

Hearing His Voice

by B.H. Clendennen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a receptive heart to hear God's voice and the transformative power of living through Christ.

Duration: 1:02:45

Scripture: Matthew 13:9, John 14:17, Ephesians 3:20, Hebrews 3:7-11, Hebrews 3:15, Hebrews 4:1-3, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Voice Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the changes in worship and preaching over time. He shares an experience in an English church where singing took up a significant portion of the service, leaving little time for preaching. The speaker emphasizes the importance of giving equal time to the preaching of the word of God. He then discusses the story of Joseph from the Bible as an example of someone who heard from God and was greatly used by Him. The speaker concludes by highlighting the memory left by those who preached the word of God, emphasizing that Christ is everything and that we should follow their example in sharing this message.

Transcript

You know, Paul said when he really found Christ, his whole life was religion. He had advanced above even those of his seniors. He was heading for the top of it all.

But he said he counted all that but done that he might win Christ. Every bit of that religion, a whole lot of learning. And he said it's all but done, just nothing.

Well, you know, in the Old Testament, you go back, you take, you run everything on that, and you go back where Israel was in that awful drought. Things were so bad, they become cannibalistic, eating their own children. But it said a pint, best I can say the measure, it said about a pint, of dove's dung sold for an enormous price.

Now, I've seen where they say that that is a root that'll thrive in a desert, you know, that has a little bit of value. But even in drought, it would come, grow a little. I don't know whether that's true or not, but I read that.

But it doesn't matter. The fact that what it was called dove's dung, you know dove is a Holy Ghost. He's always symbol, a Holy Ghost.

You see lit on Jesus, and Noah let him out, and all of this. Well, all that's left, dung is all that's left when that dove is gone. Religion without life is nothing.

It's waste. That's the, what an awful thing to carry on with the form after the reality is gone. But we have that ability to do that.

I want to read again from the book of Hebrews. We're going to go to chapter 3 here. We talked about God is spoken.

Something was said. Now, I just want this talk to be hearing that voice. Hearing that voice.

Jesus said there were some people whose ears were so degenerated, they had ears, but they couldn't hear. What an awful thing. You know, that tells you something.

He said, have ears to hear and cannot hear. That is a frightening, frightening thought. That you can so degenerate in religion, that you can't distinguish the voice of God out of all the rabble that's going around about us.

Father, you help us now. Such a wonderful time here. Thank you for the hungry hearts that gather out here on this Saturday morning.

May you talk to us and we hear what you have to say. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Now, in Hebrews chapter 3, we'll read verses 3, verse 7 rather through 11. Wherefore, now you know he's quoting the 95th Psalm here. The writer takes up the 95th Psalm.

Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost says, today, not tomorrow. You know, don't, don't. But today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, saw my works forty years.

Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation and said, they do always err in their heart, and they've not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest. Now, that rest they were looking for was a type of the rest.

But it tells us that that rest is not heaven. The rest we're to enter into is here and now. We cease from our labors.

Let's simply cease from ourself and enter into that life of God. Let the Holy Ghost lead my life. Not laying awake at night, dreaming up what I want God to help me do.

But to know the will, the mind, the purpose of God, and consent to it. Now, when God spoke to Israel, the one thing he asked was a heart that did not harden itself. That's all he asked of them.

Don't harden your heart. Now, we've got to come to know what that means of a heart and a heart. How much more does he claim this on us now? Now that he's not speaking to us through prophets, but speaking to us in his Son.

And how much more does he demand a reverence out of us that we hear? Everything ought to prepare us. There ought to be a reverence when the man of God, or when we open up to read this book, that God will talk to me and I hear what he's trying to say to me in his word. This that I'm claiming.

You know, the soil has to be broken up by the plow. That fallow ground to receive the rain and to produce has to be broken up before it can ever become tender for receiving. God said, but this man will I look to who is a poor and a contrite spirit and trembles at my word.

A broken and a contrite spirit God doesn't despise. God only uses broken things. I don't mean I have to go around with a sad face.

But it does mean that I must be broken to be able to receive. That I don't come to this book with preconceived ideas. That's the reason the unity that is a heart unity.

Now the unity the ecumenical tries to produce, that's as radical and as disruptive as any unity in this world. Because it's just a strapped together thing. But like Pastor Nick and I, the unity between us when we met is a unity of heart.

Paul said one-mindedness. So you can't disrupt that. I know I'm not God.

I know I went down alleys looking for God, found He wasn't there. Somebody help me get back out. You know, I don't read the Bible trying to prove I'm right.

You know, I mean, trying to prove my point of view I mean. I want to know if I speak something here and He didn't agree with it, it wouldn't disrupt me for Him to come. Because He and I both know if I believe one thing and He believes something else, one of both of us is wrong.

And the only thing necessary now is to find out if both of us is wrong, let's figure out where it is. If I'm wrong, then I want to get here and get this straight. You understand? You can't disrupt that if it's a heart unity.

Because we both just want the truth. Amen. None of us have all of this, you know.

None of us. I thought I'd got to the top of the mountain several times, but the wind blew the cloud away and I couldn't see the top again, you know. I saw I hadn't gone nowhere.

That's the key to all this. But when this broken disposition exists, I mean that heart that says I want to know the truth. You know, if I'm wrong, I want to know it.

Where it exists and the heart is truly hungering for God, God's voice will bring real life. He'll be able to come and He will bring real life and victory to us where that heart is open. Now when this disposition of brokenness is not there, when it's not there, when it's just a callous heart that's got it said, I know what I believe, nothing's going to touch this, you know, this is the way it's going to be, then the word remains unfruitful and we go backward.

We never get anywhere if that heart is not open to be spoken to. Amen. Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith.

Now, the Holy Ghost saith. Today, if you'll hear His voice. Harden not your heart.

It's very simple, folks, to find what hardens that heart. I found that and I want to give it to you this morning. If you harden not your heart.

You know, the seed sown by the side of the road doesn't enter the soil. It never enters because it had to be trodden down, always by passers-by, trodden down, trodden down. But when the world with its

business, its interests, has at times a free passage, then the heart loses its ability to hear God.

I live in a world and it is going to have an impact upon my life. We never lived in a culture, I don't, any society ever lived, never had a culture that had the ability to intrude on you like this one. I'm in the television, newspaper, the radio, everything.

They don't want to just inform me, they want to change me. They have the whole system today is to remold, reshape us, excuse me, remove God from our thinking, the whole thing. And when our trust is in the intellect in religion, when our trust is in the intellect, great care, and great care is not taken to take the word from God into the heart, into the life, the heart becomes closed.

It becomes closed because that isn't how you hear, you hear with the heart. When it's just an intellectual thing, then you never really know what God is saying to you. The mind is satisfied then with just beautiful thoughts and feelings, but the heart doesn't hear.

It's an intellectual thing and the heart becomes hardened and you believe that knowledge is a possession. That's a disease of the church today. Propagated by Bible schools, many of them, they teach the preacher, he got the virus, it's viral, he puts it into the church, they believe because I know what Paul knows, I have the same thing Paul.

But the man that found that pearl of great price did not make it his. It cost him everything he was to possess that pearl. And we have to know, you see it's so easy for that heart to be hardened by all of these other voices and things out there.

When we secretly are content with our religion, our second hand doctrine in Christian life, unconsciously now the heart gets hardened and you can't deal with that human. He'll sit there and throw it over his shoulder, pass it on to somebody else, but all of us are in need of knowing Christ. C.M. Ward was a great friend of mine.

He was a revival time preacher, and I don't think the radio ever had a greater voice than his in all of time. He preached for me, and I preached, he and I preached across Alaska at one time. We had a very, very great time together.

But he was a very, very brilliant man. After service one morning we were riding along, and I said to him, C.M. Ward, what makes you so smart? You seem to know everything about everything. He said, we just passed a little black boy, a fine little lad riding a bicycle.

He said, do you see that little boy we passed back there? I said, yes. He said, he knows something I don't know, and if I had time I'd find out what that is. You see, and all of us, we must listen.

You don't know it all. We know so little. Amen.

There will be billions of years learning Christ in eternity. And so it is there. But you get content with your religion, your second-hand Christianity, that heart gets hardened, and God can bring a revelation.

Other people feel, shout, and you're sitting there yawning. Amen. Because the heart has been closed to what God wants to say to you.

Now, when our heart doesn't keep up with our knowledge, oh my, how many? I saw people, religiously especially, they keep out their intelligence. Amen. You know, they just know what they don't possess.

And they're always at warfare. But when our heart does not keep up with our knowledge, and we have more pleasure in hearing and knowing than in obeying and doing. Did you hear that? When we have more pleasure in hearing and knowing than we do in obeying and doing, we lose the meekness to which the promise is given, the heart is hard and cannot discern now.

Just allowing this. When you allow the things of the world to occupy too much, more than all, when unbelief that walks by sight, I don't believe anything except I see it. When it walks by sight, looks at itself, and all around in the light of the world, and that unbelief is allowed to have its way, and the soul does not seek in childlike faith to live in the invisible that God called us to, then the word cannot enter that heart.

It becomes hard, calloused, and we just come and go like we went, while others become broken up, and the word, the seed enters, and begins to produce a more fruitful life to God. It's a solemn thought that with a mind occupied with religious truth, you see them all the time. I mean, they talk religion, even feelings are stirred at times by the voice of men and words, and a life apparently given to religious work.

The heart may be closed, and God never get in there to affect the lifestyle and the life of that human being so that Christ can really be seen in and through that life. Yet they're the most religious people in church all time. Amen, you sing, get the music just right, they may be stirred up, but yet you watch them.

I saw preachers, they get excited about what they're preaching. They buck, jump, holler, scream, but the next day they're the same, you know it never touched them. You see, you can get excited, and so we should get excited about truth.

That man was excited about that pearl, but he sold everything to own that pearl. That's where God is coming at us with. The possession of what we are.

The whole of religion, the whole of salvation, consists in the state of that heart. Not in the state of that mind, but the state of that heart. God can do nothing for us in the way of imparting the blessings of redemption, but through that heart.

Not the mind, through that heart. That heart. You give that heart to God, then God has everything now, and He can do for you.

God can do nothing in the way of imparting those blessings otherwise. Our knowledge of the word of God will profit you nothing but an argument. If your heart is not open to receive Himself to come in and to fulfill that through you, what you've learned, we take it up as words, we invent programs, we have all kinds of things to try to make people like Christ.

There's only one thing that will make you like Christ. You allow the Holy Ghost to live that Christ through your life. Amen.

That's the only thing that can ever make us into that. Now, our first concern must be for a meek, lowly, tender heart that waits on God. That takes time.

What I've heard... You know, I've heard the man of God preach, and I went home at night, and there's something echoed. You know, you heard maybe just one thing. I believe we spoke of this.

Just one thing. And your whole life, you see, this is going to change me. Something.

Here I've said, I received a tract. A little lady gave me a tract, and the name of that tract was Christ Himself by A.B. Simpson. Everything about me changed.

I mean, I was saved. I was filled. I don't mean I got re-saved, but my whole outlook is that man of God taught.

And he brought out this great truth that now that I have this life, I have to learn to live by this life. And he told how he had had two nervous breakdowns. He could only preach one message a week.

He could do nothing. He sought God for healing, but God never healed him. What God taught him was, you learn to live my life.

This is a resurrection life. You learn to live the life of another. What you're trying to do, what you're trying to do is yourself.

And you broke down, you continually break. God never healed him, but he did the work of ten men, become one of the most prolific writers of all time, and everything he wrote is worth you taking home with you. I believe one of the great movies, he said, nobody ever affected me like A.B. Simpson.

But he learned to live the life of another. When I saw that, this thought, it will quicken your mortal body. There are no mortal bodies on the other side.

No, no, it's a glorified body. To quicken this mortal body. You know, I'm old enough to be dead, but I preach sometimes ten times a day.

That's not natural. You know, I know that's not natural. I've been preaching three and four times a day the last three weeks.

And I rode 9,000 miles, you know, to get more or less to get where I am. But I learned, see, that it's not me. I've learned to live.

I haven't perfected that, but I have learned enough to live that life. Let him be my life. Not only do I have a better understanding, the only way to understand, but I have the physical strength to do what he told me to do.

A man said to me last night, when he'd get the energy, I said, I've just learned. He said, are you tired? I said, not now. But I said, Sunday night, when I get back to Brother Nick's home, I'll be like a glass of water you poured out.

You know what I mean? The Holy Spirit, that life, keeps you going. But that, you see, a truth you hear. But if I hadn't heard that, I'd still be struggling, you know, with a lot of things I'm not.

So what he asked for out of us is a heart that's not hardened. That to know, you see, an unteachable spirit can't hear anything. You meet a man who knows everything, forget him.

You're not going to get anything to him. But as long as that is open, God speaks in his Son to the heart. Salvation will be found in these two things.

And when I talk about salvation, I'm not talking about just the initial. You see, I'm saved, but I'm being saved. That's taught all through the Bible.

See, at Calvary, in His death, God dealt with my sins. I was justified when I accepted Christ. It was as if I'd never sinned in my life at that moment.

All of that was gone. But I'm redeemed by His life. There was a self-life that has to be dealt with.

The cross dealt with the self. And now as I learn to walk, there's only one way for me to overcome self, and that is for Christ to replace that. I've turned in on myself for 20 years, folks.

Amen. It's become a terrible thing. Always trying to find something.

Why am I not hearing from God? You'll never go anywhere. You've got to know, I don't see any willful sin in this life. I know this thing God's going to dig up after a while when I'm able to bear up to it.

But I just walk with Him. He'll deal with it. He's got the cross there to take it away.

But I must know, you understand, that to live this, I must listen. I must know that these two things, God speaking to me in His Son, and my heart must be open to hear that voice. And as I hear it, He never said or commanded anything that He wouldn't do.

You know, I have a lot, I thought it was on me, but it's not on me. You know with this school, 130 countries, I've called my daughter every day. She'll read me all the emails, come at me everywhere.

And she's telling me what they've got to have. And I know half that didn't come in, you know. And so there's a lot of things.

And God said to me one time, in really agonizing over some things, He said, Son, I never told you to try not to be anxious. I commanded you to be anxious in nothing. Yes sir.

He said, I never asked you to try to have faith. I commanded you to have my faith. I never commanded you to do anything that I wouldn't do in you if you let me.

If you keep all this struggling, trying to have the will to not be anxious, you're going to have a nervous breakdown. But if you roll it on me, I don't break down. It'll all work.

And it has this far. Hallelujah. Learning to live that life.

It is only in order to receive salvation as a means to an end that's something different and higher that He speaks. See, that's salvation. There's something.

I receive that. I have to come into redemption before it can ever become what God wants and become all and receive all that God has. I, one day, if I keep walking, I'm going to sit on the throne of this universe with God.

With Christ. He said, I'm going to let you sit on my throne just like my Father let me sit on His throne. And both thrones are the same.

Christ is God. And that throne belongs to Him. But as a man, He had to win that throne.

And He said, now I've got you in testing. If you'll hear my voice, listen to me, you'll win that throne to sit with me too. That's the whole course of God with life.

You are in trials, not to be saved, folks, but for inheritance. To sit on the throne of this universe with Christ. And so you have to pass through all of this.

His speaking gives and is salvation. All of it. Complete.

Not just get me unborn again, saved from hell. But being conformed to the image of Christ. All the while, this is working.

You know, when wintertime comes, where they really have the seasons, all the leaves fall off the tree. My wife and I lived in Russia where the school was born. Beautiful birch trees all around.

Where we were in the winter, not a tree. They looked dead. Snowed three foot deep.

She and I, we come where it didn't snow. So we had a lot of fun with that snow. We'd be out there walking around in it.

We was under those trees. I said, this birch, beautiful tree. But I said, they're dead.

Look dead. But I said, they're not dead. They're not dead.

They're dormant there. You look up in it, and there's all kinds of dead stuff hanging up there. And I said, isn't it wonderful? The man that owned these don't have to get somebody to come out here and beat it off of them.

Amen. When you come out here in the spring, all that will be down here and brand new. That's the way it is with Christ.

As you allow Him to grow, the dead is pushed off. You turn in on yourself. If you crucify self, you produce a self worse than self was.

But if you let the Holy Ghost direct you in that life, deal with that life, then Christ lives. That's the reason it's a constant walk of death and resurrection. Death to me, and He's coming up.

Death to what I am. It's not I, but it's Christ. And all along this pathway, that's being affected in our lives as we hear what He is saying.

His speaking is a revelation of Himself to my heart. And this is what I want you to be. Now let the work of my life be to listen with a meek and tender spirit.

That's the work. To hear what He said. Because I know now enough that He will affect that in me if I hear it.

If I hear it, He will affect. So let the work, not strive in trying to draw a blueprint for God. He's got the blueprint sitting at His right hand.

His name is Jesus. Amen. He wants no other.

That's the purpose. This universe will be filled with Christ, God's Son. The Bible said righteousness, and the Bible said He is the righteousness.

We'll cover this earth one day as the waters cover the sea. That's when He comes back with us. I know that.

But this earth, every man will sit under his own vine, and nobody will make him afraid. Nothing so hinders God's voicing as opening the heart too much to other voices. You know, you just listen to too many other voices.

You let the politics affect you. I believe every man ought to vote his conviction, but I can't change it. Two of the most contrasts ever to run in America just ran.

Mr. Bush, Mr. Kerry. Mr. Kerry. If he had got in there, homosexual marriage, everything else would have been, you know, everything.

But there's nothing I could do. I was really concerned. God said to me, Why are you so... Don't you believe I put over the nations who I will? Now you vote, you pray, you get on with my business.

And whoever's over, you thank God that the will of God's be done. Whatever it takes. I couldn't understand why George W. Bush Sr. was voted out and a man like Clinton got in.

But God spoke to my heart. I prayed about it. He said, He said, Look, I don't have any trouble dealing with Sodom.

I can carry it up in one night. Don't worry about Sodom. But George Bush was going to deal with Israel.

His new world order is going to set that aside. That's eternal. I put him down.

Because I can handle the homosexuals. I can handle everything else. One night, I can put that out.

But when you begin to touch the eternal sea, in other words, walking with God, and you're deeply interested in the news, the literature, or the society of the world, you can't hear God. You know, nothing can live outside of its environment. Paul said in caution, that I am complete in Christ.

That's my environment. I'm complete in Christ. Nothing can live outside of its environment.

Take a fish out of water, he'll die. He cannot live outside of that water. And you cannot live outside of Christ.

When you willfully take yourself out and watch filth, he won't sit there with you. You listen to filth, he won't sit there with you. You may come back, but you may have AIDS when you get back.

Spiritually, I'm talking about. You see, you cannot live. I must choose to live in the environment of God.

It doesn't matter. This faith must govern my every moment. Even my wife and I, our privacy of our own bedroom, this faith must govern everything, our conversation and everything.

Because in God I move, I breathe, I have my being. And this has to always, that attendedness, an ear deeply, deeply interested in all that world can't hear. It needs stillness, retirement, consecration, to give God the attention that he claims.

And if you will, wherefore even as the Holy Ghost saith, that's what, as he said, if you hear his voice. Now, in quoting, this is a very wonderful thing. In quoting that 95th Psalm here, the writer, uses the word

expression as the Holy Ghost saith.

What he does, he regards that Psalm as the very voice of God, doesn't he? He said, this is of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost said this. And he said, if he said there's more in it, then I'm going to give him a lecture.

That's what he said. As the Holy Ghost said. When I come to honor this word, from that standpoint, I'm going to know there's more.

See, I see more in that than the man on the street reading it sees. Yeah, I see, you will see more. It is only on this ground that he sees in them a deeper meaning.

On the ground of the Holy Ghost. Then we would have looked for, more than we would have looked for, and teaches us to find in the words, enter into my rest. Enter into my rest.

The revelation of a deep spiritual mystery, a prophecy of what Christ could bring and should bring to our lives. Enter into that rest. Now, such as the Holy Ghost gave the word, so it was Holy Spirit that taught the Apostle Paul, I think he wrote that, to set it forth in its spiritual meaning.

The words of the Holy Ghost have to have the Holy Ghost interpret them. Nobody, you can't, not scholastically, I make no appeal for ignorance, but you can't learn this Bible academically. The Holy Ghost has to teach it.

So you have to have an ear to hear what he said. We must ever be aware that the Holy Spirit only interprets to those to whom he dwells. He doesn't tell the world out there.

He doesn't tell the ungodly. He doesn't just tell the religious. He tells those in whom he lives.

And if that heart is open, I'll hear. I was in a wedding years ago during the Vietnam War. And I didn't perform the wedding, but some folks I knew, business people, pretty high class deal.

And I was there and it was over. They didn't have alcohol or nothing at it, though it wasn't a Christian deal. But I was there at the reception table and all.

And the lady who was professor at that time at the Rice University introduced herself, wondering who I was. And I told her that I was a preacher, a minister of Christ. And she said, what do you think about the Vietnam War? I said, what do you mean? I was home for a little while.

We were out there seven years. Saw Pentecost come the first time to that world. But she said, what do you think about that war? I said, what do you mean? What do you think is the solution? I said, only Christ has a solution to that.

Oh, my. I may as well drop the bomb in that wedding. What's Jesus got to do with it? I said, it had nothing to do with starting it.

But if we just get God in the right place, I said, we can find an occasion. We'll find an answer to things. You know, I wasn't being facetious.

She asked me. I told her what I believed. Oh, she said, I doubt you even believe in evolution.

I said, no, not a matter. Believe it, ma'am. I know that isn't true.

She looked at me as being ignorant anyway, you know, because I didn't go through Rice University. She said, you know. I said, yes, ma'am.

She said, I work with the smartest people in the world. Not just in Houston, but all over. I'm in contact.

Physicists, all kinds. I work with them. They're not sure about evolution.

They believe it. But they don't just absolutely know. I said, well, the difference between me and them, ma'am, I know.

Well, how do you know? I said, evidently you read the book of Genesis. You know something about the creation story. She said, I know all about it.

I've read it. Don't believe it, but I read it. I said, well, I'll tell you.

You read where that spirit moved over that void and brought light and brought order. Yes, I do. I said, that spirit's in me every time I read it.

He said, amen. That's exactly the way it was. No question.

None whatsoever, ma'am. That's the way it was. I said, he lives in me.

And I know that to be a fact. That's the Holy Spirit, you see. He takes the Holy Ghost to interpret it.

This brings us to one of the most important lessons in your spiritual life. That the Holy Ghost has spoken and He alone can make it plain to your heart. You must have a heart that will listen to it.

Don't come up with your own conceived notions and ideas. I've been taught things by church that I found out they were wrong. When I grew up in the schools in America a long, long time ago, I had a very, very mind for math.

I had no trouble with playing in solid geometry, with algebra. But it just passed. I didn't excel.

I could have excelled. But I didn't because I said, I couldn't put this on a plow handle. That's my only thinking.

I said, what am I going to do with this? How are you going to put that on a plow handle? I didn't realize where it was going. But number one, nobody taught me that geometry is a language of vision. That Einstein knew the shape of those stars by geometrical reasoning before he ever saw them.

Nobody told me that the alphabet of heaven is circles, rectangles, and triangles. Nobody told me that. And so I never learned.

So I was angry at the teacher when I saw what could have been. But I preached for 20 years. Then I began to learn what I'm telling you.

And I was mad at the people that brought me in because they never told me this. So I lived 20 years a preacher from then. God blessed what he could, but it was a secondary deal and not the primary.

God did the best he could with Saul, but that wasn't his will. David was. And he was so with us.

When we come to this, he uses human words. The Holy Ghost, I'm talking about, uses human words and thoughts. And regarded from the human side, they can be explained and propounded by the seminary.

From the human side. He uses the same word I use. Same thoughts to bring.

But even with a true Christian, this does not bring him any farther than the Old Testament preliminary stage. I mean, understand this book by human thought. The prophets sought.

Listen to it. 1 Peter 1.11 shows you. The prophets sought, searched diligently, what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto.

They never knew. You see, they were looking at it. They read it.

He's going to come. But they never understood that. Most of the church doesn't, because they're still in that preliminary place.

They don't allow the Holy Ghost, the Bible, to know this is a revelation, but it contains a revelation. And men have built a hundred different organizations out of the same Bible, and all of them claim to be preaching the truth. The Holy Ghost cannot possibly lead us into the power of the blessings of God, unless with our whole heart we listen to His voice.

Then I'm set on knowing what is God saying to me. Is this what He means? What does He know? If you hear His voice, harden not your heart. My, my.

God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our heart. God asks us to yield our whole heart to that leading, and it is the indwelling Holy Ghost that He will call us and fit us to listen to that voice. His life becomes our life.

God's command to every believer then, be filled with the Spirit. Not a suggestion. See, in Pentecost, 52 years, especially as a preacher, I've watched the change.

Number one, He becomes our helper. He didn't come to help you promote your programs. He'd come to be your life.

No, He didn't come to assist the flesh in being religious. He'd come to be the life, your life, my life, the life of that church. Then from there, we made Him optional.

We learned how. We're more educated than they were. Amen.

Somebody asked one of the big preachers in America. Now they sing courses. It's more about them than it is about God.

You've heard those. And they asked him, said, Why? Have you moved from those old songs with the theology? Well, it's a different time. He said, They were sad back then, and they'd come out of a melancholy heart.

For me to sing about Jesus had come out of a melancholy heart, about the love of God, about walking with God. Now we sing about ourselves. A big part.

I was in England in a church, and when I got there, one of the young men, I think he'd been instructed to tell me, he said, Now, our pastor, he never preaches over about 10 or 15 minutes, but said, We sing. We do a lot of singing. It's a worship singing.

Well, one hour and 20 minutes. Well, I've got flat footage down there. You know, brother, they sang one course for 20 minutes.

One course. They were 12 times, me, us, our, them. Two times God.

They sing it for 25 minutes. When I get up. How are 20 minutes of song service? Well, I get up and open this book.

I said, They demand equal time. Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

They had a 90-minute tape. I preached off of it. See, they didn't want to hear the Word of God.

It's going to disturb what they are. It's going to disturb. It's going to tear this up.

We're having a good time. We don't want nobody to mess with that. I'll tell you the Holy Ghost is going to mess with it if it isn't Christ.

But all to my benefit. He's not trying to hurt me. He cursed the earth for Adam's good, not to hurt him.

Amen. He said he had to do that at that point in time. Amen.

The Holy Spirit cannot possibly lead us into the power and blessing unless with our whole heart. And here we listen. If you hear His voice, harden not your heart.

God sent the Spirit of His Son into our heart. Ask us to yield our whole heart to His leading. And it's in dwelling Spirit and through Him that He'll call us and fit us to listen to that voice.

God speaking to us in His Word and in His Son is all by the Holy Ghost. Otherwise, it's just words that you hear. I knew an infidel when I went to Beaumont used to call me.

Why? He'd quote half this Bible and memorize it. But didn't even believe there was a God. You see, until the life of God gets into that Word, then it's just a word.

Pharisees can quote it. You know, it's really a wonderful thing when you begin to realize that the sovereignty of God in dealing with you when you're lost. You know, I sat there dead.

The Bible said I was dead. What can you do to a corpse? Amen. I mean, just dead? You can stick a needle in him.

You can turn the casket over. He'll never complain. You know, he's gone.

There's nothing you can say to the dead. So all of God's dealing with that dead man is sovereignty. But when I become born again, that sovereignty ended in that manner.

Because the same life is in me now that's in that Word. Is that right? The same life. So it demands a response.

God never deals with you when He talks to you. Faith demands that I accept that and respond to that. That angel come to Mary, the virgin, and said to her, You're going to have a baby.

Never said another word until she responded. I can tell you, it was a while before she responded. Then she said to him, How can this be? She said, I've never known a man.

Never angel come back and said the Holy Ghost will overshadow you. And that thing within you is going to be the Son of God. She never said nothing else.

She had to respond before anything ever happened. Well, now she knows they're going to stone me to death. I'll come up pregnant without a husband.

They don't put up with that like they do now. Amen. They won't abort it.

And they're not going to let me go. They're going to stone me to death. So it took some time.

But that life in her had to respond when she said, Be it unto me. Then and only then did that word become a reality to her. You see, because there's a life in me, and you hear the Word of God this morning, if you hear it as the Word of God, then from here today on, we must begin to give more response to it all the time.

And it isn't something that just totally becomes to us overnight. Every day it gets bigger and larger as we allow God to function and work in our lives. God's speaking to us in words all by the Spirit.

Everything depends upon our right relationship with the Holy Ghost. Everything. Let the Word of God be the seed in which the life of God will.

Let us receive the Word in the faith the Holy Spirit will open it. And let us know that the knowledge of Christ is the fruit of faith as the more and greater He makes Christ in my life, the more I know He's able to do exceedingly and abundantly above what I ask or think. He's not a Christ that needs help.

He's a Christ that has everything. I've watched Him become a crippled Christ in Pentecost. The superintendent called me years ago and asked me would I preach a memorial service.

When they asked you that, you know, they figured you're getting old. You're going to talk about somebody's died, you know, memory, memorial. And I said no, I declined.

Because I've never been too much of a specialty. I preach the resurrection every day. I don't wait until Easter, I'm telling you.

I preach that every day. Amen. Christ is born in hearts every day.

At any rate, after a while though, two or three weeks, I thought, you know, if He hasn't got anybody, I believe maybe I'm supposed to preach that. I called him and I said, have you got anybody? No, we're waiting on you. I said, well, I'll do it.

Well, I worked. We had a sermon, you know, on that memorial service. Well, I had it all settled.

I got there and we went to the Civic Auditorium in Laredo, Texas. And when you walked in that big auditorium, the entrance, you know, the big vestibule deal outside, we call it, was about twice as long as this church, about that wide. And all through there they had these booths where they sell stuff, you know, they're advertising this and that, things that are coming.

One of those booths was called RAFA, R-A-F-A. That's a Baptist program for the dealing with drug addicts, sitting there in a Pentecostal altar almost. I saw that.

I lost every note I had. I just fell apart. I saw that booth.

Amen. Now, I've never been. I tell you, I don't know.

You know, some things you don't have to agree with. You may call it clandestine theology, you know. But I never believed in them halfway houses.

There were no halfway houses to deliver this man from that alcohol. He found it in that altar. I went in there at 7.30 one thing.

I come out something else. I haven't drank any of it in 56 years. Amen.

So I saw that. Here we are. We've got this back.

Now, the only difference between them and the hospital down there, they only charge \$500. Amen. But they added Jesus to the pill they give you, you know.

And so they're out there. Well, I lost it all, but I still got to preach. So when they give it to me, all the RAFA crowd is sitting right here.

I'm a little high, and they're sitting right down there. And I begin to preach. And I said, this is a memorial service, and we're dealing with the memory.

Those that are gone. And I said, three points I've got here this morning. Number one, what kind of memory did they leave us? What would we do to that memory? And what kind of memory are we going to leave our children? And I said, I'll tell you the memory they left me.

Is that Christ is everything. If you're sick, He'll heal you. If you're lost, He'll save you.

If you're hungry, He'll fill you. If you're led, He'll lead. He said in His Bible that He'll guide you.

He'll guide you in all things. Tell you whatever footprint if you let Him. I said, that's what they taught me.

They were men of God, men of faith. The old man that ordained me was 70-something years old. I'm an evangelist at that time.

I really didn't have a pastor. And I loved him. His name was Gore.

Come out of Tennessee. Wasn't Ken Dow, Gore. But a man of God.

Amen. And I said, would you please ordain me? He said, I would do that. The old man was a man of faith.

And I remember, I'm kneeling there. When it come time, he put that old hand on my head. Oh, God, he said, if he ever ceases to preach the truth, kill him.

That's a man of faith. Oh, I said, I tell you, many a time I've watched this stuff come. Everybody's going over there.

Man, there's a ton of money over there. You know, you're human. You know what? Everything seems to be going over that way.

Ton of money over there. All the people over there. But I'd start moving, I'd get that old man and kill him.

I'd lay a deck over that boy. No, no, I said, I'm going to stay over here on this platform. I'm not going to move.

But I said, this is what they taught me, that Christ was everything. But I said, you know what we've done to that memory? I said, I come into this place today, and I saw these folks booth. Yeah, they're there.

What can I do? I wouldn't be ugly. But they're there. They believe what they're doing, I guess.

I said, I saw this booth, Rafa. I said, they're fine folks, they're Baptist people. They're going to tell us how to help our drug addicts.

I said, that ain't what they taught me. What you're saying now, that the Christ we preach has to have help. I said, you're trying to prop up this Christ.

The memory, what we've done to that memory, that taught me Jesus Christ was the answer. I had three massive heart attacks. The second one, the nurse pronounced me dead.

I fell out in the pulpit. Couldn't find a pulse. Pronounced me dead.

Said, there's no pulse. She's up here. I could feel her.

I could hear her, but she couldn't feel nothing. Everybody quiffed. My wife kept on praying.

She was praying in tongues. I understood her in English. She was holding on to God.

I tell her all the time, I know what you told him. I heard you. You said, he's not leaving me or these kids by myself.

He's not going to get out as easy as this. God raised me up. I had the third one in the bed.

Amen. I lay in there. So much water came out.

My body went through that old mattress, that farm. She saw me, thought I was dead. Nine days later, he squeezed that heart.

I've been running ever since. They taught me that. I never went to a doctor.

I don't condemn nobody that did. I knew God was dealing with me. I knew if I went to them, I would die.

But I said, now here we are. We're telling people that he has to have help. I'd just come from Kinshasa.

One in every three in that big city had AIDS, depression, suicide, drugs, alcohol. The worst you'll ever find in anywhere. And I got the edge of the platform.

And I looked at the man in charge. I said, when are you going with this program to Kinshasa? I said, Zaire, sir. You know where that is.

When are you going? He never answered me. I said, Norm, I want to know, when are you going to take this program out there? He never answered. I said, you're not going.

They don't have \$500. So I've got to keep telling them that Jesus is everything. Yes, sir.

Jesus is everything. That's the answer. I said, that's the message we must bring to them.

In this way, we'll learn to speak the Word. Through the disciples, though they've been with Jesus all through his earthly ministry, witnessed his death, resurrection, they're not allowed to preach him until entombed with his power. Until it was this Holy Spirit directing them.

The Spirit-breathed Word, the Spirit-open Word, must be also the Spirit-spoken Word. I must know. I speak from a heart that God has talked to.

Now, nothing has changed. We, too, must speak out of a living communication with the Holy Spirit. We must wait, wait.

From beginning to end, everything connected with God's Word must be in the power of the Holy Ghost. Or else you're just talking words. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, today, not tomorrow, today, if you hear his voice, God is the eternal what? There's no yesterday, no tomorrow.

God never begins until he's finished. I said that one time, and a person came and said, please explain that. I said, you must know the highest form of knowledge is to know there's some things you can't know.

I do know with God there never was a past, never was a future. Whatever happened ten billion years ago was right now. What happens ten billion years from now has already been done with God.

There's no past, no present, no future. God is what I'm saying. It's always eternal now.

That's the reason he said today. Today. Amen.

Christ is the author of eternal salvation that bears the character of eternity. The chief mark of Christ's salvation is that it is ever present now. Amen.

Today, if you hear his voice, man is the creature of the moment. Amen. The past is gone.

He has no control over the future. It is only the present moment that he is. Only.

Only. When man is made a partaker of Christ, God's word to him is today. In Christ, all the blessings of eternity is gathered up in the ever present now.

To live under an open heaven is to live in the resources of God all of the time. I must be very careful to keep myself. I am.

At Pentecost, heavens were open. With Christ, he lived under that open heaven. The anointing was that open heaven.

On the day of Pentecost, the heavens were open to the church. The river came down. Our greatest concern is to maintain that place where that heaven is open.

You can't be careless and live under an open heaven. Amen. The heaven didn't close because you made a mistake.

But you can't willfully walk after this world and live under an open heaven. We must maintain that place of hearing that voice. Amen.

The one need of the believer is to know this, to respond to it, and meet today of God's grace with the today of God's faith. Amen. Believe what he said.

If you would understand the meaning of this divine today, you look at it from the Holy Ghost today. He said today. Satan's word to man is tomorrow.

Yeah. Tomorrow. Be a more convenient time.

You know Habakkuk never began to preach until he was old. He only preached four months. Said more than four months, most people say a lifetime.

But in the beginning of it, you remember he said, God's house was in ill repair. Windows were broke out. Doors wouldn't close.

All kinds of armage come in and out of it. Rain leaked on it. And God was after them to build it.

And they said to God, the time has not come. He said, no, we're not refusing. It's just not time.

We will do that, you know. Very, very nice. We will do it.

God said, you live in sealed houses. I know every invoice. He said, I know every dollar you spent to fix that house.

I know what your car cost you. I know what the pavement is. I know every, I lay the invoices on your table.

You tell me the time has not come. I'll blow the roof off your house. The time for my house is now.

Every kind of a thing is in it. Today you repair this house. You get on with it.

Don't you play no, you come no more with me. It's always Satan tomorrow. Even with a child of God, the worry of unbelief is too often tomorrow.

God demands, it's too great. For today, they say, it's too great. There will be a better time.

We hope for an easier time. It's never going to get easier. It's going to be difficult.

Because delay is the hardening of that heart. The unpardonable sin is not a special act or deed of that soul. It's a condition of that heart.

You refuse to do a thing long enough, time will come when you can't. The most gracious gift ever given to you was the power to believe. Nothing, nothing.

But there was a group of people in the New Testament, the Gospels, that watched him work a hundred miracles. On this one occasion, he healed a lad that was insane, looked like blind, terrible condition. And that miracle happened.

They sought how to do away with him. And he made this solemn statement, wherefore they could not believe. Up to that point, they could have believed.

But he said, wherefore they could not believe. You see, if you refused, today God talks to you. God called you to preach the Gospel.

That don't mean you've got to go out there and start preaching. That means you must at this altar tell God, I will go. I give myself.

There'll be no other train in this life but for this purpose. Whatever you do. He called me in 1954, my wife and I, to Saigon.

The French were defeated that year. We didn't know it. Didn't even know where Saigon was, in fact.

We got involved 14 long years. And I watched it gradually, that war, increase, intensify. Every day, the headlines, the newspaper, Saigon, war, death, plunder.

Amen. We knew we belonged there, but we couldn't get there. First place, we didn't even know what to do if we'd have got there at that point in time.

Been a preacher about six months. Amen. But in 1968, in January, we arrived there exactly on God's time.

But in that altar that morning, there was a commitment made. We will go. Fourteen years later, we arrived, saw Pentecost come the first time in the history of that world.

Today, if you hear His voice, make the commitment to Him. He's not telling you to go off and be a missionary to Africa in the morning. But if He says that's where I want you, today, don't harden that heart.

Don't tell Him the time isn't come. You say, where you lead me, I will follow. Let's stand.

Hallelujah. Oh, hallelujah. God, help us to hear what the Spirit saith, oh God, in the name of Jesus.

In that name that's above every name. My God, I love you. I praise you, Lord.

I worship you here this morning, Lord. In the name of Jesus. Why don't you just lift those heads, some of you.

God's been a dealing with you. God's been talking to you. He wants a greater commitment out of you.

He just wants us to say, I will be whatever you want out of my life. All He wants is a commitment with no backdoor. My God, show me the way.

I'll walk in it, Lord. Oh, God. You said the steps of good men are ordered to the Lord.

Order mine, Lord God. I will walk in this way. Blessed be the wonderful name of Jesus.

Blessed be the wonderful name of Jesus. Blessed be the name of the Lord. God, oh God.

Today, if you hear His voice, oh my God, my God. Let the response, Lord God. Doesn't matter where it leads or what it is.

There is no higher form of existence, folks, than living in the will of God. Wherever that takes you. Whatever that leads you.

There's no greater place on this planet to live than in the will of God. Amen. Amen.

Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Lord. We hear the Word of God.

Now we have to decide what we're going to do with it. Only you can make that decision. Nobody else.

Nobody. Nobody. Joseph heard God say to him, You're going to preserve my people.

17 years old. Amen. I don't know whether he did or didn't.

But there's no record anywhere that he ever repeated that. Never. He could have.

Told him a hundred times. But he never wrote it down. Never wrote it down.

Thirteen years later. Thirteen. He's 30 now.

Ten years a slave. Three years after that in a prison, a dungeon of Egypt. A thousand demons in that damn prison saying to him, You never heard from God.

But he heard from God. He committed himself. Made the mistake of telling the religious crowd that religious people won't stand for a dreamer.

No, no. You've got to fit the mold. You've got to be foul of ground.

Never change. Never do nothing. Set your own pew every time.

Drop your nickel in the offering. But don't make no waves. Don't change nothing.

Don't let nothing ripple. You see that? He made the mistake of telling them. Their salvation was, We're sons of Jacob.

Yes, sir. I'm a Baptist. Me, all assembly of God.

Pentecostal. Had nothing to do with being in Christ. But he made a mistake of telling them.

Well, they sold him into slavery. All in the will of God, though. But you know, one Wednesday morning, 13 long years, he sat there.

And the devil said to him, You've helped a lot of people in this prison. And one of them remembered you when you got out. You said, You speak up there for me.

Well, he never thought about him again. Here you are. You're the big hero.

You say God talked to you. Now, after three years in this dungeon, ain't nobody. Ain't heard a thing.

Except that Wednesday morning. But he said, I did hear from God. Thursday at noon, he was riding the second chariot to Pharaoh.

Fifty years he ruled that land. Never greater type of Christ in that Bible than Joseph. But fifty years he ruled that land.

Because he heard. In the day you hear. The Holy Ghost said, When you hear His voice today, That day, that 17 year old boy, I will be that man.

He didn't know the hell he was going to go through. But he said, I will be. Iron came into that soul.

He became the greatest type of Christ in the Bible. Hallelujah. You know, I think, we're here until one o'clock.

We don't have to be. But I think it would be good, if you just made an altar where you are. And just commit yourself.

Just say, God, I may not know the full purpose, but I will do that. Wherever You reveal and how You do. I will be what You want me to be.

Why don't you just turn around. If you'd like to come up here, it's fine. The pastor will tell us.

He'll come back and tell us when to go. Just kneel there and talk to God.

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