

Breaking Out of the Boundaries

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon encourages believers to break out of their comfort zones and trust in God's calling for greater spiritual impact.

Duration: 53:48

Scripture: Isaiah 54:1-3, Matthew 10:27, Matthew 22:39, Romans 14:12, Romans 14:17

Topics: "Boundaries"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the tendency of Christians to resist change and cling to the familiar. He uses the analogy of bears on a canoe trip to illustrate this point. The speaker also highlights the importance of being accountable to God for how we use our talents, money, and opportunities. He urges Christians to refrain from judging others and instead focus on not causing others to stumble. The speaker also criticizes the excessive time spent on worldly distractions like TV shows and emphasizes the need to prioritize God and prayer. He encourages believers to step out of their comfort zones and engage in activities like starting Bible studies and getting to know their neighbors as part of their mission field. The sermon references Romans 14 and emphasizes the need for personal accountability to God.

Transcript

I want to read from Isaiah 54 verse 1. Isaiah 54 in verse 1. Sing, O barren thou that didst not bear, break forth into singing and cry aloud. Thou that didst not prevail with child, for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, says the Lord. Enlarge the place of your tent and let them stretch forth the curtains of your habitations.

Spare not. Lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes, for you shall break forth on the right hand and on the left, and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Tonight I want to talk on the subject of breaking out of the boundaries.

The prevailing philosophy today is, even among Christians, don't stick out your neck, don't rock the boat, don't get involved, don't take any chances. And I'm borne from card players that have a saying, you should keep your cards close to your chest so nobody else can see them. And as Christians, many of us have adopted this kind of philosophy.

We don't want anything to happen to the status quo. We want things to remain familiar the way they are. You know, many of us are like bears.

If you're on a canoe trip, I was on a canoe trip two years ago, and a bear tore our tent apart and stole all our food and stuff. We had a wonderful time. And my grandson with me, you know, and he says, Grandpa, what do we do? I says, hit the lake, man.

They can't swim fast. They can only swim about two miles an hour. I told him to take the video and get all the videos he could, and he did.

He took videos for about ten minutes and forgot to pull the trigger on the crazy thing. You know, he was so excited. I don't know how I shouldn't have mentioned that, but anyway.

If you're canoeing, you come around the bend in the river, and there's a bear in the river. He's swimming across the river, and he's three quarters of the way across. He sees you, he'll turn and go back to where he came from.

He will not continue on because that's unfamiliar territory. Where he came from is familiar territory. He goes back.

You know, a lot of us are like that. We don't want to get outside of territory we are familiar with. We like to know what the boundaries are.

I heard about a drunk fellow. His wife had changed all the furniture in the house that day, and he didn't know this. He came in dead drunk at two o'clock in the morning.

He knew where all the furniture had been. He didn't know where it was, and he came in quietly. He managed that, and he tripped over a chair, and he hit a table, and a thing fell off the wall, and the baby started crying, and the dog got barking, and he was really mad at his wife for changing the furniture.

And some people are so bound, they're so bound, you know, that if the wife happens to hang the toilet paper with the paper away from the wall instead of against the wall, you know, he doesn't talk for a whole week. You know, I read Isaiah 53 many times. I guess I've read it hundreds and hundreds of times.

Sometimes I read three times at one sitting, and every time I do, I say, Lord, there's more here that I haven't seen yet. To me, it's one of the key chapters in the Bible, certainly in the Old Testament it is, when God became man and was despised and rejected by his own creation, but in that he carried our sins away. It's not surprising that the next chapter starts with the word same, because of what he did on our behalf.

But there's an exhortation here, as you've noted, were to enlarge the place of our tent, were to stretch forth the curtains of our habitation, were not to spare, were to enlarge, were to lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes, and then, by God's grace, break forth on the right hand and on the left. Breaking out of the comfort zone, it's hard. Many people never make it.

You know, King Agrippa, he almost made it, but not quite. He got to the place where he believed the Bible was the word of God. But there's no evidence he ever got beyond that.

I guess for him, had he broken out of his comfort zone, it might have cost him, probably would have cost him his job, and might have cost him his life. And he wasn't prepared for that. So he never got out.

And there's many examples in the Bible of people like that who might have, but failed to. They held back. Faced with a decision, they'd rather stay where the territory was familiar.

Leave me alone. By the way, that's the devil's prayer. Leave us alone.

What are we to do with you? And sometimes as Christians we may not pray that prayer, but we're acting that way. Leave me alone. I'm perfectly happy the way I am.

We don't want to stretch our energy, we don't want to stretch our time, our talents, our money, any more than they are. Just leave me alone. Let me sleep on.

There's a number of awake texts in the Bible, and all of them are directed to believers, you know. 1 Corinthians 15, Ephesians chapter 5, Romans 13. God is crying awake.

It's not over yet. It's not finished yet. God isn't through yet.

God has much He wants to do. But He has to find people who are willing to break out of the comfort zone, and take some risks, take some chances. You know, Judas Iscariot spent three or three and a half years with Christ.

He never did believe. He was not a backslider, you know. It says that Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who would betray Him.

He knew that from the beginning. There must have been times, though, when Judas Iscariot thought in terms of breaking out of his comfort zone, and getting honest with Christ and the other apostles, but he never managed it. And it was written of him that it would have been good had he never been born.

That's an awful statement when you think it through. Good for that man if he'd never been born. But some of us are, you know, sometimes we're living in a little tin can.

It's about eight feet tall and four feet square. It's got a couple of holes in the front that we can see through. There's no light inside, so nobody can see in.

We have a door at the back so we get groceries and stuff maybe once every three days. And we live in a little tin can. We never get out.

We never see God do anything. We don't want God to do anything to upset the apple cart. Joanne Shetler was an American gal, and about 30 years ago, God called her and another girl to go into Luzon province in the Philippines to a remote tribe and stay there until they had the New Testament done.

So they went. They broke out of the little comfort zone. They got into this tribe and they didn't know the rules.

The rules were like this. If you come as a strange woman to any village in that area, and nobody takes you into their home, anybody can rape you or kill you. They didn't know that.

They're wandering through the village, and suddenly a man came, and he said he would like to take them into his home, and later explained why. This is how they started. It was difficult.

I flew in there later on. I remember as we were flying through the air, and the pilot said to me, Do you see that little snaky trail on top of that mountain up there? I said, What about it? He said, That's where we're landing. I said, That's where we're landing? On that snaky little trail? I mean, it's sloped this way, it's sloped that way, and it's wound like this? And it was uphill, you know.

Well, he set that thing down like a butterfly. And then we had to get off to the village where Joanne was. I had a chromatic mouth organ with me, and I had a friend with me who played a banjo ukulele.

Do you know what that is? Probably good you don't. I should say this. After about six months, the one girl quit and went home.

She couldn't hack it. She went back to the States, and so Joanne hung in there for 25 years, all by herself. She got the New Testament done.

She got a church started. And we met with that little church one night, and George played his banjo ukulele, and I played my chromatic mouth organ. And both of us, both of us are, let's see, what's the proper phrase here? Terrible.

And suddenly one of the elders spoke up and said something, and Joanne said, Do you know what he said? No, what did he say? He said, This must be what heaven is like. It made him feel a little better, but when he gets to heaven, he's sure going to wonder what those two guys were doing, those two instabuts in his little church. She stayed with it.

She hung in there, and God blessed her. No doubt she was tempted when things didn't go right. I mean, in between each house there was a house where they buried the dead, you know.

Customs were totally different. But she gave her testimony at Urbana about three years ago. I saw it in the video.

I was not there. When she was through with her testimony, the whole crowd, five, six thousand people, whatever, they leaped to their feet and they began to stomp their feet and clap their hands and cheer at the top of their lungs. It was a fantastic story of what God did.

And she broke out of the comfort zone and stayed with God no matter what. Of course, there were many like that, you know. Noah had to break out of the comfort zone and God told him to build a boat as big as a football field and there's no water within miles.

What are the people going to think? Never mind what the people think. God told me to do it, so he did it. And we know the result.

He condemned the world by what he did. He was a preacher of righteousness, not very successful. Only his own family listened.

I read a little poem recently. Maybe some of you have seen it. It was a long, long poem.

It was about Noah and his Sunday school. You ever heard that one? It was talking about all these churches with their big Sunday schools, you know, and they're falling back and forth, and how many did you have in Sunday school last Sunday? They had 4,000, how many do you have, 3,800? And their Sunday schools were all growing and they're all laughing about Noah. He only had eight.

And after 15 years, Noah just had eight. They're all laughing. And then the flood came.

And it flooded their fancy buildings and they climbed up on the roof and finally that wasn't high enough, and they climbed up on the hills and finally that wasn't high enough, and finally they all died. And then you know what? Noah had the biggest Sunday school in the world. But people, you have to break out of the

comfort zone and say yes to God, just because God asked him to, for no other reason than that.

When Abraham was 75 years old, isn't that when you put your feet up to the fire and just sit there? And God said, I want you to go, I have something for you to do, and off he went. By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should have to receive for an inheritance, obeyed. And he went out not knowing where he was going.

And he couldn't check it out with any tribal agency. He couldn't check it out with people who had lived there. He couldn't find any book in the local library that would talk about this country he was going to.

He just had to go because God said go. He had a promise, no doubt, God said he'd be with him. And we've got 7,487 promises.

That's a lot more than he had. I was saying the other day, you know, that a lot of us, we admire the promises of God. That's about as far as it goes, you know.

You know, it's a funny day we live in. Funny day we live in. Everybody wants to know what the Bible says in the Hebrew and the Greek, and nobody wants to do what it says in the English.

You know, it's a strange, strange day. What does a Hebrew say? Are you a Hebrew? No. Why do you want to know what the Hebrew says? What does the Greek say, man? Do you read Greek? No.

What difference does it make? Why don't you do what it says in the English? You're English, aren't you? Yeah. Well, it's just the way we are, I guess. Abraham broke out of the comfort zone because God called him to.

And he became the heir of the world. Lot, his nephew, he got into Sodom. He should have gotten out of Sodom.

He never broke out of the comfort zone. Maybe his wife was against it. I don't know what it was.

It was so bad that when he came with the warning that God was going to destroy the place, his sons-in-law thought he was just gone bonkers, you know. And they stayed behind. And the angel had to lay hold of him and his wife by the hand and his two daughters and lead them out.

They didn't want to go because this was unknown. They knew what it was like in Sodom. He vexed his righteous soul from day to day.

He didn't have to do that. He could have gotten out and should have, like Abraham never got in. It's easier to stay out than it is to get out.

And he never really made it. He chose the plain of Sodom because it was well watered and he had a lot of cattle. He never thought about the moral problems.

And Abraham, older man though he was, and because of his age, he was the one who should have made the first choice. He gave the choice to Lot and he took what was left. And what did Abraham get? He got the whole world.

He became the heir of the world because he was willing to break out of the comfort zone with nothing to go on but the word of God. Thank God for this man. And the wonderful example he left us in doing what he

did.

Moses was the same. Eighty years old and God calls him to lead Israel out of the wilderness. And it took 40 years.

Doesn't he know that people retire at age 65? Have you read that in the Bible by the way? At age 65 you curl up and die. People keep asking me, when are you going to retire? My answer is quite simple. When there are no more sinners and backsliders around.

So I expect I'll be around for a while. Retire? When you can preach and teach and do something and talk to people about God and pray for the lost? Retire? Well if you retire from a secular job, take on a spiritual job. Don't give up.

Don't sit looking at yourself in the mirror. Because your eyesight gets worse and it creates other problems. Moses.

Age 80. Hey Moses. I want you to go back to Egypt and lead my people out and it'll take you 40 years.

No complaint. No problem. He went and he did it.

And none of these men knew that their story would be written in a book called the Bible and be read by millions of people over thousands of years. And of these people, thousands of them would be challenged by what they did. Had they known this, it would have been easier to do what they did.

Like Joseph. Age 17. Thrown into jail.

Accused of rape. He was a slave. Then thrown into jail.

And so for 13 years, he's all tied up. A slave, a jailbird. But he keeps honing his skills.

And he never gave up on God. Churchill said, just before the last war, he would never use the word God. He used the word destiny.

He said, Destiny has planned that I should occupy a very large place in world affairs someday. And it finally came. Churchill was greatly used of God.

And he had a sense of humor too. Somebody asked him when the thing was all over, do you think that Hitler managed to escape? Did he really didn't die in that bunker in Germany? Well, he said, I wouldn't worry about it. He'll turn up either in this world or the next.

And in either case, the local authorities will take care of him. Joseph also felt the movings of destiny of God in his life because he'd had dreams that made it quite clear that at some point in his history, his whole family would be bowing down to him. And he never gave up on God.

And when the door opened, it was so fast, he barely had time to shave and wash and change his clothes. And what happened? He became the second ruler in the most powerful nation in the world in those times. Many would have given up on God, maybe even blasphemed God, shaken their fist at God, questioned God, become angry and bitter.

He didn't. And he didn't know his story would be written in a book called the Bible either. People, they did it because they loved and trusted God for no other reason than that.

They never had anything else to go on. They didn't have a Bible to read like we have. They never had all those props that we think we have to have today.

Yet they did better than we're doing with all the props we have. Isn't that strange? But that's the way it is. When God came to Jeremiah and said, Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

But God told him, it's going to be hard. And God said, If you become afraid, I will confound you in front of the whole nation. That is, I'll make a fool of you in front of the whole nation.

There's no evidence that Jeremiah ever became afraid. He went through with God always in and out of jail again and again. And Zedekiah didn't believe.

And he stayed in his little comfort zone until one night it wasn't safe to stay there. And he took off on his horse, but the horses they had had been inside the city for two years. They were in very poor physical shape.

They never had a chance. And they caught him and took him down to the land of Ribla, the land of Hamath, a place called Ribla. And there they gave judgment upon him.

First of all, they slew all the nobles of Judah before him. Then they brought his sons, and they murdered his sons in front of his eyes. And then they bore the eyes out of his head.

And then they threw him into jail. The last thing he saw was all his nobles and all his sons lying dead. He must at that point have thought of Jeremiah.

But it was too late. It was too late. He wanted to stay in familiar territory.

That's a major problem with us as Christian believers. We don't want to go when God calls us. We want the furniture to stay exactly where it is.

We don't want any demands made more on our time than have been made for our talents or our money or anything else. Just keep me happy. Don't face me with any problems.

Don't expect me to go through any trials. They read 2 Corinthians chapter 11, you know. And they see what happened to Paul.

They want no part of that. You know, some people, they live such a sweet, nice, soft Christian life. They walk on tiptoes through life, dodging every obstacle and everything they can.

Do you know why? Because they want to end up at death's door in good shape. Isn't that right? I remember one time preaching on the street corner and somebody threw a rock. Wow! Could I preach after that? I'm telling you, it did something for me.

It didn't hit me. It hit the head of a car right in front of me, you know, and bounced. Great big rock, you see.

But no kidding. Preaching afterwards. I could have preached for 3 hours, you know.

It just did something for me. But we're afraid of that kind of thing, you know. We don't want anybody to blast things or let the air out of our tires or slash our tires or do something like that.

And some Christians live in mortal fear of this all their life. And there's a consequence. They never ever see the power of God.

Do you remember we mentioned that before in Ephesians chapter 1 where Paul prayed three things for Christians? And one of them was that we might know the exceeding greatness of God's power to us who believe. We are immortal to our work as done. That was a favorite saying of George Whitefield.

And Sam Jones picked up on that. We're immortal. And Sam Jones it was who said, I would like to see the combination of men and demons that can take my life when almighty God thinks I have still something to do.

I mean, how can they? I heard about a Christian. He made a mistake down in the big American city. You don't walk down back lanes at night.

Some places in the United States you don't walk down the streets in the daytime. But anyway, he made this mistake and went down this... And two guys jumped out with a pistol and stuck up his face and said, give us your wallet or die. You know what he said? He laughed and he said, you can't scare me with heaven.

And he walked around and kept on going. They were just really shook up, you know. They didn't expect this kind of a thing, you know.

We want things to continue the way they are on people. There's no way it's going to be because look at what's happening in the world today. It's violence, you know.

Men are going to be fierce, it says in 2 Timothy chapter 3. And fierce people are violent people. We're seeing more and more of that. I mean, in Winnipeg it's getting an awful reputation now.

Baiting up old people, breaking into old people's homes and tying them up and beating them and threatening their lives and busting all the furniture and garbage. This sort of stuff is going on all the time now. And young people being stabbed in the street.

And just the other day some girl, a gang of gals, teenage kids were trying to force her to go into prostitution in their gang because they were pooling their finances and she wouldn't do it. And so they caught her on the street and they dragged her off into an apartment block in Winnipeg three days or so ago and they stripped her naked and they beat her. They stabbed her with a screwdriver or something and they left her in a closet and went for supper and intended to come back I guess and finish her off and she managed to get away.

We've got, you know, Jesus said the things I've spoken in here in class Preach on the housetops. We aren't doing that. We're going to have to do it.

We're going to have to break out of our comfort zone dear people and get with God. Why not try and start a Bible study in the block where you live? Beat on a few doors and invite people to a Bible study or ask them if they'd like to have a Bible study in their home. Get to know the people around you.

You know in the cities, people live here sometimes for ten years they don't even know the name of the next door neighbors. Now Christians should not be like that. We have a mission field.

It starts when we walk up the bowl of the church. We have little signs about that, don't we? Yes, we do have. You know, King Hezekiah a Syrian army of hundreds of thousands of men had come into the land.

Why didn't he just give up? He had no idea what might happen if he went to war. But he knew something about God. And so he had to take a risk.

And he did not surrender. He and Isaiah cried to God. And God sent an angel.

And 185,000 soldiers it says, woke up dead. Standing there looking at their bodies, how did this happen? You know. And then the general of the army went home and he went into the house of Nisroch, his god, to inquire as to what happened in Judah.

And while he was standing there praying to his god, his two sons, Adrammelech and Cheraser, came in and they murdered their dad in front of his god. The Lord didn't like what this guy had said back in Judah. He blasphemed God.

And Hezekiah saw the power of God in the most remarkable way. When Joshua called on his son to stand still, he did not know it was 93 million miles away. He didn't know you could drop thousands of earths inside the sun and still have room left over.

He didn't know you could hollow out the sun and leave a crust 200,000 miles thick and still stick the moon and the sun at the same distance apart they are now inside the hollow of the sun. He didn't know that. He just looked like a big football up there in the sky.

And so he calls on his football to not hurry up and go down. And God answered him. And you know it says in the context that there was never a day before or since when God hearkened to the voice of the man.

Joshua didn't know what he was praying. But God did it anyhow. And Joshua saw the power of God because he was willing to take a risk.

He was fighting the Amalekites, remember? Saul he never broke out of the comfort zone. When he saw Goliath you know he was the biggest man in Israel. He stood head and shoulders above any man in the nation.

He was a man logically speaking who should have put on his armor and gone out and challenged Goliath. And had he done this he would have won. David offered.

And Saul looks at David and he says well, I mean you're just a kid. And David said well, no kid or no kid. A lion and a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock and I killed them both.

And he'll be like that. I'll just treat him like those two animals I killed. And Saul couldn't believe his ears.

So he gives him his armor. Well here's this little kid. He crawls into Saul's army, takes three steps before the armor even moves, you know.

And he says I can't go with these. I've never proved them. So he goes down to the brook and he gathers five stones because Goliath had four sons, all of whom were giants.

He was ready for the whole family and he wasn't planning on missing. I like that story. It always speaks to me.

God, of course, I think there's a whole bevy of angels in there just pushing the rock over to make sure it hit the right place, you know. That wasn't David's problem. He knew God had come through.

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? Everybody else, Saul included, was shaking in their shoes. For forty days he defied Israel. And then God sent David along.

David was ready. Afterwards, I'm sure many times Saul said to himself, Why didn't I? Now everybody loves David. They were singing this song, Saul has slain his thousand and David his ten thousands.

What can he have more but the kingdom? But he could have done this. But he was trembling under a tree, it says, with a few hundred of his men. Afraid.

On another occasion when the Philistines had come and again he didn't want to break out of the comfort zone and get involved in a conflict when he didn't know what the result would be. And his son Jonathan got sick and tired of sitting around doing nothing and he said to his armor bearer, Are you with me? He said, Yes, I'm with you. What's up? Okay, they were down here and there was a hill and a garrison of Philistines on the top of the hill.

He said, Let's just come out and let them see us. Now if they say stay where you are and we'll come down and we'll take off. But if they say, Come on up to us, then we'll know by that that God is on our side.

So they came up in the air and the Philistines looked down and said, Hey, come on up you Hebrews. And John said, Let's go. Now they have to climb a hill to get there.

And there's only two of them. And it says only Jonathan and Saul had a sword. So the armor bearer had to wait till somebody died before he got a sword.

And what happened? God was so pleased, he began to tremble and shake the whole country, began to shake like a bowl of jelly and all. And Saul wondered, What in the world is going on? Who's missing? And he numbers, he finds his son Jonathan is gone. And he was a late arriver.

The Philistines were defended. But Jonathan got the glory when Saul might have had it. But Jonathan was willing to break, I say, out of the comfort zone and take a few risks with God.

We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. But when I was first converted, age 22, within a year after I was saved, I was offered a church in northern Saskatchewan. I'd only preached maybe four times.

I'd never had a day in Bible college. I'd never conducted a funeral or a wedding. I'd never conducted a business meeting.

I don't think I even knew there were such things. And I was offered this church. And I said to the Lord, Wow! Let's go.

So I went. They didn't know what they were getting. I should put it this way.

They didn't know what they weren't getting. But you know what? That first year, we had a revival and 75 people were converted and some of those people are on the mission field today with some of their kids on the mission field. I don't have to break out of a comfort zone to do that.

Some of you heard before that there was a time in my life when I was so shy, I couldn't look in the mirror without blushing. I couldn't talk to two people at one time. If I saw somebody coming down the sidewalk, I crossed over and got down a back lane just to avoid meeting people on the street.

The psychiatrists would have a name for that and a reason for it too. Probably I was abused as a child, which I never was. But I had it all figured out, you know.

Everything figured out but the truth. Anyway, I had a congregation and they were going to pay me \$30 a month. Wow! How would I ever spend that much? Well, after six months, I found a girl as crazy as I was and we got married and two of us had to live on \$30 a month.

And people, I wouldn't trade it for anything. The things we learned, the power of God. Oh, I tell you, I read the Bible day and night I had to.

What else could I do? I didn't have a library and pray by the hour. But I was out of my comfort zone into God's zone. And then we saw the power of God again and again and again and again.

No one to eat, so you pray. Do you ever have to do that? Have to pray when you have nothing to eat? You wouldn't want that, would you? You miss something if you've never done it. We prayed one time and a guy dropped by a few hours later with three big hams.

We ate hams in Alabama, so we looked like it. You know. Whatever complained, that's what God sent.

Someone else came by and offered us milk, so we had milk to drink and ham to eat. And neither of us got sick. You know.

God is saying, lengthen your cords, strengthen your streaks, enlarge the place of your tent. Move out. Get something to do for God.

You pray and ask God to give you some kind of ministry. I don't care who you are. Something will turn up.

It might be with kids. It might be with a neighbor. It might be a Bible study.

I can't say what it'll be. It'll be something. But you've got to be prepared to break out.

Let it cost a little money even. You've got stashed up for some rainy day. Why in the world do we have to put money by for a rainy day when God is still alive? The young lions lack and suffer hunger, but those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good thing.

He'll always provide. If it's strength you need, you'll have that. If it's wisdom, you'll get that.

Whatever you need, God will provide it. But you've got to be willing to take some risks. And sometimes you get doors slammed in your face, and sometimes you might have a rock thrown at you or something else or get bitten by somebody's dog.

But so what? Even such a small thing as a cup of cold water will not lose its reward. And God is still looking for people whose heart is perfect towards Him. And the Bible gives us a record of many people like this, men and women, who took in some cases very unusual risks because they believed God and He always came through.

Peter and Andrew and James and John had a comfortable living, fishing. Jesus walks by and says, Come after me and I'll make you fishers of men. They just left the ship with the nets and their parents and followed Jesus.

It sure didn't take them long to make up their mind. Somehow they knew God was calling. And that's all we have to know, is that God is calling.

But if you pray a prayer, Dear God, give me some ministry, be prepared. Don't tell God what kind of ministry. Don't tell Him when, don't tell Him where.

I've got friends that are electricians and they'll go to the foreign mission field. They go maybe for two or three months at a time to help out in some mission station somewhere and then come back and earn some more money enough to get back there again. A lot of people are doing things like that.

There's all kinds of people past the age of 50 that are going to the mission field today just to help out. Do you like living in a nice big house where nothing ever goes wrong? There's never any challenge beyond the leaking tap? Is that all there is to life? If that's all there is to life, I'd rather die. That's not all there is to life, dear people.

God can use any person in this room. My wife and I, about 20 years ago, or more than that, about 30 years ago perhaps, were down in Akron, Ohio, in an Akron Baptist temple, which at that time was the biggest Sunday school in the world. And we heard this guy.

He only had grade 5 education. Dallas Billington. He worked in the rubber factory and he said, one day God said, Dallas, I want you to start a Sunday school.

So they rented a little school called Reimer, not R-E-I or R-I-M-E-R. School. And the first meeting, including the caretaker, was 14 people.

And the Sunday my wife and I were there, there were 5,000. They had a Bible class. And that one church had started 250 churches in other parts of the United States of America.

And this poor guy, he murders a Queen's English every time he talks. Grade 5 education. They told me, if you get sick in Akron, Ohio, go to the Akron Baptist temple.

That's where all the doctors are. But he met a guy named Knockley. He said, Knockley, let's you and me build the biggest Sunday school in the world for the glory of Jesus Christ.

And they did. They shook hands on it, and they prayed over it, and they did it. I guess God tried some PhDs and couldn't get any action out of them.

So he found a guy with grade 5 education who would do something. You know. Billy Sunday, you know, Billy Sunday, he said for years he thought a sin tax was a tax on sin.

You know. He couldn't even write the entrance exam to any university in the United States of America. He was a Presbyterian, you know.

And God had called him to preach, and he knew it. And when it came up to ordain him, they were all talking it down. This guy has no education.

He doesn't know anything. How can we ordain him? And finally some older preacher got up and said, Brethren, lend me your ears. Billy Sunday has already led more people to Christ than all of us put together.

Why don't we do the right thing and ordain him? And they did. Reverend William Ashley Sunday. He finally had an honorary doctorate, D.D. It wasn't earned.

It was honorary because of his work. He couldn't have cared less as far as that is concerned. People are willing to take a risk for God.

That's all he's looking for. Cecil Carter opened British Columbia years ago. He worked in a store, a hardware store.

His witness constantly was always willing people to Christ or trying to. And he really wanted to get out of this comfort zone and get out there and do something for God. And nothing seemed to happen along those lines.

And finally, he prayed a desperate prayer. He said, Dear God, if you don't call me by the time I'm 30, I'll give up on that. I won't give up on you.

I'll keep on sowing. I'll live for you. But if you don't call me by the time I'm 30 years old, I'll never think about it again.

That was his fleece. And his 40th birthday arrived. And Cecil said, Bill, it was the worst day I ever put in, in all my life.

He sat waiting for a letter or the phone or someone to drive up and nothing happened. And 10 o'clock that night, Percy Wills phoned him from Victoria, British Columbia and said, Cecil, God has just told me I'm to invite you to become a full-time missionary with the Shantyman's Christian Association. He just shouted, Hallelujah! Wow! Isn't that like God? He loves to do a near thing.

He waits till 10 o'clock at night on the last day. We'd like him to do it five years before, you know. Big trouble is I'm in a hurry and God isn't.

Cecil hit the road when he was 30 years of age and for 20 years the gals in the office in Toronto told me they said there was a steady stream of converts wherever he went. He had some powerful, powerful meetings. And dear people, the first time I ever saw a revival was under his ministry at a little Bible camp in Manitoba.

I'd invited Cecil to come and about 25 preachers showed up, several from the States and some from Manitoba. And we'd arrange with Cecil he would preach and then we'd ask questions. Long before he was through the first message, I knew it was no time for questions.

When Cecil was through I just said, brethren, let's pray. I didn't say, let's kneel. I just said, let's pray.

Every man in the place fell on his knees or on his face and began to cry to God. The cook afterwards said, Bill, I hope you don't mind there is a lot of tears in the soup tonight. And God did a marvelous, marvelous work in those three days.

And that's the first time I ever saw the power of God in revival through a man that was wholly dedicated to God. I was never with Cecil, but I was always moved heavenward. There was something about him.

He was holy gods. He would do anything God asked him to do. He would go anywhere at any time.

And God is saying, don't spare. You're going to die someday anyhow, so don't spare. Give it all you've got while you can.

Some people think about it and plan over it for 10 years and then they get to the place where they say, well, I'm too old now. It's an exciting time to be living. All people.

God is at work all around the world. Revivals are coming here and there. Transworld Radio, I get their publication all the time.

And over in Mozambique and Madagascar, there's one area where 18 churches were started as a result of their broadcast alone. There were no missionaries in the area. And there's testimony after testimony after testimony of people who were seeking the face of God after they heard their broadcast.

And this is happening all around the world. Back to the Bible broadcast a couple of years ago in India, they had 250,000 people writing in wanting to have a Bible study. Nothing mailed out.

And people were sitting on their hands and would do nothing. Just sort of like some people, they sit there looking out the front window hoping something will happen. You know, John Wesley, he was very severe with his preachers.

He said he was so afraid that his preacher would sit in their office and wait for something to happen. It's not all done by being out in the street. But it's got to be sometime in the street, as well as sometime on my knees.

Are you living in a comfort zone? Are you happy with it? I hope you're not. You know, Jabez in 1 Chronicles chapter 4, he got totally dissatisfied with the comfort zone. And he prayed this prayer.

O that thou wouldst bless me in thee, and enlarge my coast, that your hand might be with me, that you would keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me. And God granted him that which he requested. O God, I'd rather die than not be blessed.

I'd rather die than not see something happen because I'm in this planet. Bless me indeed. Bless me indeed.

You can pray that prayer. It's only two verses long. It's the only time you ever read about Jabez.

What a challenge it was to me the first time I read it. Hey, he wanted to get out of the comfort zone. And God got him out, because he wanted to get out.

Oh, people, we sit around looking at each other in our beautiful homes. Watching TV programs. Bunch of garbage, you know.

Most of it is. Garbage. And I apologize to garbage when I say that.

It's corrupting our people, young and old. We have no time for God. We have no time for prayer.

We've got all the time in the world for these filthy soap operas and all kinds of garbage. But we watch. But we try to excuse it.

You have to know what's going on in the world. Oh, people. You know, in Romans 14, Paul said, So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Every person in this building tonight, you will give a personal accounting to God someday. For what you did with the talents he gave you, and the money he loaned you, and the opportunities he gave you, and all the rest, you will have to answer for it all, and so will I. Every one of us, Romans 14, should give account of himself to God. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more, but judge us rather.

No man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. In the same chapter, he says, The kingdom of God, it's not meat and drink. It's righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

For he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men. And a few verses further, Paul's prayer, Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. I was fishing for salmon on Puget Sound many years ago, when my son Tim, who is now in his forties, was about eight.

And we were with an unconverted relative, and he took us out in his boat at five o'clock in the morning. Now the purse sailors who were fishing for salmon on the Alaska coast that year, the salmon hadn't been running, and they'd done very poorly. So the American government allowed them to come down to the game fishing area, and the sports fishermen were very angry over this, but there were several purse trawlers in the bay.

And the guy would have said, if we catch any salmon, these guys will start up their motor, and they'll put their nets out, and as soon as the nets hit the water, we won't get a thing. We caught two salmons in a row, and all of a sudden, chug, chug, chug, chug, chug, chug, and here's two or three of these boats, and they're putting out these nets that are maybe three thousand feet long, whatever these nets are, and they put them out in the water, we never caught a thing. Then I noticed something very strange.

There was a guy with a tiny rowboat anchored to the shore over here, and he had a couple of ropes he was pulling on, and I said to the guy in our boat, what's he doing? Oh, he said, he's pulling in the bottom of the net to close off the bottom of the net. Oh. So we watched.

The net got smaller and smaller, and the bottom was being pulled in, and finally, I mean, there were thousands of salmon in the net, it seemed. There was tails in there everywhere. And then this guy in the boat, he did a very strange thing.

You know what he did? He had a long pole, about twelve or fourteen feet long, and a square on it like this. And he began banging it in the water like this. And I said to this guy, what in the world is he doing? Oh, he said, every fish in the net could get out.

There's about eight feet on the end of the net that they can't close off. Every fish in the net could get out. His business is to scare them and keep them in.

And dear people, that's exactly what the devil's doing. He's scaring you to keep you in the net or you're useless to God. You can get out of it.

You don't have to be the way you are. You don't have to stay where you are. You can get out of it.

The Bible says grow. Grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Spare not.

Lengthen your cords. Strengthen your stakes. Break out of this comfort zone, dear people, and take on something for the glory of God.

Don't ever really think in terms of fossilizing.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18375.mp3>

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