don't have? Are you ready to have him move in? Do you want him to move in? You don't have to coax him. Prepare ye the way of the Lord. Straighten up.

Smooth out. Get humble. Begin to obey.

God will move in. Every road you build, he'll move in that much further. Let him come clean all the way in, won't you? Won't you? Let's bow our heads in a moment of prayer.

Oh Lord Jesus, I know his prophetic teachers are not agreed, and we don't claim tonight, and we're not even going to pray tonight for the moment for universal revival, although we think it's theoretically possible. But Father, we think everybody's agreed on personal revival, that it's entirely possible for the coldest, most barren, gloomiest, most defeated Christian, to, within a few hours' time, move into a place of victory and fruitfulness and power and optimism and happiness such as they've never dreamed could be theirs. We believe it's entirely possible for a Church that has dragged for years to suddenly come alive, as though thou had said, Let there be light, and there is light, as though thou had said, Let the Church bring forth.

And, lo, it was so. We believe this, Lord, and we want it for ourselves and we want it for this Church. We want it for these who will listen tonight.

We want a personal revival in each heart. We want a Church revival that will melt us all in one who have had the individual revival. O God, we beseech thee, give us tonight vision to see it, courage to take advantage of it, faith to believe it.

Now that thou wilt revive thy work, thou wilt move in and the eyes of men shall see the glory of the Lord. O Lord Jesus, thou glory-bringer, thou joy-dispenser, thou physician of souls, thou son of righteousness with healing in thy wings, thou star of the east, the horizon adorning, thou bringer of good tidings. O Lord

Jesus, we've shut thee out so long.

Thou hast knocked at our doors so long, and we've been asleep or we've been preoccupied. Forgive, Lord, forgive. Forgive those who listen.

Forgive tonight. Forgive us for failing thee there. And give us a strong and courageous purpose that beginning now we will straighten up.

Beginning now we will fill up the hollow places and begin to do the things we stopped doing or never did. And we'll smooth down the bumps, those ugly humps that indicate the presence of things committed and done without not to be done. Father, we'll stop doing.

We'll smooth away by repentance and humility and meekness. Pray God.

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