

# Personal Revival

by Bill McLeod

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*Bill McLeod emphasizes the necessity of personal revival through prayer, self-examination, and a deep desire for transformation in Christ.*

**Duration:** 44:31

**Scripture:** Deuteronomy 17:18-20, Psalm 139:23-24, Jeremiah 3:13, Hosea 5:6, Romans 6:1-4, Hebrews 11:6

**Topics:** "Personal Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares personal stories and experiences to illustrate the importance of acknowledging one's sins and seeking God's forgiveness. He recounts a childhood incident where he stole toys and later felt convicted by God to pay for them. He also mentions a pastor's wife who struggled with a speech impediment and how she was encouraged to thank God for it. The speaker emphasizes the need to search one's heart, accept God's conviction, and not blame others for one's own sins. He references Bible verses such as Psalm 139:23-24 and Jeremiah 3:13 to support his message.

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## Transcript

This morning, in speaking about the place of prayer and spiritual awakening, there's a couple of things I meant to mention and forgot to mention, so I'll mention them now. Charles Finney had two men, Abel Clary and a person they called Father Nash. He was not a Roman Catholic priest, but they called him Father Nash.

It was a term of endearment. When Finney was going somewhere for meetings, these two men would precede him by ten days, or possibly even two weeks, and find a place to stay and start to pray. They would pray eight and ten hours a day for a week or ten days or two weeks before he got there.

And he said, when I arrived, the revival had already started. And these men prayed. They said that Nash could be heard praying a mile away.

And people were afraid to walk past the house when he was praying for fear that power might fall on them. They had great respect for these men. But for years they served Finney in this way, and Finney gave total credit to these men.

And we don't think in terms like that today for some reason. In the Hebrides, Duncan Campbell told us about a group of men called the Praying Men, a place called Barvis, and it was incredible to read about

them, to hear about them. He said they come home from their work, they have their supper, and they go to bed right after supper, and they sleep until nine o'clock at night.

At nine o'clock they get up, and they pray until two o'clock in the morning. And they go to bed until seven o'clock. When they get up, have their breakfast and do their work, whatever their work is.

And this was their daily prayer program, from nine o'clock to two o'clock, on their faces before God in prayer. He gave us a practical illustration of what happened. He had gone to the Isle of Skye.

Now being in the Isle of Skye, the McLeod clan came from that particular island. There's, I don't know, maybe 4,000 people on the island, half are McDonalds and half are McLeods. One guy told me, I think his name was McDonald, he said all three neighbors are McLeods, you know.

Anyway, Campbell had gone there to reopen a church that had been closed for years. He started on Sunday, five people showed up. Monday he had five, and Tuesday he had five, and nothing was happening.

So he said he got a message across to the praying men and asked them to take the burden of Skye on their hearts. And the first night after these men prayed, 200 people showed up in the church. I think he said eight people were saved that night and a revival started.

And years ago I wrote Duncan Campbell and asked him if he would ask the praying men to pray for Saskatoon. And very likely they had something to do with what happened in Saskatoon also. I meant to mention that as I said this morning and forgot, but I thought you might be interested to hear.

I want to read from Romans chapter 6, verse 1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know you not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more. Death has no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he lives, he lives unto God. Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lust thereof.

Neither yield you your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. It's the easiest thing in the world to become totally satisfied with our present level of living in the Christian life. Do you want a simple illustration? You know when you come in the door of the building here and there's a place to put your rubbers? A lot of people don't wear rubbers anymore, but I still wear rubbers, you know, the older generation.

And you notice there's many levels there, you know. If you put them on the lower level, they'd be cold. When you put them back on, you try and put them on your shirt.

You put them on the top level, you get warmer, you know. Which is to say, I mean, we can live at a low level and be cold all our life. But if you get a little nearer to God, it gets a little warmer up there.

It gets a little warmer in a number of ways, pleasant ways. And sometimes ways that are difficult, but thank God for them. Somewhere in one of the lectures we mentioned, I think it was Tozer who said that the beginning of revival is to become thoroughly dissatisfied with your present state.

And I would say that's true. Thoroughly dissatisfied. Look at it this way.

Would you be happy if every Christian in the world was just like you are? Would you like that? Do you think that's a good thing? Well, think of it that way. The answer likely would be no, which of course means I really need a personal revival, a touch from God, a new walk. I need to be lifted up and made more like Him.

We were predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son. That's why He called us and saved us, so we could be like Christ. And we become like Christ, not all at once, but over a period of time by the grace of God.

In 2 Corinthians, there's a verse that runs like this. We all, with an unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. In a sense it's a gradual process, yes.

But the gradual process doesn't even happen until we commit ourselves completely to God and ask Him to work these miracles in our heart and life. I remember reading about a man, I forget his name now, but at one time he was so wicked that four American states forbade him to cross the state line into their state. He said, if we catch you inside this state, we'll stick you in jail.

He once rode a taxi down the streets of Chicago, firing a pistol out of both windows, just for Hillary and all. Jacobi was his name. He got saved.

He became the assistant pastor at the Moody Memorial Church in Chicago years ago. They said he was one of the most Christ-like people that you could ever meet. He was so transformed by the grace of God.

We have to desire that. God can do it, but we have to desire it. All right, to be thoroughly dissatisfied with ourselves, and then to pray that simple, simple prayer that God gave us in Psalm 139.

I don't know of a better prayer in the Bible anywhere, or a better prayer outside of the Bible, to pray than Psalm 139, 23 and 4. Search me, O God. Remember in one of the Psalms it begins by saying, Examine me, prove me, try me, judge me. All four words, in about two verses.

I think it starts with judge me. Judge me, examine me, prove me, try me. That's the order.

And so in Psalm 139, search me, O God. Search me. You know how it goes.

Jesus talked about this in Matthew chapter 7. The person who has a plank in his own eye, and is trying to take a splinter out of his brother's eye. And he said, You hypocrites! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's eye. Why is it that we can see other people's problems so clearly, but our own, we're blind to them.

You ever talk to a council of people, and it goes like this, Oh, I wish my wife would change. Boy, she's got problems, you know. Or, I wish my husband was changed.

Man, he's got problems. And then you ask this person, Would you mind asking God to search your heart? Maybe there's a problem there. And if they really pray it from the heart, often they just break, you know.

As the Holy Spirit begins to show them the things that are wrong, Search me, O God. In one of the other sessions, you may remember I mentioned this. Psalm 139 begins by saying, O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

And it automatically raises the question, Why then do I have to pray this prayer, search me and know me, if God already has searched me and knows me? It doesn't really make any sense. And yet it does. Because it's true that God knows every one of us absolutely perfectly.

Being the God of the universe, He has to. I need to know how God sees me. I need to know what God found when He searched me.

So while He knows all about me, I want God to show me what He knows about me, how He sees me, how I look to Him. It isn't really important how I look to others, except in a secondary sense. But it's very important how I look like to God, what I look like to God.

So the prayer is so simple. Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts.

And see if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. Do you know the one sin that most Christians do not regard as being sin is the sin of unbelief.

And it's the bottom line of all sin. When unbelief takes over, dear people, anything can take over. And sometimes does.

And we've seen Christians where this has happened. But Christians don't feel unbelief is a sin. They just think it's unfortunate.

People say things like this, you know, I've asked God a thousand times to give me more faith, and He never does. So what they're really saying is, I'm full of unbelief, but you can't blame me for it. I've really tried.

God hasn't done anything. What do we expect God to do? Drill a three-inch hole in our head and pour faith in? Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. There's ways of building your faith.

We can pray for this, Lord, increase our faith, the disciples prayed. That's fine, you can pray that way too. But if I neglect the God appointed means for increasing my faith, it's useless to pray for more faith.

7,487 promises, get to know them. We should at least be familiar with a couple of hundred of those promises, right? You know, when you're reading your Bible, a good practice would be, every time you come across a promise, put a big P in the margin. And after you've gone through the whole Bible, you'll really be surprised to see these P's everywhere, you know.

You know, the kings of Israel were supposed to write out, and this means handwrite, a copy of the Law of Moses. And the Law of Moses, first five books of Moses, are two-thirds the size of the New Testament. And the reason they were to do this was, well, there's a number of things in the context there.

One of them was this, so their heart would not be lifted up above their brethren. That was one of the things. I thought to myself years ago, my, if the kings of Israel had to handwrite a copy of the Law of Moses, why don't I try and do this? I decided to do the New Testament.

And I didn't handwrite, my handwriting is so bad, not even an angel could read it, so I used a typewriter. Typewriters were invented for me, I'm sure, and people like me. It took about two years to finish the New Testament because I only did it when I was home, never did it when I was on the road, I couldn't very well.

And I started with short books like 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, short in Jude, and got into longer books, and finally into Matthew, which is a long book, of course, 28 chapters. And you know something? It was such a blessing. You have to notice every word, every sentence, everything, in a new way when you write it out, you know.

And I mentioned this in a public meeting, and a friend of mine who's a professor of music at the Prairie Bible School, he decided to do this, only he is handwriting the Bible, and he's got a beautiful, legible hand. And he did some of the New Testament, and he got into the Old Testament, he got Psalms done and Proverbs done, I don't know how much of the Old Testament. He told me he's going to handwrite the whole Bible.

He's found it such a blessing. And it's not that he has a lot of spare time, he really doesn't have. But he's found it such a challenge and such a blessing.

And you get to the point finally where it doesn't matter what kind of problem comes along, something comes into your mind from the Word of God. God can't give you what you don't have, in that sense. When you know the Bible well and you have a problem to face, you look to God, and Bible verses begin to flood into your mind that you have stored away.

And that's so important. I finished the Psalms and Proverbs and the book of Isaiah. Oh, I got a blessing out of writing out Isaiah.

That was a challenge. That was a blessing. And I think I got Malachi and a few other books done, but just, it's wonderful to be able to do that.

All right, we begin then. Psalm 139, 23, and 24, searching, O God, to get alone with God and draw near to God in faith. Just ask the Lord to search your heart and accept everything God shows you.

Jeremiah 3.13 says, Only acknowledge your iniquity that you have transgressed against the Lord your God. Don't fight against things God shows you. You may be blaming somebody else for something you're doing.

You have to stop doing that. God says, Only acknowledge your iniquity. You know what it says in Hosea 5? God said, They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find him.

He has withdrawn himself from them. That doesn't seem fair. Here's Israel going, actually with animals to offer as a sacrifice to God.

They really mean business. They're seeking God, and God walks away. Okay, so read on in Hosea 5. And here's what you come to.

God said, I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face. So they were seeking the face of God, but not admitting their sin. And God walked away.

So I will go and return to my place until they acknowledge their offense and seek my face. We'll never find God just by seeking God if we ignore the sin problem. Because we're responsible for our sins.

We blame it on our sinful nature and on all kinds of things and people. I mean, it happened in the Garden of Eden. God taps Adam on the shoulder and says, What went wrong? He says, The woman that you gave me.

God taps her on the shoulder and she says, The devil. God taps the devil on the shoulder and he had more honor than either of them had. He never said anything.

But that's where it all began. My daughter, Judy, who is now in her 50s, when she was a little child, we were at Pine Falls Manifold, and my wife came from, it was Christmas time, we were there for Christmas. And I happened to look out the window just in time to see Judy come out behind Lois, who was a couple years younger, and push her head first in a great big snow bag.

So we called them in. And I said, Judy, why did you do it? And she stood like this, stared me in the face, and she says, I didn't do it. You know, we fathers have a certain, well, it goes like this.

Judith Lynn McLeod. Don't you lie to me. I saw you do it.

I was looking out the window. Well, Daddy, it really wasn't me. It was this hand that did it.

It's the best she could think of. It goes back to the Garden of Eden. Where did she get it from? She got it from me.

Where did I get it from? From my dad. Where did he get it from? From his dad. It goes all the way back, you know.

We love to blame someone else or something else for our personal problems, and it doesn't work. With God, he walks away, remember? He hides. Until we acknowledge our offense.

You know what the Hebrew language actually says there? Until they be guilty. That's the Hebrew. I will go and return to my place until they be guilty.

And when we're guilty before God, God is there to forgive us and cleanse us from all our iniquity, no matter what. I've heard people confess some awful, awful, awful things over the years. And seeing God wipe it away, forgive it, as he's promised, he freely forgives us all trespasses.

So be encouraged in that area. But you have to let down the defenses and not say, well, Lord, you can go back six years, but not seven, because seven years ago, I did something. I don't want to be fussing around with that, you know.

You have to give God the key to all the past. Let him search as far back as he wants. And sometimes it gets painful.

You know, when I was a little kid, maybe six or seven, I had a couple of pals. We used to go to the 5, 10, 15 cent store. They don't have them anymore, but they had one in Winnipeg then.

And I would go, and we'd line this thing up. We had it all figured out. The first guy would go along, and he'd pick up a toy and admire it, and then set it right on the edge of the counter.

The second guy would come along and hit it accidentally with his elbow and knock it on the floor. The third guy would come along and bend down the top of his shoes and get it in his pocket, see. We managed to get away with a lot of toys that way, you know.

And here a few years ago in the States, the Lord reminded me about this. He said, I want you to contact this store and pay for those toys you stole. I said, God, I was just a little kid.

God says, I know. I want you to do that. So I did.

I wrote out a check and wrote a letter and explained, put a tract in. God had probably some other reason for wanting me to do that. And I struggled a little bit, but I had to do it.

And so God made me do something. Let's drag something up that happened years ago. I remember I got a phone call one time from a pastor's wife, and she was really crying.

And she said, you know, God is asking me to do something. I want to do it. And I said, what is it? When she was a child, she was extremely deceitful.

And her parents never ever caught on. She always blamed her sisters or her brothers. She never once got blamed for it.

And her mother was always bragging about her. What a beautiful angel-like child she was. And she says, now the Lord wants me to tell my mother the truth.

And she says, you know, it'll kill my mom. I says, yes, it'll kill you too. And she agreed.

And finally she had to go and do it. So God, you know, He comes. He is firm.

He won't ask you to do something you can't do. The will of God is three things, good, acceptable, and perfect. If it's good, it's not bad.

If it's acceptable, it's something you can do. If it's perfect, you can't improve on it. So why not go for it? Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me. You know, there are eight things that Israel was told not to covet. They were not to covet their neighbor's wife, or his house, or his ox, or his ass, or his servant, his manservant, or his maidservant, or anything that he owned.

Do you covet something somebody else has? You know, sometimes people, they wish God had made them different. The nose is too big or too small. The eyes are too far apart, too close together.

The ears are too big. John R. Rice, I remember one time he said that he had ears so big and floppy that somebody said, looking at him from behind, he looked like a taxi cab with the doors open, you know. So, well, he had to accept that.

You know, you can't change those things. But, thank God. You know, Zacchaeus was made small, and someone said his smallness became his salvation.

Had he been of a normal height, he could have looked over and seen what was going on and just walked away. But he couldn't see, so he had to climb a tree to see. And Jesus got him then, you know.

So, thank God for the way he's made you. In meetings one time, they brought a girl to me for counseling, and I couldn't get her to say a word, you know. And I plodded with her and said, well, can't you tell me what the point is? She was crying, you know.

I said, can't you tell me what the problem is? And finally she got up and left. The next night they brought her back again, crying her heart out. And again I gently dealt with her and tried to get her to tell me what the problem was, and finally she opened her mouth.

It took her about three minutes to say, I can't talk. Well, I didn't know she had this problem. I mean, it took her a good three minutes to say, I can't talk.

So I said, have you ever thanked God for this affliction? She shook her head so violently it almost flew off her shoulders, you know. Thank God for it. But that's what I suggested.

And so I read, or I quoted to her from Exodus, where God said, when Moses said he was of slow speech, God said, who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the dumb or the deaf or the seeing or the blind? Have not I the Lord? I said, dear girl, I said, listen, Jesus made you the way you are. Why don't you thank him for it? And finally she shook her head. And my song and I were just there.

Now I said, we led her through the steps, you know, just to thank God, first of all, for the way he made her, and then to seek the face of God. And she really met God. And then we drove her home.

She was in the back seat. And all of a sudden she started to sing. And she started to sing songs, and she started to talk and talk and talk.

And my son, he says, do you hear what I hear? And I says, yes. Don't say a word. Let her go.

It was beautiful. She wrote me a letter months later. She said, you know, I had so many problems because I was so bitter against God for the way he made me.

But she said, they're all gone except one tiny little thing, and I'll have this licked in a couple of days. All right. Search me, O God.

What is it that's keeping the blessing of God away? Unbelief? Covetous spirit? What is it? The second thing, of course, is to deal with the self problem because, well, there's a saying that self is the factory that manufactures the sin. And what we do, we deal with the finished product. When we should be asking God to bomb the factory, God wants to deal with his deeper self problem that prevents us from serving him.

No, we can deal with sin all our life. I remember hearing a story about a fellow. He lived up, he was a trapper in northern Quebec, a Catholic, but he didn't get to church once in five years.

And he was out in Montreal, and he happened to meet a friend of his who was also a Catholic from the church where he really had his membership. And this guy says, Hey, man, you haven't been in church for about almost five years. You're a lapsed Catholic.

Well, he says, I live in the wilderness, and there's no church up where I am, and there's just no way I can get to Mass, and so there's nothing I can do about it. He says, You can fly out. You can fly out.

You should fly out and get to Mass. You know, in the Catholic Church, you have two sins, venial sins and mortal sins. Venial sins are not that important.

Mortal sins, if you die with a mortal sin in your conscience, you'll likely go to hell, you see. So the trapper said, Well, you know, he said, for venial sins it's too costly to fly out, and for mortal sins it's too risky. You know, sometimes we categorize sin in the same way.

We've got mortal sins and venial sins, and the mortal sins we deal with, and the venial sins we don't worry about them, and so it's sort of the other way around. But, dear people, sin is sin. My sins, your sins, help to nail Christ to the cross.

He was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. And so, the self problem. I need to die.

You know, in Job 29, 30, and 31, I think there's 191 verses, and there's over 90... Oh, pardon me, I got it the wrong way. There's over 90 verses, and there's 196 references in those three chapters to I, me, my, or myself. I used to wonder what Job's problem was, you know.

He was a good man, it says, a perfect man, upright, sincere person, feared evil, and all of this. But obviously there were some problems there. And as I was studying Job 29 and 31, I saw what the problem was.

It was an eye problem. He was saying things like this, I was eyes to the blind, I was feet to the lame, I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, I broke the jaws of the wicked and plucked the spoil out of their teeth, I brought the naked to my house and clothed them, my righteousness I hold fast, I will not let it go. And he was really stuck on all these great, wonderful things he was doing, the wonderful person he was, you know.

So God put him through the mill. He said things like this, he runs on me like a giant, he breaks me with breach upon breach, he takes me by the neck and he shakes me, he sets me up for his target, the arrows of the Almighty are within my bosom, the poison were off as drinking up my spirit. God really broke him.

And when God was through, the same man who said all those wonderful things about himself now said, behold, I am vile. I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes. So what happened? God dealt with the self problem.

And it's a much deeper problem than the sin problem is. And it's the reason for the sin problem. You remember in Romans chapter 12 it tells us to present our body as a living sacrifice? What's the next word? Do you remember? A living sacrifice? Holy.

Holy. So if I present my body to my God as a living sacrifice, I first of all got to deal with a sin. For the sacrifice will not be holy and God cannot accept it.

When we come to Christ as a sinner, we come just as I am without one plea. When I come as a Christian, it's not that way. I have to come acknowledging my sin, my pride, my coldness, my critical spirit, or whatever it happens to be that's contrary to the word of God and God's remedies across.

Colossians 3.3 says you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. Colossians 3.5 says therefore mortify the deeds of the body. So what he's saying is this.

You're dead, now die. You're dead, now die. God sees every Christian as being already crucified with Christ.

The New Testament, in different places of course, teaches we're crucified with Christ, we're dead with Christ, we're buried with Christ, and we're risen with Christ. It even teaches that we're ascended with Christ, seated in the heavenlies. That's how God sees us.

That's how God wants us to see ourselves. So in Romans 6, it says this, verse 6, knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed or rendered powerless or annulled, as some translations say, that from now on we should not serve sin. And then verses 10 and 11 tell us how to enter into this particular experience.

He says we are to reckon ourselves, first of all verse 10, in that he died, that's Christ, he died unto sin or concerning sin once, but in that he lives, he lives unto God. Likewise, I looked this word up in the Greek, it simply means after the same fashion, in the same manner. Likewise, reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have you ever done that? What does it mean to reckon? The Greek word reckon has many English equivalents in the New Testament, words like esteem, count, account, believe, think, or impute. They're all translated from the same Greek word. So he's saying to us we should count ourselves to be crucified with Christ.

We should esteem this to be true. We should think it. We should believe it.

Likewise, reckon. Reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God. And the thing that immediately happens is this when we get to this point.

We say, well I know myself. There's no way I can live this way. No point in trying.

God doesn't say try, he says reckon. It's a faith reckoning. By faith you reckon that you are what God says you are.

It then becomes God's responsibility to make this a reality in our experience. That's why he says through Jesus Christ, our Lord. It's by his power, not by mine.

Sam Jones was a famous Southern Methodist evangelist, a contemporary of Dwight on Moody's, a man greatly used of God. As a matter of fact, if by reason of bad planning they both had crusades in the same city at the same time, Jones got the biggest crowds. And he used to twit Moody.

He'd say, Moody, you can have my overflow if you want. And Moody didn't mind. There was no jealousy between them.

But you know, Jones had been an alcoholic, got saved, and had victory over alcohol for years. But in the middle of a crusade in a hotel room one day, the old lust for liquor returned. And it was so strong, he started for the door.

He said, Oh God, can't you do a better job than this? That was it. God touched him. He never had an interest in liquor ever again in his walk with God.

It was all gone. It was a hard cry. The words don't matter so much now.

But Jesus Christ can do it. One of my churches, this fellow came. He told me when he was, he started drinking when he was three or four years old.

His parents gave him liquor first then. And he was quite a tap dancer. He was a fighter, a boozier.

He couldn't read or write. And he got saved, you know. He was a member of one of my churches years ago.

And he came to me after a service. And he said, pastor, and he was crying, you know, he said, When I got saved, God cleared up my mind, my heart. And he said, I quit alcohol.

I quit all these godless things I was doing. But I can't lick tobacco. I just can't lick it.

And I want to be a clear testimony for Jesus. Can you help me? I said, No, I'm sorry. I can't.

But Jesus can. And we knelt. It was so simple.

We just knelt there. And we wept and called on God. And God took it out of his heart.

And it was all gone. He went home and threw his tobacco in the stove. You can't do that nowadays.

You don't have those kind of stoves. But in those days you could. There's some advantage we used to have that we've forgotten about.

And Joe Minney walked with God until he passed away. Jesus Christ can do it. Transformed we sing by grace divine.

The glory shall be thine. To thy most holy will, O Lord, I now my all resign. Don't look at the past failures.

Don't look into your own heart. It's as looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. So in Romans chapter 8 it says this, If you live after the flesh, you will die.

If you through the Spirit do mortify, that means put to death, the deeds of the body, you will live. It's through the Holy Spirit that we mortify or put to death that sinful nature we have. It will always be there.

But under God's control, sin, self, dying with Jesus, we sing in one of our songs, by death's reckoned mind, living with Jesus, a new life, divine. And over the years we've seen many, many people who've experienced this, met God at the cross, being totally transformed, the old problems dealt with by the power of God, and He's the only one that can do it. He's waiting for us to yield ourselves unto Him.

I notice here in Romans chapter 6 that after we reckon ourselves to be dead to sin but alive to God, the word yield occurs three times. After this happens, we begin yielding to God, yielding to God. But first of all, to reckon myself by faith to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ.

The third simple step, of course, is to be filled with the Spirit of God. It should be obvious, and often isn't, that God cannot superimpose the Holy Spirit on an uncrucified self. We shouldn't be asking God to fill me with the Holy Spirit when I know that self is not crucified.

So I have to be emptied before I can be filled. You know, being filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5, verse 18, it is not an option. It is a command to be obeyed.

Be not drunk with wine is not a command. Yes, it is. But be filled with the Spirit.

I remember talking with a lady one time and she said, You know, I've taught Sunday school all my life. I became a Christian when I was a child. I've walked with God all my life.

But I just don't have any joy and I don't have any peace and I don't have any power and I don't know what's wrong. I said, Do you have any idea what it means to be filled with the Spirit? She said, No, that's for the apostles, isn't it? And people like that. So we looked at Ephesians 5, verse 18, and we talked about that a while.

We talked about the self-prompt she dealt with that. She asked the Lord to fill her with the Holy Spirit. You know, she wasn't even able to talk afterwards.

God had really met her. She'd never thought of this before, that she could be filled with the Holy Spirit. And we can be.

After meeting one time, I saw a lady standing with a man, it was her husband. And the minute I was through counseling, she dragged him over and she says to me, He's a backslider. Talk to him, she said.

Well, he was a very unwilling charlie, you know. And so we went in the back room and I began to talk to him. He says, Preacher Lord, I just came along to keep peace, he said.

If I didn't come, she'd be yakking at me for a week, he said. So I turned to her and I said, You're a Christian? Of course I'm a Christian, she said. I said, Are you walking with God? Are you filled with the Spirit of God? Yes, she said.

I speak in tongues 30 minutes every day. I said, Now, wait a minute. I didn't ask you to speak in tongues 30 minutes a day.

I asked you if you're filled with the Holy Spirit. Well, she said, That's the same thing. I said, No, it's not.

I said, The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith. Do you have these things? Well, she said, I have a few problems. Her husband was shaking his head up and down.

I said, Tell me about your little problems. Well, she said, I'm terribly jealous of my husband. Yeah, he knew all about that.

And then she said, You know, sometimes when I lose my temper, I blaspheme God. And I said, Sister, you are not filled with the Spirit of God. You need to meet God.

You need to repent and turn away from yourself. And we knelt there. And he just stood and watched, you know.

And that gal really met God. She really met God. So she's dragging him because he's backslidden.

What was she? You know. She had a deeper need than he had because, I mean, he wasn't a Christian even, but... She was so... You know, when she dragged this gal, she had a triumphant look on her face. Talk to him.

He's backslidden. She was as backslidden in a sense as he was. You know.

Didn't understand it. All right. We have promises here too.

I will pour water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon your seed and my blessing on your offspring and they shall spring up as among the grasses, willows by the water course. There's so many statements of this kind in the Bible.

It shows us that God is just waiting. He is just waiting to fill us. He's just looking for an empty vessel.

That's all. Be you not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, and be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit. It's interesting.

When the apostle Paul was converted and God sent Ananias to pray for Paul that his sight might be restored, God said nothing at all about being filled with the Spirit. But when Ananias laid his hands on Paul, he said, Why did he add that? Because it was commonly understood back in those days to become a Christian, now you need to be filled with the Spirit of God. It was just taken for granted.

We don't take it for granted anymore. And we're quite satisfied to live at a different level, at a lower level. So basically, deal with sin, deal with self, deal with the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit.

And so we yield to God, and by faith claim the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I read of a man who became an outstanding American Christian worker. He went forward in the meeting.

An invitation had been given for people who wanted to be filled with the Spirit to come forward. And he went forward and knelt and prayed a while, came back and sat down, and a friend of his leaned forward from a pew behind, tapped him on the shoulder and said, Why did you go forward? He said, Because I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He said, Did you receive? He said, Yes, I did.

He said, How do you feel? He said, I didn't ask for feeling, I asked for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But his life afterwards showed very clearly that he'd met with God, and he'd been filled with the Spirit at that particular time. So we're not asking for a feeling.

We should know from the Word of God that God has many different ways of working. He's a God of infinite variety, which is true when He's dealing with people. Somebody has an experience, and then they expect everybody else should have the same kind of experience.

Don't expect that. Don't seek that. Let God be God as He wants to be in your life.

You're a special person to God as a Christian believer. And so Luke 11.13 says, If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Dwight L. Moody had the largest Sunday school in Chicago.

And two Methodist ladies began attending his church, and they got along with him one time and said, Mr. Moody, you need to be filled with the Spirit. And he was really indignant. Filled with the Spirit? I've got the biggest Sunday school in Chicago.

What do you mean I need to be filled with the Spirit? We're having conversions right along, you know. They kept talking to him. I need to be filled with the Spirit.

Finally, he asked them to pray for him. And for a six-month period, they prayed for him. And he said he was just totally miserable in his walk with God.

Totally miserable. And then one day, walking down the street, he said, Jesus Christ revealed Himself to me. And he had a meeting with God that was so powerful, he ran to a house nearby where a friend of his lived, asked if he could have a room to be alone for some hours.

And there for hours, he just knelt and wept before God. And he was filled with the Holy Spirit and filled with the love of God. He said he had such love in his soul, he felt he could take, he said, the whole world into his heart.

And God did something deep and powerful and special because two ladies were concerned, and they recognized he's a good man, but he's not really filled with the Spirit of God. I think that's all I'll say.

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