

Flowing Rivers

by Bill McLeod

Bill McLeod's sermon emphasizes the necessity of thirsting for God and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

Duration: 49:42

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 7:37, James 4:7

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a powerful testimony of a young man who was in desperate need of help. After attending a meeting, the young man fell to his knees and cried out for 10 minutes, experiencing a powerful transformation in his life. This encounter sparked a movement where teams were sent out to different provinces, states, and even foreign countries to share the message of God's love. The speaker emphasizes the importance of being honest about our sins and confessing them to others, as this opens the door for God to work in marvelous ways. The sermon also highlights the promise of everlasting life through Jesus Christ, using references from John 4 and John 7. The speaker concludes by sharing a personal experience of God communicating with him, urging him to stay obedient and move with the Lord's leading.

Transcript

Good afternoon. How are you doing? Good? You're not bragging? John chapter 7, verse 37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. Many of the people, therefore, when they heard this saying, said of a truth, This is the prophet.

Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the scripture said that Christ comes of the seed of David, not of the town of Bethlehem where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. In Psalm 63, it says that my soul thirsts for God, my flesh longs for God, in a dry and thirsty land.

But in Psalm 68, 6, it says that the rebellious dwell in a dry land. A preacher once said to me, I'm as dry as a piece of leather that's hung in the sun for two years. That's dry.

And I said, So who is it you can't forgive? And he looked at me. It turned out he'd been pastoring a church. A lady in the congregation spread lying stories about him that he was immoral and he had to leave under a cloud and he hated that woman with a passion.

Everywhere he went, he talked about her, how awful she was and this kind of stuff. I said, Well, brother, you're going to have to make it right or you'll stay dry. And I said, I can go and I'll confess to her and ask her forgiveness and she will say, Oh, Pastor dear, I've always loved you so much and prayed for you every day.

He said, I can hear her voice right now. I can't stand it. But apparently he did it.

And then the water came back, as it always does. In John 4, as we know, Christ said, If you drink of this well, that's natural water from a well. You'll thirst again.

But if you drink of the water that I give, you'll never thirst. The water that I give will be in you like an artesian well, springing up into everlasting life. That's John 4. John 7 goes a little further.

This well springing up has overflowed. And he that believes on me. And by the way, you know, a lot of people think this is a promise for Christian workers only.

It's not. It's he that believes on me. That's the qualification.

If you're a Christian, you can have this promise fulfilled in your life. Out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water. And this he spoke, we see, of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, because at that point the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Did you know that Pentecost was a Jesus happening? It says, Therefore, being by the right hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he, that's Jesus, has shed forth this, that's Pentecost, which you now see and hear. So Pentecost was a Jesus Christ happening. We need to keep that in mind.

I moved from Winnipeg to Saskatoon in 1962. That's about 500 miles. I really didn't want to go to Saskatchewan, because in Canada at the time, they had little jokes, you know, about Saskatchewan's a nice place to move away from.

And I was at Prairie Province, and they had a recession and this kind of thing, and people used to joke about the last person leaving ought to turn out the lights. And I really didn't want to go there. So my wife and I, we got called to this church.

We had a feeling God wanted us to go, and yet we put it as high as we could, so we decided unless we got a 95% vote, we wouldn't go. And I was positive there was no way I could get a 95% vote, because I had preached there a couple of times. And so it happened.

We got a 98% vote, so then we had to go. And I went, and it was a good church. They had a brand new building, seating about 300, and they had 175 members.

You have to keep in mind when we talk about Canada that we are 7% evangelical. You are 30% evangelical. We probably have four times as many evangelicals in the states on the average as we have in Canada, and it does make a difference.

Half the nation in Canada is Catholic, Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic, and it is a little harder in some areas particularly to carry on gospel work. Anyway, it's not uncommon, especially in western Canada. You've got 175 members.

You may have 225 people attending. And the church went up to, before the revival, went up to 300. There were times we had to put extra rows of chairs at the back to accommodate the people, probably close to 350.

A lot of our people were Bible school graduates. And, you know, they love to hear you preach the Bible. The prayer meeting was running around 2025.

And I had different, you know, as I was there for 10 years before the revival came, and during those 10 years we probably had once a year at least, we'd have an evangelist come, maybe a singing team or whatever, a combination. And they would come. We'd have a pack, a few programs.

And we'd have all these meetings and special meetings and stuff, you know. We had one fellow come. He could play the trombone like you wouldn't believe, great song leader and great preacher actually, and all this kind of thing.

He used to train a choir of 40 people every night, a volunteer choir, and he really got them singing, you know. So we'd have these people come, usually for a week. Then what happened? Well, there might be two or three backsliders restored, and three or four people start tithing, and four or five join the church, and maybe a couple of people get saved.

But once they were gone, the church was exactly the same as it had been before. There was no more evidence of life after they'd been there than there was before they came. So after this happened, a number of times I remember talking to the Lord and said, God, I'm just not going to do it again.

There's got to be something better than this. There's got to be something different than this. If the Bible is true, we shouldn't be going on at what Whitfield called this low-dying race.

And just about that time, I met a missionary. We had him in our church, and I shared with him. And he said, why don't you get Ralph and Lucifer there? I said, who are they? He said, well, they have a deep, they plow pretty deep, and they have a kind of a revival-type ministry.

So I wrote to some terrorists. They couldn't come for two years. But we set something up for two years down the road.

Now, before this had happened, matter of fact, I'd only been there a few weeks or maybe a month or two when we had 10 deacons in the church. And I suggested we have a deacons' prayer meeting every Saturday night at 9 o'clock just to pray for revival. So we averaged about seven of the 10 deacons would be there Saturday after Saturday praying for revival.

That's the first thing we did. Then I used to tell the people, you know, miss Sunday morning if you have to, miss Sunday evening if you must, but don't ever miss the prayer meeting unless the Lord comes or you're

dead. And I really pressed this, and the prayer meeting started to grow.

Then we started a children's prayer meeting. And finally, we had between 30 and 40 children attending. So we divided them into two groups.

We had a couple of adults in each of these groups. They had separate prayer meetings in different places in the church. And the adults, their deal was to train the children to run their own prayer meetings, which they did, and it worked out well.

And this meant more parents would come because their kids were in prayer meeting as well. We got up to 50. We got up to 75.

We kept pushing it. God began working in the prayer meeting. This was before the revival.

We got up to 100. We got up to 150. We sometimes had as many as 170 in the prayer meeting.

And remember, we only had around 175 or 180 members. And, you know, God was working in the prayer meeting. It used to be before I knew better, you know, you preach for 40 minutes and you pray for 10 and you call it a prayer meeting? That's lying too, isn't it? So we changed that.

Now it would bring a short message, usually just on prayer, maybe 10 minutes or at the most 15 minutes. Then we'd pray for 35 minutes or maybe 40 minutes. And then we told people, you've got a special need tonight, spiritual need, physical need, whatever.

Share it with us. We'll pray for you. And people began doing that.

And God began to answer prayer in these departments. And the prayer meeting became the liveliest meeting of the week. I mean, God was there.

And we could see that. And we got to a place where people just didn't miss the prayer meeting. They might miss Sunday morning or Sunday evening, but not Wednesday night.

And we were praying constantly for revival. You know, every Sunday evening service, we ended with a half hour of prayer for revival. And I would tell the people, we're going to pray for exactly 30 minutes.

And we'd be praying just for revival. You don't have to stay. But if you'd like to stay, do, please.

And so we'd have 30, 40 people stay for that time of prayer every Sunday evening. And then we had a prayer wheel on the foyer. And we had it cut up into 15-minute prayer slots.

We asked people to pick out the prayer time they would pray for revival in the church, day or night, and just write their name in the slot. Pretty soon, we had the whole 24 hours taken up. And in some slots, there were two or three names.

We didn't do this all at once. You know, if we'd tried to do this all at once, the people could not have taken it. It was too much.

So we did a little bit at a time. When something caught on, we went a little further. We started cottage prayer meetings at one point.

But cottage prayer meetings never did take off very well. It was the only thing we tried that didn't. And then I suggested at one point, why don't you ask God to waken you every night to pray for revival? I've been doing that myself for a long while.

I'm still doing it today. Every night, God wakens me, 1-32 o'clock or whatever, and I get up and sit somewhere, and I pray for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, maybe for an hour, just depending on how God leads me. And so I suggested this to people, and people began doing that.

And then they started telling me things like this. You know, Pastor, I used to be prayed up in five minutes. Last night, I prayed for 45 minutes.

Oh, it's wonderful, you know. You know what happened? You know, Phinney said, I know some people don't have much use for Phinney, and I'm sure he'd be in heaven. The guy told me that all Phinney's converts would be in hell.

I asked him how he knew. He didn't really know why he knew or how he knew, but that's what he said. Anyway, Phinney said, if I ever lose what he calls the spirit of prayer, he said, I cannot converse effectively publicly or privately with any degree of power at all if I ever lose the spirit of prayer.

What is the spirit of prayer? From Zechariah. It speaks about God pouring on his people the spirit of grace and supplication. That's the spirit of prayer.

There is a spirit of prayer. There is a gift of prayer. And God gives it to his people when they really want it.

And I think what happened in our case was, when God saw we meant business in the area of prayer, because after all, he did say, my house should be called a house of prayer for all people, he never, remember, called it a house of preaching or singing or anything else. He called it a house of prayer. And I wonder when we're going to catch on and get back to that.

We need to, because that's when the power comes. And when he saw that we meant business, then he gave us the spirit of prayer. And people were just finally delightful to pray.

People wanted to pray. It wasn't like it had been before. I'm prayed out in five minutes.

A lady told me that one time. She said, you know, I'm prayed out in five minutes. I said, think of your best friend.

She said, yeah, I've got her in my mind. I said, are you two talked out in five minutes? She said, no. I said, so you're telling me that your friend is more interesting than the God of the universe? Well, she got the message.

I don't know what she did about it. Then they had had a Leighton Ford crusade in Saskatoon. Leighton Ford was one of Billy Graham's men.

And I was the only evangelical church that didn't cooperate. And I did so because I discovered they had unconverted people running committees and all this kind of thing. And so I wouldn't have any part of that.

And I took a lot of criticism because there were 12 Baptist churches in Saskatoon. I had the largest of the 12. People were asking, why isn't Bill McCloud in the crusade? So I wrote a letter to all evangelical preachers and workers in the city explaining my position from the Bible, inviting their comments.

I got one phone call. One guy came to see me. One guy wrote me a letter.

But you should have heard the rumors. You know what one Baptist preacher told his congregation? He said, Bill McCloud doesn't believe the Bible anymore, and that's why he won't cooperate in the crusade. Now, he got my letter.

He was lying through his teeth, you know. How else can you lie? So a girl from my church, she was marrying a fellow from another church, and she told me one day, she said, you know, pastor, they hate you in that church. They hate you with a passion.

The alliance pastor, they had the biggest work in the city, and we were talking on the phone one day, and he said, so you're not going to cooperate? I said, no, I'm not. He said, why not? And I told him. I explained to him.

Well, he got the letter, so he knew. And we talked about it. He said, you know, I stand where you stand.

We're not going to cooperate either. Well, what happened was his church put so much pressure on him, he bowed to the pressure and went in here. One Baptist preacher did the same thing.

He said, I feel exactly the way you feel, but he said, my people are so hot, they want to get in on this, and so they wouldn't do it. After it was all over, he said, you know what's happened in my church? I wish I did what you did, because he said, now I compromise there. They're asking me to compromise in other areas, too.

And that's what normally happens. So when Ralph and Lou came, I said, hey, guys, listen, my name is Mud in the City. If you want to back out of my church and go to another church, feel free to do that.

And I explained what had happened. And they said, hey, wait a minute. We stand on separation of place.

You stand, too. We feel exactly the way you feel. God's going to vindicate your stand for him.

And God certainly did. You know, one guy came after God began to work on the pastors, and he told me how he'd been speaking against me. And he said, you know, I want to be part of what God is doing.

And he said, when I heard that Ralph and Lou were coming to Saskatoon, I actually prayed. And I said, Lord, because he didn't know what church they were coming to. He said, I prayed not in any church, but not in Bill McLeod's church.

So he had to make this right with me. And they started on a Wednesday night. We had maybe 150 people on a Wednesday night.

And three or four people came forward, including my wife and a lady in the church. The two of them didn't get along too well. And they got things all straightened out the first night.

And by Saturday night, we couldn't move in the church. It was so packed with people. And Sunday was absolutely hopeless.

And so there was an Anglican church in the air with seats about 600 or 700. And I talked with the pastor. He said, you can have the building as long as you want, he said.

We don't have any meetings in the evening at all, even on Sunday, just one Sunday morning. So we got this building, seating maybe 600. And we had about 700 there the first night.

And the second night, we had more. And we had to get out of there. So we moved.

And the Alliance had a missionary conference all lined up. And although they had missionaries in town at the time, they canceled out when they saw what God was doing. And they made their building available.

We could pack 1,000 in there. We lasted there a couple of nights. That was too small.

So we moved to the largest church building in the city. We rented this building. It would seat about 1,400, maybe 1,500.

And the first night, we had 1,700 people. And we had a problem. The caretaker, he got so angry.

He lost his cool. He wasn't a Christian. And he got swearing at us.

And he said, you've got to get rid of some of these people or the fire marshal will close this place down. You know what happened? A week later, he got saved. And he said, hang them on the lights.

Pack them in. So we were supposed to go for a week and a half. We had to go for seven weeks.

And God gave us revival. We started on the 13th of October. It wasn't a Friday.

That was a Wednesday night. And that time of year, you can get two feet of snow. We never got any snow until the whole thing was over.

Beautiful weather. And people could drive in. They came in from all over the place.

They flew in from all over the place. And God began a deep and a powerful work there. And, you know, the chief of police in Saskatoon, his name was Kettles, and he issued a statement to the newspaper.

It helped us quite a little bit. He said, I'm not a religious person, but I do know the difference between ordinary church work and revival. And revival has come to our city.

We know that because we have people coming confessing the crimes they've committed. Well, praise God. People sometimes said when they flew into Saskatoon, the minute they landed, they felt something in the air.

They wanted what it was. What's going on here? There's something going on. Well, God was going on.

When I was a young Christian, I read a book by Maxwell. It was called Born Crucified. And it explained about being crucified with Christ.

I read the book. Although, in retrospect, I don't think the book made it plain how you could get a handle on this, how you could get into this. But I saw the truth, at least.

It did something for me there. And before the crusade began, I was spending hours in Romans 6, 7, and 8, especially 6 and 7, trying to get a handle on this. And in Galatians 5, they, their Christ, have crucified the flesh with their passions and lusts.

I kept calling on God. And then he showed me. It was a faith matter in Romans chapter 6. In that he, that's Jesus, in that he died, he died unto sin once.

But in that he lives, he lives unto God. The first word of the next verse is likewise. It means exactly what it says.

Likewise, in the same fashion or in the same manner or in the same way. Reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We don't do that.

The average Christian, he reckons on sinning the rest of his life. And I'm not preaching sinless perfection. Don't misunderstand me.

But the Bible says you're to reckon yourself by faith to be dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And all of a sudden, I just leaped out of the page like Spurgeon said, sometimes the truth will leap out of you like a line from a thicket. And that's what happened to me with that truth.

And I got a handle on it. So by faith. The word reckon, by the way, the Greek word there has many English equivalents in the New Testament.

Words like think, esteem, count, account, reckon, consider. They're all translated from the same Greek word. So I am to reckon myself.

I'm to esteem, to count myself crucified with Christ and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And I got a hold of it. And I've been praying for years, I must confess, to be truly filled with the Holy Spirit.

And I read all these books, you know, deeper experience of famous Christians, power lines, and all these books dealing with subjects like this. And I got some light, but not enough, you know, somehow. Except I saw it is a faith thing.

And so I came to a place one day where I called on God to fill me with the Holy Spirit. And I said, this time I'm going to believe no matter what happens. And the next day I woke up and I just had, I don't know what to call it even.

I just had the assurance that God had answered me. Now the church, oftentimes I'd go away for a week of meetings, evangelistic meetings somewhere else. And I could be positive even if I was as close to Saskatoon as 50 miles, that none of my people would ever show up.

Now that really changed radically after the revival. And I'd have a week of meetings. Two or three get converted maybe.

Maybe only one. A couple of backsliders restored. You know, the old story.

The first crusade I conducted in Winnipeg after the revival in Saskatoon. We started in the building seating 1,200. We had no churches cooperating.

The only advance notice we had was two days. We got some spot announcements on the radio. That's all we had.

And so before that first night, there were six of us in the basement of the church having a prayer meeting. And one of the guys says, boy, we go upstairs, we're going to find about 20 people sitting there. It's going

to look awful.

I said, that's not how I feel. Went upstairs, people were 600 people waiting there. That church was quickly filled.

And we finally had to move to a bigger building. We planned to go for, we didn't know how long really. We just figured we'd go as long as God led us.

We had to go for five weeks. And it duplicated what happened in Saskatoon. Many people were converted.

There was probably 1,000 people responded in those meetings. In that five weeks of meetings. It was a totally different ballgame from what it had been before.

Now God was at work. And you know, one night, I didn't see a vision, I didn't hear a voice. But God was communicating with me.

And God can do that when your heart is open, you know. And it went something like this. Now there's a, the Lord was saying, I have a coffin here.

I'd like you to climb in. You can keep the lid open and watch what I'm doing. But if you get out of the coffin and start walking around, I'll have to quit.

And I got the message. I knew exactly what he meant. Just move with the Lord.

See what God is doing. Move with the Lord. A kid about, oh, nine or whatever from my church came running up in the platform.

And just pushed his way into the pulpit. I think Ralph Sutter was at the pulpit at the moment. And he moved aside.

And this kid began to preach. He was weeping the whole time and crying on the sinners to get saved. So they wouldn't go to hell.

Then he began calling to the Christians to get right with God. And then he stood there just bawled and his dad came and took him back to the seat. Nobody thought it was out of place.

I mean, God used that that night. Jonathan Edwards points out that in his day, some of the most powerful revivals he saw were started by children's prayer meetings. So don't write the kids off.

God might use them as he's done before. And so it was a wonderful time. And then things just opened up in a town called Brandon, 35,000 people.

And a bunch of preachers came down to Winnipeg to see what God was doing. And they asked me if I'd come to Brandon when I was still in Winnipeg. And I said I would do that.

But one of the preachers that came, he didn't like it. I could see that he was very cold and critical, you know. And I found out later on he'd come to Winnipeg hoping to pick up some grief.

So he could go back to Brandon and persuade the pastors not to have me come. So I came to Brandon. And it spilled over there.

We had to go for three weeks. We got into a building seating a thousand. And God did some marvelous things there.

And this preacher, in the meantime, he came under terrible conviction of sin himself, you know. He was a born-again believer, believe it or not. So one Sunday morning, he'd been sneaking into the meetings to see what was going on, you know.

And one Sunday morning, he preached. And he gave an invitation. He'd never done this in his life before.

And nobody responded. So he went and knelt at the front. Because he thought, having seen what went on in the meetings, if you kneel at the front, you get hit by lightning.

So he knelt a while and nothing happened. And he opened his eyes and looked around. There were two or three people kneeling, young people.

And he said, I can't help you. Somebody needs to help me. So finally one night, he came to the meetings.

He came forward at the end of the meeting. And we took him into a side room. There was just one chair in the room.

And he ran for this chair. And he fell over that chair. And he bawled for 10 minutes.

We couldn't even talk to him anymore. He got his life all straightened out. It was powerful.

And it was lasting. It was wonderful. God was in business.

And God was working. And this just kept on and on. Invitations from here and there all over the country to come, come, come.

We began sending teams out. We stopped counting after 2,000 teams had gone out. They went to every province in Canada.

Went to every state in the United States. Went to many foreign countries. Teams went to South America.

They went to India. Went to Europe. You know, from Winnipeg, there was a bunch of German-speaking people, Pentecostals, Baptists, and men.

And I just got their heads together, 85 of them. And they chartered a plane. And they went to Germany to spread the revival message.

I mean, these are not normal things. These are things that happen in times of revival. Three preachers showed up.

And I knew them. And they showed up. We were still in Saskatoon.

And they came to me. They're the saddest-looking Saks you ever saw. And they said, you know, we heard about the revival.

And we're not getting anywhere. And we're all planning to leave the ministry. If God doesn't do something for us here, we're leaving the ministry.

I said, well, listen, brethren, you keep your hearts open. You won't have to leave the ministry. And then they found out I was moving off to Winnipeg before the meetings in Saskatoon were completed.

And so they said, Bill, you can't go. We've come here so you can help us. I said, you don't need me.

I said, you need Jesus. And finally, well, all three of them responded in one meeting. And God transformed them.

One of them became a tremendous soul winner. I don't know what happened to the other two. He just became a tremendous soul winner, so much so that in his church, he had a fellow who had just emigrated to Canada from Scotland.

And he was so excited about souls and people were getting saved. And this Scotch guy said, hey, I want to pay to fly to Scotland. I got all kinds of relatives and friends over there.

Will you go over there and try and win something for the Lord? And so he flew over to Scotland and led about 15 or 20 of these people to the Lord. He was ready to leave the ministry because his heart wasn't right. Their hearts weren't right.

And they knew that. They were fruitless. And that's not how God wants his people to be.

Sherwood Wirt, who was Billy Graham's right-hand man, he edited the Billy Graham Decision magazine for 25 years. Leonard Ravenhill had phoned him and said there's a revival in Canada. That's next door to heaven.

I took up to Canada, so he phoned me. I'd never met him before, but he phoned me. He got my phone number somewhere, somehow.

And I said, well, the meeting's right now in Winnipeg. God's working. He said, I'll fly down.

So he was there in Elam Chapel one night. He was sitting about the third row down from the front. And that particular night, I was preaching.

We had a marvelous sharing time that night. Terry and Evelyn Thiessen shared, and they later on became teams. He was a civil engineer and took early retirement so he could become a revival team.

And God used him greatly in this kind of work. Anyway, they gave their testimony that night. And Sherwood Wirt was there.

And before I finished preaching, people started coming forward. I finally had to quit preaching because the whole front of this church was just filled with people kneeling, praying. So then we filled the platform, and then we filled the choir loft.

And then we emptied the front pew all across the church so there'd be place for people to kneel. Then we had to empty the second pew. Then we had to empty the third row of pews.

And that's where Sherwood Wirt was. And he came to me afterwards, and here's what he said. He said, I've been involved in evangelism with Billy Graham on the largest scale possible, but he said, I have never in my life seen revival.

He said, this is revival. I can't explain what I hear, what I'm seeing. Then he told me this.

He said, you know, Billy's clean on top, but he said down below in the lower echelons of the movement, he said there's an awful lot of crud and politicking going on. I don't know what will happen when Billy dies. He said, we really need revival.

Then he told me about his wife, and they didn't get along. Matter of fact, you know, he, maybe I shouldn't say this, but he said he would have divorced his wife 25 years before, but he didn't want to hurt Billy Graham. They just lived in the same house.

She's dead now. He's remarried, but she got revived, too, by the way. And then he phoned me.

I was in meetings with Jewell Alliance in Edmonton, Canada. And he phoned one night, and he said, my wife met God. He said, we're going out together conducting afterglows.

He said, it's marvelous. He wrote a book called The Afterglow. You ought to buy it and read it.

He lays his heart on the table and tells what happened in his life, when self was in control, until Jesus took over. But he saw the power of God in revival, and that's what happened. Now, it says in our promise in John chapter 7, He that believes on the other's innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.

This he spoke of the Spirit, which they that believe in him should receive. Well, did he mean it, or didn't he mean it? You know, the tragic discrepancy among us Christians is this, that the Bible is still, there are 7,487 promises in the Bible. Why on the earth, why in the world are we living at the low level we're at? I mean, with all these promises from God.

We say they're exceeding great, and they are. They're precious, they are. They come from God, they did.

What more do we need than the promises of God? But somehow we're flaking out. You know, we're like this pulpit. We're kind of shaky, you know.

But we shouldn't be. We've got to learn how to stand on the promises of God. Be like Abraham.

Remember Romans chapter 4? He did not stagger at the promise of God for unbelief. He was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And that's the address we should live at.

We take the promises, we don't admire them. Sometimes all we do is admire them and stick them on the wall. And we don't really apply them.

And consequently, we don't see the power of God. I believe God was going to do it. I believe God was going to send revival.

Our people began to believe it. Not at the beginning, but eventually. It wasn't with me at the beginning either.

But eventually, we got to a place where we knew God was going to do something. We didn't know what. We had no idea.

But thank God for what he did at that particular time. But it's all related to this verse here. The rebellious dwell in a dry land.

You won't have this promise fulfilled in your life if you're a rebel against the will of God. Many years ago, before revival, I had a preacher in my pulpit, Cecil Carter from British Columbia County, a tremendous man of God. And he made a statement that kind of rocked me.

He said, is this in the Bible? Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And everybody said, yes. No, he said, that's not in the Bible.

I said to myself, now wait a minute, Cecil, you just goofed because that's in James chapter 4, verse 7. Then he said this. That's not what's in the Bible. Here's what's in the Bible.

Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. And then he explained.

You can't resist the devil unless you are submitted to God. And if you're not submitted to God in some area of your life, you will not have, in some area of your life, you will not have victory over the devil. And we've seen this happen, men, again and again.

In New Brunswick, a fellow named Dave White, he was an alcoholic, and he got saved eight months before I showed up in the area for meetings. And then he was in the meetings. Because for these eight months, he hadn't been sober hardly at all.

He was a Christian, but still just drunk all the time, it seemed. And he desperately, people were praying for him, laying hands on him, praying for him, encouraging him, reading books to him, loaning him stuff and all this. And nothing happened, you know.

But he was in our meetings. And when I had spoken this James 4, verse 7, you know, submit to God, resist the devil. He went to his pastor after and said, you've got to drive me into St. John's tomorrow because God showed me something right.

There's some things I have to make right. He had skipped bail 22 years before. The police had been looking for him for 22 years.

He'd been running around New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and so on, hiding here and there. The police hadn't found him for 22 years. And God showed him that, you've got to make things right.

You've got a lot of crud in the past. You've got to get this stuff, take care of it, take care of it properly, and you won't have any problem about the alcohol. So they went to St. John's.

They walked into the police headquarters. When he walked in, the chief of police was away, and the deputy chief was in charge, and he says, Dave White, where have you been hiding? We've been looking for you for 22 years. So he told them what he'd been doing.

Then he said, what are you doing here today? So he told them, I got saved. I just got revived. I want to be right with God.

I want to be right with God and make everything right and explain everything. And the deputy chief said, you know, three years ago a Baptist preacher led me to Christ, but I fell off the King's Highway into the ditch. With you guys coming here today, I'm back on the King's Highway again.

He said, Dave, listen, you go home. We're going to forget about it. We're going to destroy the record.

Nothing's against you. We're letting you go. And they let him go.

And you know what happened to a man? In 24 hours, the alcohol was gone totally because he had submitted to God. This is a major problem among Christian people. Maybe we're bitter against our wife.

Like a preacher in Canada came to me, and he said, I'm having some strange things happen in my head. He said, there's times when my whole mind goes black and dark. I can't see.

I can't walk. I can't do anything. I've been to the doctors.

They can't find any reason for it. He said, Bill, would you pray for me? I said, Henry, I'd be glad to pray for you. But I said, before we pray, I just looked to God, you know, and something came down.

And I said, Henry, is there somebody you can't forgive? And he stared at me and he said, how did you know? Well, I said, God kind of indicated that. I said, what's the problem? He said, it's my wife. He said, I'm very bitter against my wife because I think she kind of talked me into marrying her, and I really didn't want to marry her.

And he said, she's a marvelous woman. We've got three kids. I couldn't hope to get a better wife anywhere.

But he said, I've been bitter against you almost from the time we were married. I said, Henry, take care of it and see what happens. He went to his wife, made everything right, and these spells never ever returned.

They were gone. You know, God has different ways of getting us into a corner. It's called witch and corner.

Then all their wisdom is swallowed up, it says. They're at their wit's end. They cry unto God, it says in Psalms, in their troubles.

And he saves them out of their distresses. But God has a way of engineering things and bringing us to a point where there's no way out but up. Thank God for that, his faithfulness.

Some kid in a Bible college in Canada woke up one morning and discovered he had strong homosexual tendencies. He was horrified. He hated this idea.

He knew it was wrong. He'd never thought about it. He'd never entertained any of these things in his mind.

But there it was, strong as could be. He didn't want to talk to the staff about it for fear they'd kick him out of the school, which they might have done. Then a friend of mine was ministering at the school, and he went to him and told him the problem.

And my friend said to him, what is your attitude, your relation to your father and your mother? And the kid said, what in the world has that got to do with it? Never mind, he said. Just answer the question. And the kid said, I love my mother, but I hate my father because he's a skunk.

So my friend turned to Ephesians chapter 6 and read, you know, honor your father and your mother. And he said to this kid, it doesn't say honor your father, providing he's not a skunk. That's not what it says.

It says honor your father and your mother, period. And he went home, made things right with his dad, woke up the next morning, and the homosexual thing was totally gone. So it's the same thing as James 4, 7, the game.

Submit yourself therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will plead for you. He will flee. I said, please flee from me.

You know, I think almost half of the problems that Christians have could be answered, would be answered, if we were to deal with the thing God's talking to us about. So often people say, well, you know, I've prayed about this 50 times. The Lord hasn't told me anything.

I said, so God's a liar? No, he said, God isn't a liar. Well, I said, you're intimating as he is. Why? And then he'll say something.

Why are you saying that? Well, I said, because it says this. Then he shows them their work and their transgressions they have exceeded, and he opens their ear to discipline, and he commands that they return from iniquity. You're telling me God doesn't do that.

But God said he does that. The whole context there is very interesting. It goes like this.

It says, God never takes his eyes off the righteous, but with kings, it's in Job, but with kings are they on the throne. He establishes them forever, and they are exalted. And then comes an if.

If they be bound in fetters and held in cords of affliction, then what? Then he shows them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He's talking about the righteous. And he opens their ear to discipline, and he commands that they return from iniquity.

And there it is, plain as can be. So when people tell me God hasn't responded to their prayer, either he can't because they're full of sin and they're not going to deal with things, or they haven't even prayed because God has promised he'll show up. I remember one time they brought a pastor's wife to me, and they told me on the side, they said, we've been counseling with her for an hour or two, we can't get anywhere, and she's bitter, and she's angry, and she's mad, all the rest of it, and see if you can help her.

So we knelt at a pew at the front of the church. And I said, have you asked God to search your heart? Oh, she said, at least 50 times. So what did God tell you? She said, nothing.

I said, I don't believe it. So we got talking. I couldn't make any headway.

So finally, I looked to God, and he gave me the right word. And what I said was this, tell me, how do you like your husband's work? He was a pastor. And she just broke, and she wept for 10 minutes.

She hated the whole thing. She came from British Columbia, from mountain country. She was now in Saskatoon, you know, and they had a small church.

They were living in a basement suite, just one window in the cement wall, you know. She hated the whole thing. Filled with it.

But she said God didn't talk to her about anything. But I'll tell you, she made it right. She got it straightened out, got the place where she loved her little suite, and she loves Saskatchewan, even though there wasn't a mountain in 100 miles.

But dear people, it's a very important truth. Then in James chapter 5, is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church. Let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise them up. And then comes an if. If he have committed sin.

It doesn't say since he has committed sin. In some circles they're teaching if you're sick, it's because of sin. The Bible nowhere says that.

It may be. If he has committed sin, they should be forgiven. But remember, sins are not forgiven unless they are what? Unless they're confessed and forsaken.

He that covers his sins shall not prosper. Whoso confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy. Okay, what does it say next? It says confess your sins, your faults.

The English word fault is translated from a Greek word. Then in other places in the New Testament, it's translated with the word sin. So confess your fault.

One to others, the Greek says, one to others. And pray one for another that you may be healed. But we're afraid to let anyone else know we've got a problem.

We're full of pride. When everybody thinks we've got it all put together, we're a cool man, we're doing it right. And there's nothing wrong in my life.

Then the same person can spend 15 minutes talking about their sins and their failures. But the Bible says we're supposed to confess our faults one to another, one to others. You know, in Luke 19, it says many that believe came and confessed and showed their deeds.

And the Greek is very graphic. There it goes like this. Many that believe came and openly confessed and thoroughly showed their deeds.

And that last phrase means from top to toe. So that happened in the revival back in those days. Why shouldn't it happen today? Why are we so afraid to let anyone know that we're struggling with pornography or something else? I mean, I'm not any better than any person in the room here.

You're all in the same boat. We're sinners saved by the grace of God. And but for the grace of God, we could be doing anything.

Shooting people, raping people, all the rest of it. We could do any of that because of the fallen nature we have. So we're brothers in Christ.

We need to love one another, pray for one another, share with one another, pray for one another to be healed by the power of God. We're talking now particularly about the healing of the soul, which is more important to me than the healing of the body. Although our God does both.

He that believes on me, as the scripture said, out of his innermost being, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. And this tragic description I mentioned a few moments ago is this. You know, it's a funny thing.

If you bought a car and you told the car agent, I don't want some car, you know, that says 25 cents every time the motor turns over. I want a car that gets good mileage. You'll get 35 miles a gallon on this car.

You buy it and you get 18. Are you going to forget about it? Aren't you going to go back? I mean, there's a discrepancy between what he promised and what you're realizing. Aren't you going to go back to this guy and talk to him about the discrepancy and make it right? Or if you bought a rug and the rug was 10 by 12 and you paid for it, when they bring it to the house it's 4 by 6. Are you just going to accept that? No, there's a discrepancy between what I paid for, what I got, I know what to do.

I go right back to that rug place and I get the rug the right size. But it's a funny thing when it comes to the Christian life. The kingdom of God is not where I am, so we figure let's just stay where I am.

We shouldn't. We should look at the Word of God. What does the Bible say? 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.

That's normal New Testament Christianity. That's how it should be, Acts 13, 52. The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

You know, back in those days, if you weren't filled with the Holy Ghost, you were filled with the devil. Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? That's what Peter had to say to one of the church members there. And when Paul was talking to Elements the sorcerer, what did he say to him? He said, oh, full of all subtlety and all mischief, you child of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? So you're either filled with the Holy Spirit or filled with the devil.

Is it any different today? How am I to be filled with self? Sometimes people say, I'm not filled with the devil, but I'm filled with self. Years ago, God gave me a sermon which I entitled, The Demon of Self. There isn't all that much difference between an uncrucified self and between a demon.

They're both rebels against God. They both want to do their own thing and have their own way. I mentioned before about the afterglow.

We have these public meetings that go on for two hours, maybe two and a half hours. And then when that meeting was ended, we would have an afterglow. And we might have 50.

We might have 150. We might have sometimes had probably 300 people in one of the afterglows. We'd have maybe two or three concentric rows of chairs in a circle with an opening at both ends so people could get in and out.

Then we'd have a chair or two in the middle. And we'd sing a few choruses and have some people maybe share whose lives God had been touching. Then we'd just throw it open.

If you're struggling with sin and you need help, why don't you come and kneel at the chair and we'll pray for you. You know, some of those meetings went till 7 o'clock in the morning. And in those meetings, people who were maybe too proud to go forward in the public meetings, in the smaller meetings, somehow God got through to them.

There were hundreds of people that were changed, wonderfully changed, by the power of God. I talked about Martin Bowker yesterday. I had back with an evangelist in one of the afterglows.

He'd been in the meetings, but he never responded. But in the afterglow where people were getting honored, I remember a friend of mine who was a psychologist, a born-again believer, and all of that. And I met him one night after one of those meetings, the afterglow.

And I said, Hugh, what do you think? What do you think of what you're seeing? He said, I never thought I'd ever live to see anything like this. One of the doctors in Saskatoon, he said, we have been walking in the book of Acts for seven weeks. May it never end.

There may be some here today that are struggling with some particular problem. Maybe you've been praying. Others have prayed for you.

Others have encouraged you. You still don't have it. You're still struggling.

We're just so glad to pray with you. We have a chair here. If you'd like to come, kneel at the chair.

We'd be glad to pray with you, get other brethren to come and pray around you. And do feel free. We're not trying to push anybody.

We haven't done that at all in these meetings. But this may be exactly what you need. So if you have this need in your heart, if you come, I'm going to prolong this just a few moments.

If you'd like to be prayed with, now here's what we'll do. If you come, then we'll kneel with you. We'll counsel with you.

There are three steps into personal revival. We'll make these three steps plain to you. And we'll lead you to pray, and then we'll pray for you.

That's what we do in these afterglows. It's a marvelous thing there. That was about three or four years ago.

I was there recently again. We didn't have an afterglow this time. But we just had a marvelous time.

And oftentimes, when men get honest about their sin, and not ashamed to confess it to their brethren, then God comes through in a marvelous way. And so it's open for a few moments. If nobody comes, we'll close in prayer.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24249.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bill-mcleod/flowing-rivers/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

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

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

www.sermonindex.net