

A Distinct Culture

by B.H. Clendennen

The church is a distinct culture, a living organism that is a spiritual thing, a movement from God, and must always be the life of God, with the purpose of displaying God's Son to the world and demonstrating the kingdom of God.

Duration: 1:08:30

Scripture: Matthew 5:14

Topics: "Kingdom Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares his experience in boot camp and how it relates to the Christian walk. He emphasizes the importance of obedience and submission to God's Word, stating that those who do not obey and walk with God have no place in His kingdom. The preacher also highlights the trials and tests that believers face, explaining that these challenges are meant to eliminate the undesirable and refine their faith. He encourages listeners to learn and grow spiritually in this life, as there won't be any learning in the afterlife.

Transcript

...removed the refuse from the cell. He lived there, and they'd say to him the same thing every day. If you will just confess the Pope's head of the church and deny what you believe, we'll let you out of here.

And every day he answered the same. Why do I want out of here? Anywhere that Christ is, is a kingdom now for me. Hallelujah.

So whether He comes for us or to us, it's all the same. Heaven is where Christ is. If He wasn't going to be there, it'd be nothing but more gold to dig up and fight over.

But He will be. I want you to turn to Luke 4.1 and Romans 18.14. Romans 4.1, or Luke 4.1, Romans 8.14. Father, we thank You for Your mercy to us today. Thank You for what our hearts have heard, the worship.

Thank You, Lord, for the giving of this church to the cause of Christ. Thank You for everything, but now bless us to speak and to hear the Word of God in Jesus' name. Amen.

Luke 4.1, and Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost. Now if He had to be full, you have to be full. Before He began the miracle-working ministry, He was filled with the Holy Ghost.

And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Romans 8.14. For many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. What a wonderful thought.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Holy Ghost is the mind, the will, the emotions, and the consciousness of God within us. It is God come, Christ come, to live within us by the Holy Spirit.

He becomes in us what He is. That's the whole purpose. The only reason for the creature is to contain the Creator.

God created us that through us His Son might live on this earth. He laid down the body that Mary gave Him at Calvary, but at petty cost, He got another body. That's us, the church.

And it's to function the same, Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever, should live the same life through the church that He lived on this earth through the body that Mary gave Him. If we then have been truly filled with the Holy Ghost, we will love what God loves, hate what God hates, weep over what God weeps over. Our emotions will be the emotions of God, because the very nature of God has come into us to live in and through our lives.

This is Christianity. A man asked me some time ago, How would you define, just truly define a Christian? I said, He is a human edition of the divine Christ. That is a Christian.

Christ reliving His life through you and I. Now, this God within me, the very character of God being lived in and through our lives, is the thing which truly distinguishes us as the children of God. As we walk this earth, and this poor, sick world is able to see God in and through our lives, that's the thing. It's not that I go to church, not that you talk religion, but that wherever you are, the very conditions of life are created because you're there.

God lives in you. And the whole test of whether your religion is real or not, do you actually create conditions of life by your presence? For I'm in Egypt over that desert. You look down, everything is dead.

Nothing moves. No life. But when you come to that Nile River, stretching out for a mile or two each way, it's verdant, it's green, it's beautiful.

There are olives, there's fruit, there's vegetables, because that river created life in that desert. Out of our innermost being is the full river of life that creates life wherever we are. We don't just talk religion.

We bring God. We make Christ real. We give God an address.

I don't know what the exact address of this place is, but you can say to anybody in this city this afternoon, that God will be at this certain street at a certain time. God will be here. We give God an address in Cork.

We can say God will be here, and that God will be a living God. Not an argument of religion. This is what distinguishes us as Christians.

The church is a distinct culture. She is not of this world. The church come into being on the day of Pentecost.

It was birthed, a living organism. Not an organization, not a movement of man, but a living organism moved and birthed on that day of Pentecost. It came from above and will not, cannot stand a mixture of earth and heaven.

It is a thing of heaven and it must be kept on that ground. If for any reason you and I as a church lose that unworldliness, then we become a misrepresentation of God. When we faithfulness to God demands that I remain a foreigner on this planet.

I'm not here. I'm a pilgrim. I'm a stranger.

I'm in a world but not of a world, and if that's ever lost, then we become a misrepresentation of God because we are here representing another world, another culture. Politics have no place in the function of this organism. I'm talking about in the church itself.

Politics have no place in here. This is a spiritual thing, a movement from God, and it must always be the life of God that she is. That church must ever be kept pure that God can flow in and through her.

When it's not, he must purge it. He has to deal with us many times very roughly. He has to deal with that church to bring her back.

When Ezekiel in a vision was carried back and saw that house, you and I know that that temple had been destroyed for 15 years. What he saw was a vision of the church of Christ. That strange man came and said to him that he was brought there to see that house, that he may show the house to the house of Israel.

Now wherever you find the word house in the Bible, and it's not Cornelius' or somebody else's house, it's always Christ. He is God's house. And because of our union with him in his death and resurrection, now we have become the house of God.

Know you not that your body is a temple of God. We are. God does not live in a temple made with hands.

We now have become the house of God. And as Ezekiel saw, there's a little trickle of water, a stream rather coming out of that house, coming down by the altar. It never leaves that cross.

Coming down and on out. But the man took him inside and they measured that house. Everything was put in order.

And when the house was in order, there was a river that men could not swim across. The river was flowing. Around its banks were trees bearing new fruit every month.

There's nothing you never get familiar with a real Pentecostal church. You don't know what God might do when you come together. It bears new fruit every month.

You don't have to wait until September to get an apple off of that tree. The leaves of that tree heal the nations. Now we know from the Bible that trees are symbolic of people.

Wherever that river flows, along its banks, there'll be men and women with their roots down in that Holy Ghost, producing the fruit of God all the time. It's a place where men come to find God. That's what Ezekiel saw.

He saw the church. And when that church is in order, the life of God, it's a terror to the nations of what it is. That church has one overriding principle and purpose, and that is to display God's Son to the world.

You have no reason to be in Cork but to let Jesus live in Cork. That Christ has a body, that He can walk these streets, work in offices, ride these buses, live in neighborhoods, that's the reason we're here. That Christ can live in this town, in this place.

Now since the church is one thing, the purpose of God, and is also the means by which that purpose is realized, it is imperative that we understand this one truth. That is, to mold any distinct culture or society, the thinking of that society must be controlled. There is no way that you can mold that vessel unless you control the thinking of that vessel.

I'm not talking about brainwash. I'm talking about controlling the thinking of that vessel. It must be brought.

Every dictator since Nimrod until now has known this truth. Stalin, he refused the Russians the right to receive letters outside of that Soviet Union. They could not communicate with people outside.

Every radio, every television, every newspaper only printed what he wanted. They only heard what he wanted them to hear. And when we arrived there, we were shocked.

They believed. They felt sorry for us Americans. They thought we were slaves of the state.

Yet so effectively, he was molding a culture after himself. Well, if God is going to mold a culture where he only has, then the thinking of that culture must be one. It must be molded.

You cannot have a thousand different thoughts coming through it as regards to God. The people must be led to think like God if they're going to act like God. I know the confessional people have took that scripture as a man thinker, so he is, and have stretched it out.

But what God was saying, if I can get you to think on me, then you'll be like me. I was called to speak at a drug rehab. They had about 50 of them.

I've never been much of a halfway house. I just believe the church is the answer to everything. I know God is, and this is where he lives.

I've told men everywhere across this earth, no matter where I found them, I said, you don't have to be like that. You don't have to be. No matter how far down the social ladder you are.

I went to Beaumont. We had people who had come to that church. You dare not let them get to the return air of the air conditioning, the condition of them.

They lived on the street. They were the worst kind, the odors. You didn't want to get too much into the building.

But today with two-piece suits, they're now ushers. They put thousands of dollars in that church. I said to them, you don't have to live here like a dog, an animal.

Christ's come to lift you up. But to do, you've got to make them think right. I came there to that group.

I said, what am I going to say to these people? The first thing I said, I said, how many have been born again? Every one of them lifted their hands. I knew that wasn't true, but I'm going to deal with them on that

line anyway. How many of you have been born again? They all lifted their hands.

I said, then this Bible said, He has delivered you from the powers of darkness and translated you into the kingdom of his Son. If you're truly born again, there's a new creature. And that new creature has never had a needle in his arm.

He's never committed adultery. He doesn't steal from anybody. Now what you must do is set your affections on things above.

If you're mindful where you come from, you'll buy that needle again. But if you'll set your affections, what I'm saying, get your mind right. Keep your mind on him, you'll be in perfect peace.

You must mold the thinking of that society. It must be controlled. I see the church and the kingdom of God as a way of life.

A nation among nations, but not of them. We must demonstrate the kingdom of God. We must walk this earth as people of God.

It's a sick world. They need to see people that are well. It's a wicked world.

They need to see holy people. They have to see that we must be that. We are among them, but not of them.

We are a select, elect society, culture with our own views. We put the school in 130 nations of the world and never ask them once about their culture. I've had them say to me, you don't understand.

We've always, we start out with 15, we may wind up with 45. I tell them, you will, you know the golden rule is, the man has the golden rules. I paid to get you here.

I pay your bills. I feed you. You're here to go to school.

If you don't like it, you can go home. It starts at 6 o'clock with the prayer meeting. Not 10 minutes past 6, 6 o'clock.

They come in 10 after. I say, why are you late? Well, he didn't wake up. Tell a student to wake you.

Don't do this no more. The second time, I said, next time, have your bag packed. Love you, but it's not for you.

If I let you come in here late, everybody will be late after a while. Wasn't being mean, I'm just telling them. I had one man say, well, this is not our culture.

I know. It's not American culture. I brought the culture of a man of God.

He got up before day to pray. You will too if you go to this school. That's all.

You see, if you're trying to find how the Chinese live to bring Christ to that, you're going to miss it all together. When we moved into Middle Asia in that Muslim world, we appointed 71 churches across those five states. Pastor Brother White and I were in Tushkin, in a room where you couldn't have got 50 Americans, but I believe there was 100 of them, young Muslim young people, teenagers born again.

They needed no chairs. They're on the floor. Born again, filled with the Holy Ghost.

Family has already evicted them, but he and I both reckon when we left there, we never saw such fervency. They loved not their lives unto death. But when we went there, a man said to me, I'd like to come over with you.

I could teach them how to reach the Muslim world. I said, we already know. Who taught you? I said, the Bible.

I never found that. I said, they went everywhere preaching Christ. Hallelujah.

Everywhere. They never made any difference with anybody. They just went preaching Christ, who He is, what He is.

That was the answer to it all. We're a select, elect culture. Our own views, ideals, goals, values, ethics, with every member held together by the Holy Spirit.

All of us held together. These views, these ideals, these goals, these ethics, are the views, ideals, goals, values, and ethics of another. It is Christ living through us, and the very manners and ethics and ideals of heaven is what we bring.

We are what He is. He gave us His life, and the whole of sanctification is the growth of that spiritual man into the image of Christ. I just wrote down some things here as to how that is.

When Jesus came, He was begotten of the Spirit. So are we. The angel said to Mary, that wonderful person in you will be of the Holy Ghost.

He was begotten of the Spirit. So are we. He was not of this world.

As to His origin nature, we've been born from above. He was loved by the Father. So am I. With the same love that He was.

He was sanctified, sent into the world to bear witness to truth. Likewise, I've been sent here. He received the Spirit as a seal of God to His sonship.

So did I. He was anointed with power and light to serve, and I received the same option for Him. He began His ministry when the Spirit baptized Him and said, don't you start until you've had the same. They began to serve in the Spirit of the Son.

The witness was sent forth into their hearts, and Abba Father, after service and suffering, He was received up to glory. We'll get there soon. I believe we're on the threshold of getting out of here.

Now, in the new birth, we receive Christ, and now the work of Him who came to guide us into all truth, the Holy Spirit, is to conform us to Him who declared Himself to be the truth. That's the purpose. To conform us to the truth.

To make us what He is. All through the Bible, this is the truth. When you read the Old Testament, those people in there, they were always testimonies of what was coming.

They were symbolic. They were Abraham. When you think of it, you think of faith.

Because that's what marked his life. All of those men, all women, were marked. Certain characteristics marked their lives.

When you think of Solomon, you think of wisdom, of Moses, of meekness, of David, a man after God's heart. It's as if God had took one man and scattered him over the whole of the Old Testament. Then when you bring all the parts together, you've got Christ.

You've got Him. When you come to Matthew, and all the parts have been brought together, you have Jesus. That's what we are, members in particular of that body.

When we come together, it's the fullness of Christ that should be manifested among us. That's the purpose of our existence in the new birth. Within these inner actions, the first initiative of the church is to set forth as presents itself as a spiritual transformed organism or body.

The first thing is to show our attitude God requires of His people. People ought to look at us and know what God expects, what God wants, what God is after. What a confusing thing it is.

One of the lessons in the school of Christ is the church is a prophet. Amen. I don't talk about offices, but the very ministry.

The Bible says the spirit of prophecy is a testimony of Jesus Christ. Well, the church is His body. It testifies.

The very term Christian means Christlike. So I say to a man, you say to a man, I'm a Christian. Then he looks at you and says, that must be what Christ is.

And when he sees the confusion of religion today, I don't wonder that he doesn't want to be a part of us. But when that church really exemplifies and sets Christ forth, when they sit in our midst and know He's alive, that He comes from the dead because of what's happened to us. If we took time this morning to have the testimonies of everybody in this place, we're always looking for a miracle of somebody getting out of a wheelchair.

But I can tell you there's more than twisted bodies. Some of the most twisted spirits you ever knew have been straightened up by the power of this Holy Ghost. The testimony of this Gospel is a testimony of lives that have been changed.

Christ took a hold of me. I was going this way, but now I'm going this way. I went into that church at 7.30 going due south, straight to hell.

I'd come out at 9.30 going due north. I'm going up that hill toward God. And 56 years later, still a walk in that pathway.

That's the testimony of the church. The church exemplifies, transmits, expresses within itself and to the world the kind of interrelations and attitude God requires of His people. And when they see that in us, people are hurting out there.

They're hungry out there. They don't care to come to church and you tell them why it's good that a certain politician got voted in. They're in trouble.

Children on drugs. Husbands are drunk. They're married to a devil.

They want to know if God knows where they live. And if they can sit down among us and find Christ walking here, they've found an answer to life. How wonderful that is to be able to come to such a church.

The Bible said, two cannot walk together unless they be agreed. You can't bind us together any more than theirs. It doesn't work.

I said it doesn't work. Unity is only possible on the grounds that I have just named of this church. We ultimately become what we believe.

We're molded by the ideas we take into our being. And unity is only possible. The world knows that.

That's the reason they don't want God in the schools of learning. They took Him out so that He's not in the high places of learning. They put the professors in those schools that believe what they believe and hammered our children from the time they get there.

They know if they can instill those wrong thoughts in them, they will make them what they want them to be. The false religions, Jehovah's Witnesses and such, give us those children until they're twelve. You can't only blow them out of that place because they've so instilled into that mind that false religion.

Why have we been so slow in our not recognizing that they ultimately are going to become the ideas that they take, they believe, they practice, as we take those new creatures. To be a unit, we must mold to the same ideas. Therefore, preaching must be direct.

This pulpit must control what's thought in this church. That's not dictatorship. That's God's way.

You can't allow Sunday school teachers to teach opposite of what this pulpit says. I come, it took me a while to be boiled enough, but I could fire a preacher as quick as I could fire a plumber. Yes, sir.

I hired a man, he had a truck, says he's a plumber, and he couldn't plumb. I said, you better gather up your tools. You don't belong here.

And a preacher that come into that pulpit and begin to say what I did not believe. I sit right where you are. I rose up.

I said, sir, that isn't what we teach as not we believe here. If that's your thinking, we'll take it from here. Amen.

Just have to. You cannot. You don't know who will be destroyed by just one foolishness out of somebody leading them down the wrong road.

God put a man of God over the church. Not a board. They are that for other things, but not to decide what this person believes.

God put the vision in the heart of the man of God, and every Sunday school teacher must take it from there. They must grow up all the way along the line, this is what we are. That has to be so.

Else you've got a church not knowing where it's at. Amen. They're confused.

There can be no place for the ecumenical thinking of our time that everything is a church. It just cannot be. Truth is more important to God than that kind of unity.

Amen. It's just 500 years ago there was unity, but who wants that unity? Amen. Where a man has refused the right to think.

In Galatians 2, the apostle Paul, the youngest apostle, he's called out, I mean as far as time being an apostle, he is called after Peter's been three years along that line. But in Galatians, Paul rebukes the elder apostle to his face. He's out of line.

He said he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. What a courage! You understand, he could have split that church. Here's the senior apostle, here's the junior, and the junior says to the elder, you're not walking according to what Christ gives us.

You're not walking according to the gospel. Now I know the ecumenical has said he's an unkind man. He should never have said that to the apostle Peter.

But no man knew the value of peace and unity better than the apostle Paul. He wrote the love chapter of I Corinthians 13. He was the apostle who exhorted the church to be of one mind.

He was the apostle who spoke of the church as one body, one spirit, one hope, one calling. Yet see how he acts. He stands Peter to his face.

Why would he do this? Because he knew the terrible consequence of allowing false doctrine to go unchecked. He knew it was far worse than the loss of peace. He knew that.

To allow that leaven, it will leaven that whole lump. When that comes in and you allow it, you don't contradict that, then you're going to allow something to come that after a while will be something you cannot deal with. No man knows any more than Paul when he dealt that.

There are preachers and teachers who will put up with anything in the church to keep what they call peace. Solomon married strange women trying to keep peace with other nations. It cost him everything in the end.

It was his wives that took him away from God. It was those strange women that turned him to worship those other gods, to make a mixture of his life because he tried to appease by dropping what he believes it won't work. When the elders of Israel came to Samson at the rocky Tam, they said to him, Why are you causing all this trouble? He'd hang out in those Lehi Mountains and when those caravans of the Philistines would come, he'd pounce on them, spoil them, give the spoils to his people.

He was a terror to the enemy. He was a type of the church how it was, what it had become, but ultimately what it came back to be. The whole of the church history in the life of one man.

But here comes the elders of Israel and they said, Why are you causing all this trouble? He said, Because they're troubling me. They said, Look, you're not understanding, son. We've worked out a deal with these Philistines.

We've dropped some of our more radical teaching. And they said, We'll accept it on that. They never dropped nothing.

No, no, Rome, they're not going to drop nothing, but you'll just drop. You'll come along good with them. They said, Look, we've dropped some of our more radical teaching, and we're experiencing real growth.

You can't believe how many folks are coming. Why do the Philistines even come and visit my churches now? Because they're not offended by what we say. Why are you doing this? He said, Because they're troubling me.

You know the story that bound him up. He allowed him. All he said to him, Don't you touch me.

I'm not afraid of the devil, but I am afraid of God's people. You touch me. That's a different story.

Well, it bound him up, put him in a wheelbarrow, rolled him over to the devil. The devil shouted, That was a mistake of his life. He broke those chains, killed a thousand of them with the jawbone of a donkey.

You know, I've heard preachers say they took that old, dried up jawbone. Now, he wants a brand new one. A brand new jawbone.

A new consecration. Rededication to God. Hell is in trouble now.

See, the firstborn of every creature was God's, but the firstborn of a donkey. He said, You either break his neck or sacrifice something in his place if you're going to keep him. That donkey had just been given over to God.

That new consecration. He rose up, see, to defeat the enemy. When the church is right and walks right, but all the while, that devil and that thinking out the religious to pull us down.

Pull us down. They're preachers who put up with anything to keep what they call peace. This mixture of truth and error, flesh and spirit, amen, goes under the banner of love.

And if you preach against it, brother, you're an unlovely man. You're a bigot. You're the kind of a man.

I was telling the pastor this morning, in Beaumont, where I'm every Easter, they have a big sunrise service. Everybody goes but me. You know, I never went.

I even had the assemblies of God. Now, you should go. You're a rebel.

No, I said, I'm not a rebel. I just can't go. I said, one Sunday morning, Easter morning, rather, they had a Jewish rabbi.

I said, he hates Jesus. Why would I want to go listen to him? A man that hates the Christ. He's my life.

I'm not going to put up with that. I'm not going to honor a man that will make this town believe that that rabbi is alright. Half the time, it was a Roman priest.

They got more voice in it than anybody else. I said, I'm not going out there and make this city, which is a Catholic city. The word Beaumont means beautiful mountain.

Well, the highest hill is a city dump. Somebody had to give it that name. Amen.

Beautiful mountain is his platform, you know. But it comes as that prince name. And it's a Catholic city.

And I said, I'm not going out there and let these wonderful people believe that I believe they're alright where they are. I must preach. I love the people, so I've got to proclaim the gospel as it is to them.

But see, you're some kind of a bad fellow if you weren't mixed with all that. These unity at any cost preachers would have agreed with Ahab that Elijah was the man troubling this thing. Get rid of him.

That's what they'll tell you. Even religious people. You get rid of that born again bunch, and we won't have any trouble this year.

It's that far right they call us. Just because we stand for God. When you hear them talking about the far right religious, they're talking about born again people.

The whole thing. That lesbian that was the attorney general for eight years, she said, you know a cult and we're watching them. We're going to rid this country of them cults.

I said, how would you define a cult? Well, you find that people go to church a lot. They go to church all the time. They give a lot of money to the church.

They believe that Jesus is going to come back to this earth real quick. Amen. And they'll give to make Him known all over the world.

That's a cult. If there's two of those in them, we watch them closely. I said, boy, they've got a telescope on us.

Because that's my whole life what she named off there. You see, but that unity. Oh, they said, here's the trouble.

And no doubt would have helped the Prince of Judah stop the mouth of Jeremiah. I have no doubt these of whom I speak, the unity crowd, would have said to Paul that Paul rather showed a lack of love in rebuking the Apostle Peter. Why, he could have split that church.

Now, some of these people are sincere. But they are sincerely wrong. The church is a church.

It will not mix, folks. It must be this Word. We have no right to expect anything from the church but the pure, unadulterated Gospel of Christ.

When I sit down and you sit down to hear it preached, I have no right to expect anything but the pure, unmixed Word of God. Amen. But to maintain this pure Gospel, we must be willing to make any sacrifice to hazard our life, to hazard peace, to risk dissension, and to risk the chance of division.

There is always that possibility if we stand for that which is truth. One morning I was preaching. Then, you know, I was a little younger and a lot better spring in the step.

I was going down that center a hundred miles an hour. I mean, I was preaching. I didn't know that they had planned it.

But right in the middle of that sermon, 60 people stood up out of about 200 and took 15 minutes to get out that door like a herd of turtles. Amen. They were just moving out.

It just took all of ten minutes. I had four heart attacks, but I kept on preaching. Amen.

I kept on preaching as I walked out. They didn't like what was being said. They tried and tried to make changes, but they couldn't do that.

So they thought, we'll destroy it. That morning at a given signal, they just all stood up from all over. They never sat in one place and made their way out of that church.

Well, sometime later, some of them found they made a mistake and started coming back. But I met them at that door right there, and I said, I want to tell you, the same devil you thought was here when you left is still here. Nothing has changed.

No, no. Whatever you thought was here, whatever made you leave, it's still in this house. There has nothing changed.

Amen. You see, that's not being mean. That's guarding the truth.

That's standing. But what's real, we cannot allow this to be mixed. You're not going to find people born again, saved and delivered if you don't bring the Gospel as it is.

Now, when every man is left to do what he thinks is right, you've got anarchy. You don't have a church. You've got anarchy.

Everybody allowed to do their own little thing. I've been there. That's a terrible nightmare.

The Bible makes it very plain. Only those that agree with and think like God are going to be a part of that bride. Nobody else.

There'll be no rebels. No rebels in that bride. Every man will have made Him Lord.

If He don't rule you here, you won't rule with Him there. To think like God, you have to have the mind of God. You can't with this human mind think like God.

And the mind of God is the Holy Ghost. I can prove that any way you want it to be proved. Don't have time here this morning, but that is the mind of God.

When God came to the Holy Spirit, His mind, He said, you shall receive power, which means you'll have ability when you receive the Holy Ghost. You know, I know, all the ability of the human is in the mind. The ability to move, to walk, to talk, everything is in the mind.

We're learning the further we go that the power of concentration is more powerful than muscles. Amen. The athlete, his mind, has more to do with how he functions than does his physical ability.

It is that mind. Everything is coordinated and worked out by the mind. To think like God, we must have that mind.

And whenever you think like God, then ultimately, you begin to act like God. You know, people have been married a long time, many of them, they love each other, and they think alike, pretty soon they begin to look alike. I hope I begin to look like my wife.

I've been looking better on this road. Amen. Because we do think alike.

But it's the truth. You begin, as they live together, and they think, all of a sudden, their brothers and sisters almost look like they were because of that mind. And as a man thinks like God, and his mind stays in the same train with God, then that image begins to form in him.

I don't mean physically, but morally and spiritually, that image. He begins to act like God, and this is what distinguishes us as Christians. Not a lot of carry-ons, but the people look and say, He's been with Christ.

He's been with Christ. Because he thinks in that direction. That mind.

You cannot think like God unless you have God's mind. Now, as believers, we're on probation now. Not for salvation.

I'm saved. I'm born again. The blood saved me.

I didn't save myself. Christ saved me. He said He justified the ungodly.

I can tell you that's a fact. He justified me 56 years ago. An ungodly human being.

But He justified. But now, since then, for 56 years, I've been on probation. Not for justification, but for dominion.

On probation for the inheritance of this salvation. Every one of us, we're on probation for dominion. Because that bride is destined to rule with Christ.

To sit on the throne of this universe with Christ. Think about that. That is a final issue with us.

Paul said that I might apprehend that which I've been apprehended for. He talked of the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. That high calling is to be a part of that bridal company.

Amen. I'm on test, on trial, for that now. God is not going to have the unfaithful.

Not going to have the double-minded. It's going to be those people that make Him Lord in time. That we're destined to rule.

But it's only those that are ruled by Him in time. If He's not your Lord here, you're not going to sit there on the throne with Him as Lord. It is now that God is dealing with every part of my life.

There's not any variance with Him at all. Whatever it is, God is dealing with it, moving that I will be able to sit with Him. Now, God allows the enemy to assail us, to test us along every line with one thing in view, that we may be with Christ in dominion.

Every vessel God used had to pass through that. Abraham went through a 25-year walk of faith. Every emotion is tried.

He had to be delivered from all self-help. We have to come to that. I have to be brought to a place of utter despair of my ever being what He wants me to be in myself.

Then I enter into that rest. I just say to Him, If Thou will, You can make me whole. If You don't, I can't.

It's a hopeless case. I've lied to You enough in my lifetime. I've said to You, I'm never going to do that again.

Two days later, I did it. It's impossible. But I fall over You meek, humble, patient, total resignation to God.

That's the rest. If You don't do it, it's hopeless. But I give myself in total submission to Him.

Now, He allows that enemy to assail me, to test me. 25-year walk of faith. Every emotion is tested beyond endurance.

Everything. But in the end, when God said, Now you offer that Son in whom all the promises are, you take Him to that mount, you offer Him as a sacrifice, Abraham would have said, That's too much. He never knew what faith was all about.

But he took Him. God stopped him just before he plunged the knife. And when the old man, now over a hundred years old, upward to 150 years old, the wind blowing on him, and God said to him, Abraham, look up.

If you can count them stars, that's how many children I'm going to give you. Because I know I can trust you. Hallelujah.

See, everything. See what He can trust you. Amen.

He'll give you a little money. If you can't trust Him with that, if you can't pay tithe off \$100, He's not going to give you a million. I can tell you that.

And nothing coming. And if He can't trust you with what's in this world, He's sure not going to trust you with anything in the next world. So everything has to pass through that crucible of trial, of test.

25 years. I know I can trust you. He called Joseph, Moses, Joseph to conserve it.

Passes through 13 years of slavery in a dungeon. Finally, He proved Himself and becomes second Pharaoh. Moses, 40 years in the desert.

What's He doing? Getting Him ready. Forging a vessel through which He can deliver the people. But He had to be purged of everything that's not God, if He's going to be able.

So God allows us to be tested to assail. Amen. How can two walk together except that they agree? To rule with Christ, you must agree with Christ.

That seemed to be a hard lesson. This age, you know, it's an unbridled age. The word discipline is a hollow word to this generation of people.

You know, it's like a Frankenstein deal. Discipline. No, don't tell me.

You can't tell me what to do. You have no right to tell me what to do. I said, I do if you're going to go anywhere.

I've had folks who blatantly, oh, you're not going to tell me what to do. I said, I'm just preaching to you. If you're going to go where I'm telling you you can't go, you're going to listen to it.

You're going to obey. You're not going to every man go in his own direction. To rule with Christ, you have to agree with Him, which means we reject every system that does not agree with Him who is the Word of God.

Everything. Every false way. God hates every false way.

If I have His mind, I'll hate it like He does. I have the nature, the consciousness of God, then it's a natural thing for me to hate that which God hates. And that agreement, as long as Jesus said, many are called, but few are chosen.

Every born-again believer is called to be a part of that bride. But out of them, few are chosen. And it is a test of everyday living that eliminates the most of them.

It is that test. You know that boot camp? If you were in the military, they put you in there first. They put me in there for 12 weeks.

Fall in. Fall out. Get up.

Get out. Crawling under barbed wire. Running.

Everything. In the little old tent they had for me, there's another boy, me and him, same age, just over 18 at that time. He cried all the time.

Just wanted his mama. You know, we'd be over there sobbing, sobbing. I can't sleep.

They never let me in bed four hours a night. And I can't sleep that four hours for him over there crying, wanting mama. I got up one morning when that bugle blew, and I put my pants on a running.

I wanted to get out there and talk to that sergeant. And I got out there and said, I need to talk to you, sir. What do you want, boot? Hollering, yeah.

I said, I just want to tell you. That boy in that tent with me, I want you to leave him there. He's crying.

Keep me awake. I'm going to tell you something, folks. I didn't come from a Christian background.

I knew what it is to curse, but he cussed. He invented words. Oh, that sergeant.

When he got through, oh, that roll out of his mouth. Oh, he said, let him sleep. I'm going to do one of three things.

You hear me? I said, I'm going to kill him. Make a marine out of him and send him home to his mama. Last time I saw him, he was going home to his mama.

Still crying. Going home to mama. Amen.

But he asked me, he said, you know why you're in this boot camp? I said, you know why it's here? I said, no, sir, but I'd like to know. I wrote my mama. I said, mom, this is the meanest man I ever saw in my life.

He hollered up to me and said, ha! And I'm standing there. I thought, you know, I don't know what he wants, but it's my hair. Boy, do you know what's your left foot? Yes, sir.

Let me see. He hit it with a stick all day. I never forgot what's a left leg.

Oh, no. See, I never knew what he was doing until he hit that island. And when the bombs started coming, and that captain said, hit the deck.

Everybody wondered what he said. Ain't here tonight, mister. See, he was automating me to obey, to do, to believe.

When we got through, he said to me, though after he got through cussing and said, what are you going to do? He said, you know why you're here and why this boot camp? And I said, no, sir. He said, to eliminate the undesirable. The trials, the tests.

Eliminate the undesirable. If you're not going to obey him, if you're not going to walk with him, there's no place in this kingdom for you. If this word of God can be thrown over your shoulder, there's no place here for you.

He said, this is all to... He said, if he's going to cry, let him cry here. Don't get up and tell the Japanese where you are with your crying and whining. You stay right here.

And he said, we're going to eliminate. That's a whole test of it. Amen.

I wrote my mom. I said, he's the meanest man I ever knew. But after 12 weeks, I was mean as he was.

That's the whole purpose of the thing. You know, to take that mind, turn me from a farm boy to a man of war. Twelve weeks.

But the whole thing was good. If you can't make it, we're going to eliminate you. That's this life.

You can quit any time you want to, but there's always the power, you see. If I choose God, He chooses me. It isn't that I have to do anything except make the right choice.

God will always be there. In every test of life, He'll take Joseph through that dungeon if Joseph will consent to the will of God. The fire cannot burn those three boys if they say, we'll not bow.

I'm going to do what God wants, no matter what comes or goes. It is this that tests and makes. Jesus said, many are called, few are chosen.

It is the everyday test of life that eliminates the many. So it is in this new creation that we must do our learning spiritually. There won't be any learning up there.

It's down here. I'm being conditioned from there now. And I must.

We learn spiritually here in this new creation. We must pass from one rim to another progressively now in this life. I know preachers, they change churches every two years.

They're looking for some place to lay down, something already going, a little more money. All they're doing is confusing the church. Amen.

You must find whether the Word of God is preached, whether you like it or don't like it. Just make sure that the Word of God is preached. Then submit yourself to it.

That old man don't die easy, but he will die if you'll submit to him. We must pass. We have to battle not for our salvation, but for our inheritance.

We have to be tested. We have to be tried. Not so that we prove ourselves good Christians.

Amen. I'm only good because of God. None good but God.

So the test don't prove I'm a good Christian, but proves my love and faithfulness to God that called me. Will I stand when things are not like they ought to be? I've said to preachers all over America, I said up in Canada they passed a law that will eventually ban that Bible. It will eventually ban it.

You can't speak against perversion up there, they can sue you and own the property. I said it's coming south. Make no mistake about it.

I was over in England, and I saw billboards half the size of the back of that church, an old man and an old woman sitting there holding hands, and they said we're here that you may stay together long. Oh, I said that's beautiful. We're trying to preserve this marriage, but we didn't go two miles until these two fellows all hubbed up together, and they said we're here that you stay together longer.

I got home. I sold the church. I said it's moving west.

And I said do you know the reason it's happening? It's a test. I've been a preacher. Do I believe what I preach? If it costs me a prison term, \$25,000 fine, will I still preach what I believe? See, all of it is a test.

This church is going to be tested. If you believe what the pastor told me this morning, just talking, in that bosom, down inside, he knows peace is going to be disturbed. He's not going to be able to go.

There's going to be trouble up ahead. Somebody's going to come try to stop this testimony because it's exploding all the time. I come here three years ago.

I can see a long ways up the road, amen, from where you come, where you was, where you come, where you're going. Well, you're not going to get that easy. There's going to be tests up there.

There's going to be trouble. But all of it, God allows to see whether you really believe what you say. When you stand, we're more than conquerors.

God can never grant authority up to any man that's at variance with himself. Never. A woman, a variable is a man that doesn't altogether believe what he says.

In today's ecumenical climate, when men are tempted to make everything the church, when all roads seem to lead to Rome, we're told to just focus on those things in which we agree. One Pentecostal so-called preacher said, now, you know, you'll have no trouble if you realize that the Roman church is against abortion. Now, isn't that something? How spiritual are you? I know a lot of people who know nothing about God against murdering babies.

Amen. There's just a lot of good people. But this is how come we can all join together is simply because we agree on abortion or some other issue like that.

But for the true church to join that is to tell the world God has two plans of salvation. One says you can work your way in. The other says you've got to believe your way in.

One's by grace. One by works. So I have to make up my mind where I'm going to live and stay.

The bride is limited to those whom God can trust. Those whom He can trust. Who's going to marry a woman if you know you can't trust her? If I've got a chain her to the bedpost when I go to work, I'm not going to marry that.

I mean, God's going to let His Son be married to a bride that He can't trust. Is that right? Going to have to be able to trust and believe. You know, I just think it's so ridiculous to believe that God, the thinking that God would allow a mixed up mule like we've got today and call the church to be the bride of His Son.

Just what an awful thing. The only person in history though has earned that trust is the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the only person.

You see, that bride is limited to those whom that Father can trust. And the only human out of the six billion here now and the billions before that God ever could trust is His Son. That Jesus Christ.

That's all. Christ as a man was the firstborn of a new race and every born again believer is predestined to that image. Because that's the only image He can trust.

If you're not willing for Him to work His will and conform you to that image, that's painful. You have to pass through. For that butterfly or that crawling caterpillar to become that beautiful winged creature, the butterfly, it must spin itself into a shroud.

Give up that life as a worm and work its way as it comes out, the pain of going through all of that, amen, to be that butterfly. If you stop it anywhere and say, boy, I didn't know what that was. I used to find it on a tree.

You've done it. Tear it open. Just a blob.

It can never go any further. It's over with. It must pass through every stage if it's going to be that.

Some of it is very painful, folks. He'll never have the symmetry unless he goes through that small opening all the way. He'll never be able to fly.

None of it can be bypassed. The whole of it. Do you understand? If I'm going to be like Him, amen, from that larva to the pupa is a very difficult thing.

I must pass from that baby to that presence of God, amen, progressively. And it is difficult as it makes that. You have to die to a lot of things you want to hold on to.

There's a lot of them. But you only want to hold on to them because you don't know where they are. When you willfully acknowledge what God wants, then you look back, you didn't want the thing in the first place.

But God never lets you see that until you make a choice. He never lets you see it. The reason is simple.

For God must have the same trust and confidence in our thoughts, our actions, our desires, to conform me to that image so it's not I but Christ that's living and I'll be with Him in that body. To sit on a throne, to live, to reign with Christ means you have to come to a place of maturity where the stability and qualities of godliness shows us the greatest type of Christ in the Bible shows us the marks of spirituality. Integrity, discernment, and authority.

That's what you've found. That's what those brothers found in Him when they come in. Our mentality as a church must mature in God and we must reach that plateau of understanding and authority to where we're wiser than the devil.

We have to come to that if we're going to make it. If we're to rule with Him in eternity, we must learn now to judge righteously and control this old fallen nature. I must keep it down.

We must, as a church, possess the power and the government of God. For this, the Holy Ghost, must be in absolute control. He must have your life.

We know a lot about devil-possessed men, but we need to know something about God-possessed men and women who have totally given themselves to God, possessed of the Holy Spirit, where their whole mind is to do the will of God. Now this is where most fail because their lifestyle conditions them to have their own way. Their whole lifestyle.

They come into an altar. Then it's a galling thing when the man of God begins to deal. The Holy Ghost will not share His life with your life.

If He comes to live in this temple, then you've got to let Him have it all. He will not. Two people of different wills cannot live in the same temple.

God gave us the story of Abraham's son to teach us that. Paul said it's an allegory. Everything was fine as long as it's just Ishmael.

But when Isaac comes, one of them's got to get out, or there's never going to be any peace. There's coming a wedding, folks. It's already set.

There's a day. There's an hour. Heaven is ready.

There's a wedding coming up soon. And those that are part of that are going to agree with Him. They're going to have submitted themselves to that bridegroom totally and absolutely.

We're in that betrothal time now. The trumpet's going to sound in a little while. Thirty-five years a pastor.

Some of the most wonderful moments of that church were the weddings. I never was a Marian Sam. I didn't marry folks off the street.

I married those young people in that church. God made me theirs. I watched them.

I talked to them when they got engaged. They told me they planned to get married. Setting a date to make sure I was going to be there and everything.

I'd talk to them. I'd say, Now, I've been watching you. You've met this girl.

You've learned to love her. Now you want to marry her. I said, I want to tell you, if you would always treat her like you've treated her to trick her into marrying you, you'd be on a honeymoon 50 years from now.

But if she turns into a piece of property after you marry her, it isn't going to work. I said, if you always treat her... I talked to them while we got the date set. Oh, when the time comes for that wedding.

That's a pretty church. Tire vaulted ceiling. Red carpets.

Red windows. But it never was good enough. I'm telling you, Mama, come in there.

They dusted. They wiped. They cleaned.

Put a bouquet on every pew, a candle in every window. It wasn't good enough. Walk on that.

Had to roll a white deal down there for that girl to come home. I mean, hairdressers out there just for patting that hair in place. One time, had a wedding.

Had trees 15 foot high on the platform. I said, Why don't we have it out in the garden? You know, just birds chirping over here. Yeah, had a fountain.

You know, the birds chirping over here. Everything, see, but everything. When come time for that wedding, like now, we'd come out that door over here.

We'd come out of me, the bridegroom, best man. I'd said that bridegroom, I said, I'm going up on the platform. I'll go up the step.

But you stand, I said, you come down here. You stand where you can see down that middle aisle. Going to be a lot of traffic here.

I said, going to be seven, eight girls, seven, eight boys, probably a little boy and girl come on throwing flowers around coming. I said, I don't understand all that. Don't let that confuse your mind.

You just stand there fixed. I said, let all that go. But when you hear that organ shut down, and it hits that tune, here comes that bride.

I said, you perk up. I can see him down there. Oh, heart beating, heck.

I said, because that father's going to make a turn. And I can tell you son, whatever they've got to work with, that's the best he'll ever look on this earth. There's a line in your Bible, said the bride has made herself ready.

I said, she's made herself ready. I never saw one come out with tennis shoes on. When she made that turn, beauty, mama, had seen, oh my, the cost.

You know, I talked to my wife. I was in Egypt and Israel. My daughter got married June the third.

I got home on June the first. And I tell folks, I said, that wedding cost me \$700. One time she said, it wasn't \$700, it was \$2200.

But I already had my granddaughter. It didn't make any difference. Already had my granddaughter.

It didn't matter what it cost. I believe this morning, that if heaven needed anything, it's been done. If there's going to be any flowers put out, folks, they're out.

I believe Christ is at that altar, and a thousand million angels in those stairs. He's waiting for the Father to make that turn, with that bride on His arm. There'll be no rebels in that bride.

None. You're here this morning. You may be a Sunday Christian.

That ain't good enough. It's going to be one loyal, has no eyes for anybody but Him. He, if you love houses, lambs, wives, or children more than Him, you're not worthy for that bridal company.

I learned that if I love Him more than I love that girl, I'll love that girl more than I could have ever loved her in my life. Because I love Him more than I love her, then my love for her has been expanded beyond what a human could do, whenever he's first. But some of you, I'm telling you, the trumpet's about to sound.

The wedding's about to take place. And it isn't going to be for church people. It's going to be people that made themselves ready.

How about you? Have you become careless? Has the Word of God more or less become an icon? Did you come this morning because you felt it was required, or was you glad to say, let's go to the house of God? Is that love still burning in that heart? Is it there? Was it time? What is more real to you than it is now? Then you better renew that. I said you better renew that. I get up in the morning and go to that office.

I know the mood of that woman 58 years. If it isn't right, I don't leave until it's right. What's wrong? Oh, nothing.

Don't tell me nothing. What's wrong here? I don't want to leave there. Any problems between me and her? Years have been too good.

Is there any problem between you and the bridegroom? You must make it right. Father, thank You this morning. Thank You, Lord, for this time, this people, Your presence.

In the name of Jesus, speak into hearts this morning. That trumpet's about to sound. We're about to be called to that wedding.

We that have stood the test and walk with Him, refuse to become careless. Father, in the name of Jesus, You deal with hearts here on this Sunday morning. While our heads are bowed, our hearts are bowed, as we contemplate this thought how perhaps today, oh my, oh Jesus, perhaps today Christ would come.

Who knows what today may bring. Jesus, deal with that heart. If it's become careless at all, if we begin to neglect, we've not gone back to that world physically, but have we allowed ourselves to drift away from that consecration Oh God, in the name of Jesus, talk to every human in this building this morning.

Don't let us leave here until we've righted. If there is in this heart that which we know is contrary to what He desires, then we cannot have that, because that separates us from Him whom we love. Father, speak to every heart here this morning.

There may be those that never knew You, others that walk with You, but today they've become careless. Don't let them leave this building until that road back to that wonderful fellowship has been renewed. In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus, would You stand with me here this morning? You know, while God, Amen.

I wonder if we could sing a little song this morning. Yes. Hallelujah.

While we listen, we worship. You know that song, Just as I am without one plea, without one plea, just that Thy blood was shed for me. While we sing, listen, if you once walked with God in a more intimate relationship than you have this morning, then you need to come at the front of this church.

Pastor and I want to pray for you this morning right down here. If you don't know Jesus, you're among people that love you.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/10/SID10226.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bh-clendennen/a-distinct-culture/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net