

The Tabernacle - His Rightful Place in Our Hearts

by Billy Strachan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's will and not man's opinion in putting the Ark of the Covenant and the living Christ in their rightful place in our hearts.

Duration: 1:01:33

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 3:23, John 8:52, Revelation 1:10-15

Topics: "Tabernacle"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of living a life surrendered to God. They describe starting each day by acknowledging God's presence and allowing Him to work through them. The speaker also highlights the significance of the exchanged life in the gospel of Jesus Christ, where believers allow God to work in and through them. They discuss the concept of entering into the presence of God and experiencing His power and guidance. The sermon also touches on the story of Moses and the distribution of carts among the Levites, highlighting the role of the Kohathites who were to carry their burdens on their shoulders instead of using carts.

Transcript

Well, good evening and thank you for faithfully coming out week by week for this large journey that we've made straight in through the gate and down that pathway of blessing, straight into the very heart of God and as pictured here in the Ark of the Covenant. Now, you will notice that there are actually two things here and you have to have it explained to you. The Ark is actually the lower half which is a wooden box, wood overlaid with gold.

Its measurements in Exodus are specified specifically, but then on top of it is the lid. Now, the lid has no gold, no wood attached to it. The lid is pure gold and the actual ornamental cherubim and the lid form one piece.

They are all sort of molded in one and the entire lid is referred to as the mercy seat. So, the Ark is actually the lower half the box upon which is the mercy seat. Now, there was just above the mercy seat, right in the middle where the eyes of the cherubim would meet where they're staring, there was a very bright light and that bright light was known as the Shekinah glory.

That was the presence, the indicated presence of the Almighty in the Holy of Holies with that light above the mercy seat indicating his living presence there. From the outside it was a pillar of cloud and at night the cloud glowed, but in the actual Holy of Holies there was this very piercing bright light in the middle there called the Shekinah glory above the mercy seat and that's why when the priest went in once a year, he had to carry the incense burner inside the veil so that the smoke from the incense burner would dim the light so that he would be capable of being in the presence of the Almighty without being blinded. And also, you will read in your Bible that whenever they wanted to know God's mind on a matter, the priest would come in and he would put on what was known as a terephim, some sort of breastplate upon which were the rows of stones, of precious stones.

Each of those stones, its Hebrew name began with one of the Hebrew consonants and there was a Hebrew consonant for each stone and all of the consonants in their alphabet were there on the stonework. Now Hebrew was a language and is a language that used consonants only. It was later that they added vowel points, small dots between the consonants that indicated vowels, but in the main it was a language written totally with consonants.

That meant as the priest went in and sought the will of the Lord, something of the light of the Shekinah glory reflected off the consonants. And they put in behind these stones what is known in scripture as Urim and Thummim. What that Urim and Thummim was is not too clear, although some Jewish scholars today have gotten near enough to believing that the Urim was uranium in content, some radioactive substance that would be there encouched in this ephod around his neck.

It wasn't a terephim, it was an ephod and it had something to do with being able to catch and reflect the light off the stones. So in actual fact, God could speak to the priest by the use of the consonants. He could spell out the words and they could get a message direct from God and that's why even right through to the book of the day of the judges you found Phineas putting on the ephod and still going into the tabernacle to get a message and a decision from God as to whether or not they should go up to battle.

And that tabernacle that you see there was still in existence in Shiloh in King David's day. It lasted right through until David's day. That was the tabernacle that Samuel went to and Eli sat in a seat outside the door, the veil.

But David made ready for replacing it with Solomon's temple. He prepared everything, all the money, the drawings, everything, all that they needed and then when Solomon took the throne he had it built up, the Solomon's temple. God's glory filled this, God's glory filled Solomon's temple.

When Solomon's temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, there is a list of the articles that he pilaged from the temple because this by that time had worn done and was buried. And they did not list in the list of the things they took any of the particular pieces of furniture such as the table of incense, the table of showbread, the lamp or the ark. And so many Jewish scholars believe that the devout who truly believed in the Lord with all their heart, seeing the advance of Nebuchadnezzar's threat and the stubbornness of the king to go out and surrender, already secretly removed the furniture from the temple and buried it somewhere in the Middle East.

It's never been seen since and of course Solomon's temple was completely destroyed and then God ordered that it be replaced after the 70 years with Zerubbabel's temple. And that was a smaller one and it had nothing like the glory that was attached to Solomon's temple and then that one was destroyed. The temple that was in Jerusalem in the day of the Lord, the Lord never ordered to be built, nor was God ever

in it, nor did his glory ever rest upon it.

God's glory filled Zerubbabel's temple, Solomon's temple, the tabernacle, but never the temple in Jerusalem in the day that the Lord walked the streets of Jerusalem. That temple was built by Herod out of political guile to win the right to rule the Jewish people though he himself was an Edomite. And as long as he gave them the temple and a gold-encrusted, jewel-encrusted door to the temple, they submitted to his rulership.

But God was never in that temple. The only time he was ever anywhere near it was in the person of Christ because the New Testament tells us in the epistle to the Corinthians that God was in Christ reconciling himself to the world. So that from God in a garden with Adam and Eve and God under a tree with Abraham and God in the tabernacle, God in the temple, God in the smaller temple, it was God in Christ.

And the whole reason that the ark has never been found, you will find declared in Jeremiah chapter 3 that when I finally establish you as a nation within the land I promised, I'm going to take the ark out of your mind and out of your remembrance and you will never see it again. And the reason they don't need the ark again is that it was but a shadow, a picture of the presence of the Almighty God that had come down into the planet to have fellowship with his believing people. And we don't need that anymore because now we don't need the shadow, we've got the substance.

We possess Jesus Christ in our hearts wherever we are. He has replaced the ark with his living person inside us. Now in that ark, the lower box, there were certain items.

These are declared in Hebrews 9 where we read this, then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly or earthly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick and the table and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the holy of holies, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, Aaron's rod that budded and the tables of the covenant and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat of which we cannot now speak particularly.

Now the reason in Hebrews it has mentioned that the little prayer censer was inside the holy of holies with the ark and not where I showed you last week outside in the holy place is because the writer to Hebrews is describing at this time the great day of atonement, that day when the priest took it in one day a year. That's why it's written that way here. But inside the box was the pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the law.

In other words, the ark that represented Christ contained the evidences for your faith. The pot of manna is typifying the sealing of the Holy Spirit. Every morning they woke up in the wilderness, there it was on the ground, manna, a food that fell from heaven, small, white, round, they could pick it up in the cool of the day, bake it, eat it, but as soon as it got hot, it melted.

And they called it manna, which was a Hebrew word that meant what is it? So they went out every day to eat whatever it was. And whenever it was, they saw it and said to each other, I'm going for some, what is it? And that's what they eat. Now the amazing thing is it was only meant to sustain them until they enjoyed fullness of the fruit of the promised land.

So when God brought his children out of Egypt, unconditionally, they couldn't divide the Red Sea, he did that for them. It was to take them into the land of promise and to give them a plentiful life, an abundant life with tremendous provision, fruit of the land, everything they needed. Deuteronomy chapter 1 verse 3 tells us there was just 11 days journey from this side of the Red Sea till they entered the promised land.

11 days journey and they took 40 years to do it. They must have had a bus service like FlixBus. But the reason for that was the children of Israel wandered for 40 years.

Sometimes they were as near to entering the land when they turn and go away again. And they rebelled and wouldn't go in. Now the amazing thing is that after 40 years, every morning they got up, it was still there in the ground.

Manna, what is it? And it tasted like wafers and honey. But by that time they got so fed up with the stuff, they were baking it in pans, making porridge of it, making cakes of it. They were having it in all sorts of different fashions.

If you went there for a visit, you would be saying, what's for breakfast? They'd say, manna. And you'd say, oh, that's nice. I haven't had any of that.

I'd love to taste it. And they'd say, don't be too big a hurry. Why? That's what you're getting for lunch.

But we've had it for breakfast, I know, and you're going to get it for supper too. But don't worry, we'll try to vary it. We'll have it porridge in the morning, baked in the afternoon and fried in the evening.

We'll try to make it different. But the funny thing is, it's always there. It's all we've got and it's there every day.

And it was God's sustaining presence, but not his satisfying presence. And it's a beautiful picture of the sealing of the spirit because every morning they woke up, there was that little something, just like a wafer with honey, just a smidgen, just a taste of God's provision that made them aware he's still with us. He's still there.

He's still sustaining, but we're not yet satisfied. That's the sealing of the spirit. And any believer that's born again, wakes up every morning and knows I possess God.

I am a child of God because I have the witness of the spirit with my spirit that I am a child of God, even if they're not enjoying the fullness of a fellowship with God. But you will read in the book of Joshua that the day and the hour they crossed over into Canaan, that day the manna ceased. It never again fell all through history because they'd arrived at the place of the enjoyment of the fullness of a fellowship with the living God.

And so the ark contains evidence number one of your faith. In that box was the witness of the spirit, the sealing of the spirit. The second thing it contained was Aaron's rod that budded.

Now that rod typified acceptable service for God. There were 250 men that were excellent men, men of renown and integrity that came and complained to Moses and Aaron about Aaron being the high priest. They accused Moses of putting one of his family into one of the top jobs.

When we're all as good as he is, in fact some of us are better than he is, and they were because he was a weak man, was Aaron, but the thing is God chose them. They knew they were strong and ought to be in

that position but God hadn't chosen them and they complained. Now God opened the ground up and swallowed Dathan and Abiram, but you'll find that he took the rest of them and ordered Moses to lay up before him all the rods of the officers, the rod of service.

And he says and I'll show you the one that I've chosen and they all came in with the rods and placed them up in the tabernacle before the Lord and everybody withdrew. And in the morning when they went back in Aaron's rod had had a miracle. Now remember it was a rod made of wood, no longer attached to the ground.

Remember what we discovered earlier, cut down, cut up, stood up. And here is a rod that could not have any sustenance from the soil. It was a dead stick and yet it had a miracle in that it had blossomed, buddied, and was covered with almonds.

All in one night. Blossomed, buddied, and brought forth fruit. The three little things that we all would love to see in our service of the Lord.

That in though we are a weak dead Christian, we would be in such an intimate relationship with him, that we would blossom with a resurrection newness every morning. Because it was evident that that stick had a resurrection life, a new life from above and not from below, from heaven not from the earth. And not only was it blossoming with a freshness that morning, it was budding and the budding came to fruitfulness.

These are the things we aim at in our service and in our daily walk. And it proved that Aaron was God's chosen. And when that ceremony was finished, this is put that into the box, that rod that budded, blossomed, and brought forth fruit.

Because that's one of the evidences of an intimate relationship with Christ. You not only have the seeming of the spirit, but you have as though you're a weak piece of wood, a weak human being. You have a freshness every morning that can only be contributed to a divine source of supply from above and not from the earth or from yourself.

And every day you're budding with newness and bringing forth fruitfulness. And the third evidence of your faith that's carried in the box is the tables of the covenant, the tables of the law. Now you could never keep the law to become a Christian, but the minute you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, who took the punishment for your inability to keep the law and be like God, you then ask him to come into your life.

And when the Savior comes into your life, you're receiving into your life the only one that ever kept the law, the law keeper, Jesus Christ. So that just as you have the tables of the covenant inside the box, you have the law keeper inside your heart. So that one of the evidences of an intimate relationship right in the holy of holy places in your heart, because remember this and hear the things all coming together, your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost that does dwell in you.

Your holy of holies is no longer in veils, your holy of holies is in your very life. And deep down inside you don't have an ark, you have Christ. And you have the witness of the Spirit, you have the witness of the resurrection, fullness of Christ in your daily budding forth with newness of life and fruitfulness in service.

And more than that, people will observe that you keep the law. But you'll know the secret, it isn't me keeping it, it's him keeping it for me. So if I don't steal today, it's not because I've stopped being a thief, it's because today the relationship I have to Jesus, that his honest life is being displayed through me.

If you don't murder today, it's not because you couldn't, it's because you were in such an intimate relationship with your indwelling Savior that he who never commits murder was in such a control of your life that that day you didn't commit any murder. But you're always weak, but you have the law keeper within who keeps the law through you. Now these are the evidences of your faith carried in the ark, just as they are the evidences of your faith in the person of Christ.

But the great challenge about this ark is the challenge of putting the ark in its rightful place in the hearts of God's people. Just as the biggest challenge of the church today, which is the final message of the tabernacle, is to put the living Christ who replaced the ark in his rightful place in your heart and in my heart today. Now at one time they had the ark, but it was never where it ought to be.

And we read in the first book of Chronicles, in the thirteenth chapter, that there came a day when sensing the value of the ark, which for them typified the presence of God with the contents of the faith, they wanted it back in the lives of the people, back in its central position. Now it's good to want that, and it's good to be sincere about that, but there's a right and a wrong way of putting God where he ought to be. And we read in one Chronicles 13, and David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds and with every leader.

And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, if it seem good to you, and that it be of the Lord our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves to us, and let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we inquire not at it in the days of King Saul. Now isn't it interesting, the minute they rejected God as their king, and asked for an earthly king, from the day they got the earthly leader, they ignored the presence of God. Get that? The day that you acknowledge any other person as king and leader of your life, other than God as your king, from that day forth you ignore Christ.

And they'd ignored him all the time, all the 40 years that King Saul had ruled over them. But now he's dead, and David has said, let's put God back where he ought to be. In other words, he was longing for revival.

And that's a word that's so bandied around in our day and age, and all over Britain people are praying for revival. Let's get Jesus Christ in his rightful place in the hearts of these people, and then we'll see God being re-established in our land, and things get better. Now it's a great idea, but be careful how you do it.

Because we read here that all the congregations said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. And of course that is always the biggest mistake you can make, in doing something that's right in the eyes of the people, and it's not necessarily right in the eyes of God. Never take a democratic opinion as to how to put Jesus Christ right in your heart.

Because every denomination, every doctrinal presenter, is sure to have his democratic choice of how you can know that the ark is where it ought to be, where Christ is where he ought to be. And there are many pundits of methods, and they use as their proof that we have a big majority that believe it. So surely if the majority in this church believe this is the way to put God where he ought to be, then that makes it right.

No it doesn't. There was a time even in the Bible when two kings wanted to go to war, and they inquired of all the prophets, and they all said go up and go to battle. And so one king turned to the other and says have we inquired of everybody? Oh he says there's just one that we haven't talked to.

So why don't you talk to him? He says I don't like him. So why not? He says he always tells me what I ought to hear, not what I want to hear. And he says oh don't say that, bring him.

So they fetched Micaiah, and Micaiah came and all the other guys took him aside and said don't go in there and upset the apple cart. We have all agreed, we've made our democratic prophecy, we've all agreed to encourage the king to go up to battle. And Micaiah said well I can go no further than beyond the word of the Lord.

And so he marched and the king said well speak unto us. Should I or should I not go up to battle? He says oh go, go. But the very way he said it, the king knew he didn't like it.

That's the funny thing about people. They don't like to hear what they ought to hear, but they can tell you when you're telling them what they want to hear when you don't normally do that. And I've seen that so often.

There are sometimes some students that come to me that are used to my rather Scottish, crude, blunt way of speaking, and for a change I'll pussyfoot around and make it all buttery. And I'll give them the answer that they want, not what they ought to hear, and they'll turn around and say to me we don't expect that of you. And it's funny that they'd rather have the truth even if it hurts.

And they can tell if I'm just lying. And it was the same with my care. The king says look that's not what you were.

And he says no it wasn't. And I'll tell you. I saw in heaven God saying who will go and persuade this king to go up to battle and die? And an evil spirit came forth and said I will go and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets and convince them they should convince the king to go up and die.

And so one of the prophets crossed the room and slapped my care across the face and said which way did the spirit of God go from me to you? The Lord has not said that. And we are telling the truth. And he said right.

We'll soon find out. And the king says put him in the prison. And he says you put me in prison.

If you come back you can get me out. But if I'm telling the truth you'll never come back and I'll never get out. And he never got out because he told the truth and the king died.

But the democratic choice was oh go and it was a lie. Never move on the basis of what people tell you is the majority consensus of opinion of just how to put Jesus where he ought to be. It's what does God think.

But here this people said oh it's a great idea. So David gathered all Israel together from Sihur of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemat to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-Jerum. And David went up and all Israel to Bala that is to Kiriath-Jerum which belongs to Judah to bring up thence the ark of God the Lord that dwells between the cherubims whose name is called Onit.

And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Amminadab and Uzzah and Ahio draved the cart. How wonderful. At last they're on their way to put God where he should be like we want to put Christ where he should be.

And so they weren't going to do it with a half heart no slummy way of doing it. They're putting their best into it so they made a brand new cart to carry God back to the people. I wonder where they got the idea

from.

Well if you go back a few chapters you'll find that at one time the Philistines stole the ark in a battle and took it to their country but everywhere they put it it plagued the people so they wanted to get rid of it so they stuck it in a cart and sent it back to Israel. And so Israel says well let's copy the world. Let's copy the pagans on how to put God first.

And if they sent it back in any old cart we'll make a new cart. Oh we love copying. We love to be one up.

We love to do things better than the world. Money, investment, time and think God should be pleased. And boy did they have a real hallelujah meeting.

We read this and David and all Israel played before God with all their might and with singing and with harps and with psalteries and with timbrels and with cymbals and with trumpets. I've been to meetings like that today. And when they came unto the threshing floor of Eden, Uzzah put forth his hand to hold the ark because the ox stumbled.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and he smote him because he put his hand to the ark and there he died before God. Right in the midst of their biggest hallelujah meeting, doing their best to put God back where he should be with the people, what happens? He killed the chief deacon. Oh dear.

I wonder what the non-Christians, the pagans will believe now. Our best effort gone to pieces. And the anger of the Lord was kindled and David was displeased.

I bet you was. You get very upset if you've done your best and God's turned around and killed your best deacon. Because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah where for the place is called Perez to this day.

And David was afraid of God that day saying, how shall I bring the ark of God home? You'll notice when man asks always after the disaster, what a pity he didn't ask first. God, how do we put the ark where it should be? How do we put Christ in the center of our being and our fellowship and our relationship that the evidences of our faith might be seen in the sealing of the spirit, the blessed service, the law keeping. Well, David shunted it aside and put it in the house.

But you know, he did one of the most wisest things he could have done, which he should have done before in his weeks that followed with his displeasure. He began to read the Bible and he began to find in the word things that were rather interesting. For instance, in numbers chapter seven, we read this and it came to pass in the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle and had anointed it and sanctified it and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them and sanctified them that the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers who were the princes of the tribes and were over them that were numbered often, and they brought their offering before the Lord.

Oh, they brought an offering to the Lord. I wonder what it was. Six covered wagons.

Well, would you believe it? Six new carts. And I had a problem with one. So it's not the first time God has had carts.

And 12 oxen. Isn't that funny? And I had two. It's the same kind of thing I've been having a problem with really.

A wagon for two of the princes and for each one an ox, and they brought them before the tabernacle. And the Lord speak unto Moses saying, take it of them that they may be due to the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. And you'll give them unto the Levites, every man according to his service.

And Moses took the wagons and the oxen and gave them to the Levites. Why have I got my deacons struck dead? I've found a precedent in numbers. I had one cart, two oxen in the ark.

He touched it to keep it steady because the stupid animal tripped and he killed my deacon. And here back in those days, men came with six carts, 12 oxen. And God says, I accept it.

Give it to the Levites to carry the tabernacle around. Hmm. I wonder what went wrong with mine.

And the six carts. Oh, and there's the three tribes around the walls. Gershon, Merari, Koa.

Three into six is two. That's real democratic. That's really good.

Yes. If you're a fair God, you'll give each tribe two carts apiece to take their belongings around. Let's see if God was fair.

Two wagons and four oxen he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service, told you, two apiece. And four wagons and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the hand of Ithamer, the son of Aaron, the priest. But unto the sons of Kohath he gave none.

Can I have a word with you? You're not very good at math. There was three groups, Lord. Six carts, they should have got two apiece.

That's fair. How come you gave one group two and the other group four and the poor Kohathites got none? I wonder why they got none. Let's see.

Because the service of the sanctuary belonging to them was they should carry whatever they were carrying upon their shoulders. Oh. I wonder what it was they were to carry that they didn't get carts.

I think I read something about that the other day. Numbers four. And the Lord speak to Moses and Aaron saying, take the sums of the sons of Kohath.

Oh, that's that group that didn't get carts. From among the sons of Levi, after their families by the house of their fathers, from thirty years old up even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation. This shall be the service of the sons of Kohath and the tabernacle of the congregation about the most holy things.

When the camp sets forward, Aaron shall come and his sons and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of testimony with it and shall put there on the covering of badger skins and shall spread over it a cloth holy of blue and shall put in the staves thereof. Oh, would you believe it? They didn't get carts because they were supposed to carry it on their shoulders between two sticks on their shoulders. So that's what the sticks were for.

And we shoved it in a cart. And God says, you don't shove me around in a cart. The evidences of your faith will be carried by a Kohathite between his shoulders on two sticks.

Oh, and by the way, David, while you're reading, son, I hope you've noticed it's not any Kohathite that carries the evidences of your faith between his shoulders on two sticks because it says in Numbers four, in chapter, in verse three, from thirty years old upward, even until fifty years old. And in verse twenty-three, from thirty years old upward, even until fifty years old. In verse thirty, from thirty years old upward, even until fifty years old.

Verse thirty-five, from thirty years old upward, even until fifty years old. Verse forty-three, from thirty years old upward, even until fifty years old. Verse forty-seven, from thirty years old upward, even until fifty years old.

I think God's trying to say something. You know, he doesn't send down a ballpoint pen when you read the Bible and underline a text and say, notice that, will you? No, he just has the wonderful habit of repeating it till you get it. The only person that's qualified to carry the evidences of your faith upon his shoulders between two sticks is a young man set aside for the task in the priesthood who is thirty years up and not yet fifty.

He's not allowed to carry it till he's thirty. He's not allowed to give the job up until he's fifty, and after he's fifty, he gives the job up. Now then, let's turn the coin for you.

If you will look in Luke's gospel and chapter three and verse twenty-three, you read there, and Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age. Well, well, well, I find in my New Testament a young man that's thirty years and up, and if you'll turn to John's gospel and the eighth chapter when Jesus was having an argument with the Jews about the validity of his claim to be God on earth, in verse fifty-two, then said the Jews to Jesus, now we know that you have a demon. Abraham's dead, and the prophets are dead, and you say, if a man keeps my saying, he shall never taste of death.

Are you greater than our father Abraham, which is dead, and the prophets that are dead? Who do you make yourself out to be? And Jesus answered, if I honor myself, my honor is nothing. It is my father that honors me, of whom you say that he is your God. Yet you have not known him, but I know him, and if I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like you, but I know him and keep his saying.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, but you're not yet fifty years old, have you seen Abraham? Well, well, well, we have a young man in the New Testament, thirty years and up, and not yet fifty, so he qualifies to carry the evidences of our faith upon his shoulders between two sticks, and Christ will never give up that job until he's fifty, but he never will be fifty, because he became eternally thirty-three, because at thirty-three years of age, they didn't just put the sticks on his shoulders, they nailed him to it. They nailed him to his two sticks by his hands and his feet, and they crucified the Lord of glory, till you have hanging on a cross a young man thirty years and up and not yet fifty, and his sticks are nailed to his shoulders, and they took him down and buried him, and he rose again the third day, and he is eternally thirty-three years of age.

He will never be fifty. He will never give up the job. He will never be redundant, and the tragedy with the church of Jesus Christ today is too many people have assumed the responsibility to shove God around in their body like David shoved the ark around in a car.

They've taken on the responsibility of carrying the evidences of their faith. It's my job to prove I have the spirit. It's my job to prove my services of God.

It's my job to carry the responsibility to prove that I'm a good law-abiding, law-keeping Christian. It's my job to carry and maintain the evidences of my faith in my life for God, to please God, please the church, please the world. Be careful.

Your ox might stumble, or you might, and you end up discovering that you'll make wreckage of your faith. Not you nor I have ever any right to assume any responsibilities for maintaining a spiritual life. That is the sole responsibility of a young man thirty years and up, not yet fifty, who took that upon himself when they nailed his sticks to his shoulders, and he's not giving that job up.

And it's Jesus Christ within you whose sole responsibility is to make you spiritual, to make you have a resurrected newness to your life every morning, to make you a person that buds and blossoms and brings forth fruit, that makes you a person that behaves in the community like God. It's Him that does that in you. That's why you need the intimacy of a relationship.

Not shoving around as best you can, not developing your little carts to make God work, to make your system look like the best system to put Jesus where he should be. He doesn't need our help, no more than he needed David's techniques. And it's rather interesting that in the first book of Chronicles, in the 15th chapter, we read this in the verse 11, and David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab.

And he said unto them, You are the chief of the fathers of the Levites. Sanctify yourselves, both you and your children, your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel to the place that I have prepared for it. For, because you didn't do it at the beginning, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

The whole reason, the best effort to put God back in the rightful place in the hearts of the nation went to pieces, because they did it their own way and didn't do it after the due order that God laid down in his word. And I've got news for you. It's time you learned as the priests, the New Testament priests, because those of you who have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior have been made kings and priests unto our God, and as priests with a holy place, and a Savior who longs to be in his rightful place in your heart, you may not have sought him after the due order.

And maybe the very reason your faith doesn't become a vibrant, exciting experience in a close relationship with Jesus is you're too busy carrying what it's none of your business to carry. Too busy working hard to prove your faith, to prove you've got the Spirit, to prove you're working for Jesus, to prove that you're good. Instead of daily coming like any penitent sinner and in believing in his holy gospel, just come day by day and say, Lord Jesus, the job's yours.

I know this morning I'm too weak to keep your law. I'm too lazy to serve you. I cannot maintain a spiritual glow or a spirit presence in my life.

That's your responsibility. I just lay my heart open to you that you in your lordship of my life may take control of my life and fulfill your responsibility of being my spirit life, my service, my sanctified behavior. Be that me today and we'll do the same again tomorrow.

From now on I'm doing it after the due order, not me living for you, but you carrying the responsibility of releasing your life in me and the evidences of my faith being maintained, carried and demonstrated through me by your resurrection life every day. That's why I need to be intimate with you. That's why I

need to know you as my personal friend.

That's why I need you as my secret. So that as I get up every day, I say, hey Lord, what a mess you're getting this morning. Have a great time in me.

And I go out into my community and I get on my life and if I come back at the end of the day and I've been aware of and seen you doing something in and through my life, I'll say, hey, you must have been having a good time today doing your job in me, through me, because I certainly didn't help you because it's not my business. That's yours. That is the kernel.

That is the central fact of the living gospel of Jesus Christ, an exchanged life in the very presence of him having come all the way through the gate, past the altar, past the laver, in through that wonderful structure, into that atmosphere with the right food, the right prayer, the right light. You can go through that veil and just love the Lord for all he's going to do in maintaining the evidences of your faith for you, in you, and through you. There is a rest to the people of God.

Many don't find it because they're still too busy shoving them around in a cart. Let's have a word of prayer. Holy Father, we thank you for the validity of the word to show us the centrality of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives as a risen Savior.

Thank you for a reminder from that word that it's his sole responsibility to maintain our spirit life in us and through us and for us. Forgive us for taking that away from him. Forgive us for wasted days, weeks, months, years of pushing Jesus Christ around in our life the way we wanted to.

Oh, our God, teach us to allow him to be God and King in our lives according to the due order and to leave him with his responsibility to be our life and for thy name's sake. Amen. You said with great feeling last week, uh, something like, oh, for present day Samuel, and I wondered if you could expand on that a little bit.

Well, we are in a world with many churches from many denominations that have established their orthodox, uh, system of who they would consider to be appointed worthy to lead us in spirit life. They'd never pick a Samuel. He was only 12 and yet that boy stepped forward at the age of 12 and was so used of God that right through to being an old man, he was the voice of God for the entire nation.

But it was a teenager he used, not a man that the world thought worthy of that position. And sometimes today when I look around and I see the people that we choose to lead in spirit life and they don't even believe in God, it makes the heart cry for even a teenager that wouldn't have any of those wonderful things we think is marvelous that God could pick up and use after all of you read the Bible properly. Moses that wrote all of this was an ex murderer.

I don't think we would appoint him to Christian leadership. You find that Ruth, who was the mother of Obed, who was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, was a Gentile woman. You find that her relative was Rahab the prostitute.

The father of the nation of Israel was Jacob the thief. You find that many of them were very weak people that God used because they had an availability to let God do the work through them as I've described tonight. But we are so clever these days.

We appoint the people we consider to be good enough to lead us into darkness, not into light. And I have sat on committee meetings for appointing missionaries. I've sat on groups discussing the possibility of who should be our next pastor.

And I'll tell you this, it's amazing the people that they would bypass. And I know of one church that was busy discussing what man would be good enough for a church this size and for a people like we have. And there was one gentleman at the end of the table said he had a nomination to put forward and we looked at him as much as well.

We better let him say it, although we've got our minds made up who's going to be the pastor anyway. We've just got to go through this democratic meeting for the sake of a good face. And they said, well, who have you got? And he says, well, it's from a friend.

And he says, dear sir, I'd like to be your pastor, but I just have to be honest and tell you that I'm sick a lot. I have very bad legs and I'm nearly blind. And wherever I go, although I love the Lord with all my heart, I seem to create an awful lot of trouble and split churches.

And I've been in prison once or twice. And I'm a snake handler. And I believe in healing and restoring the dead.

And I speak in tongues and I've seen visions, lots of visions. And I'm not very good at working with other co-workers. I usually end up splitting evangelistic teams and getting rid of some of them and the ones I don't like.

But for all that, I love the Lord. And I'd love to come and be your pastor. And the committee looked at him and said, who on earth in the right mind would ever pick somebody like that to be a pastor? Who wrote that anyway? Said the apostle Paul.

They wouldn't pick him. That's why I said last week, I would love to see a new Samuel, some young, nondescript teenager that God could pick up and slay the nation with and confound the mighty and the wise that are really fools in sheep's clothing. What I was pointing out was that as he turned to see the voice that spoke with him, because it was a voice like a trumpet that means it drowned out all other voices.

Therefore, it was a voice of authority. It was as the voice of the sound of many waters, which means it drowned out all other voices. Therefore, it was a voice of God.

It was a supreme voice of authority. Therefore, in anticipation of turning to see the voice, you would presume, as I had done for many years in reading the passage, I'd focus my attention on the description of the Lord in the midst of the candlesticks. I presumed what he did do was turn and saw the Lord.

In actual fact, what he first saw when he turned was not the Lord. He saw the light of these seven candlesticks. Therefore, to him, the voice was the voice of the candlesticks.

It was the light of the word, the light coming, the illumination coming from the candlesticks that first blinded his eyes. As he got used to the light, he then saw in the midst of these candlesticks the Lord. Therefore, he fainted.

As I pointed out, had we had that experience, we could understand us fainting. We've never seen him. The thing that made me stop and go back and ask myself, why, John, should you faint, was because he had

lived with the Lord for three years.

He was the only one that was brave enough to stand at the cross and watch him being crucified and remain with him when the others fled. He was the first to understand the significance of the vacated grave clothes that he'd risen from the dead. He'd already under his belt the personal experience of having been in the Mount of Transfiguration and seen Moses and Elijah and heard God speaking audibly with Jesus and seen him glowing.

He'd lay in on his chest and talk to him in a very intimate capacity for three years. He'd seen him at least three times, it's recorded, as a risen Lord on the earth before his ascension. He'd watched him going up.

So seeing the risen Christ and the glorified Christ was not a new experience to him, so why faint? And that's what made me go back and then suddenly I saw he fainted at the realization that the way that the world would hear a voice of authority in the darkness of the world and turn around to see who is speaking with authority, they'll turn around and find it's the church. It is the Christians that are giving the light to the world. You are the lights of the world, we discussed that earlier in the series.

You are the light of the world to go out, not under a bucket, not under a bed, but out on a hill to let the world see and it's the churches that have the voice of authority. It's the church that has the message for the world and it's only as they receive that light from the churches do they discover that the source of that authority inside our light is the light of the world, Jesus himself, our secret. Yes, because it made them realize again that it's through a weak church that they'll see that light, not just Jesus himself doing the talking, but talking through you and I. Now personally when I saw that I felt like fainting, that the responsibility is that people in the community is going to see Christ through the likes of me.

Well that's enough to take anybody's breath away and I know lots of Christians that would agree with that and all. Any other questions before we hand back? All right.

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