

Israel's Communication

by Charles Anderson

Charles Anderson preaches on the importance of communication in ministry, using the example of Moses and the silver trumpets to illustrate the need for clear and effective communication in conveying God's message to His people.

Duration: 45:54

Scripture: Exodus 19:4, Leviticus 23:2, Numbers 10:2, Numbers 10:8, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 1 Corinthians 7:23, Hebrews 10:25

Topics: "Israel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the challenges faced by the Israelites during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. He emphasizes that the Israelites were not skilled warriors and were vulnerable to attacks from marauding tribes. Despite their weaknesses, the speaker highlights that the Israelites had a constant reminder of their pilgrim status and were not allowed to settle down along the way. The speaker also shares personal experiences and expresses gratitude for God's grace and support in difficult times.

Transcript

I would like to steal just a few moments of my own time this evening first, before we look into the Word together, to explain something to you. One of the things that I miss very much is having my wife with me on this visit to the Park of the Palms. We look forward to this for a long time, but the ways of God are so very strange.

I often say I have no problem with the will of God, but I very often have a problem with the ways of God, how God does things. I'm forever trying to tell him how he ought to be doing them, but he seems to know better than I do what's the proper way. At any rate, if I may explain why she's not with me, and I know she's as disappointed as I am, I was the president of a Bible college that I founded, really, back in 1950, and for 30 years I was president of that school as well as pastor of a growing and very large church in the area.

And when it got to be around, I think it was 1980, I suggested to the Board of Governors that they ought to get somebody who was younger, who had brighter ideas, who was not as decrepit as I am, and who could bring a fresh infusion of leadership into the school, and so I left. And we came down here to South Florida, and we live in Boca Raton, which, as you know, has the reputation for being God's waiting room. Did you

know that? That's what they call it anyway.

I told the brethren this morning, we have a very excellent hospital in Boca Raton. It's a wonderful hospital. They have the grandest and one of the best cardiac divisions in that hospital, and I suppose anywhere in the area.

But did you know that they don't have a maternity ward? That's a fact. If you want to have a baby in Boca Raton, you've got to go somewhere else and have it, because there's no hospital down there that will take care of you. So, we came to Boca Raton, and for a couple of years I helped the church there, the University Baptist Church, and then left there a couple of years ago to be on the road as a freelance Bible teacher and preacher.

And I have been associated with Pioneers Missionary Organization, which is only seven or eight years old. We now have about, I don't know how many missionaries scattered all over the world. We're targeting the unreached peoples, the hidden peoples of the world, of which, by the way, there are nearly about three billion peoples on the face of this earth who have never heard the sweet syllables of Jesus' name.

That's an astounding fact, and we're seeking to reach those people. At any rate, that's a long story, but I want to tell you how strange the ways of God are. The Bible College had a president.

There were two who followed me in this. The latest one had a very severe heart attack last winter and almost died, and it took him several months to recuperate. And when the summer came, this past summer, I think the school realized, and he did too, that he was incapable of carrying on as president and facing the pressure of the school.

And so he resigned at the end of August. And so the Board of Governors is now seeking for a new president, new captain for the ship. And in the meanwhile, they came to me and said, Would you be willing to step back into the breach, not on a day-to-day basis? I'm not interested in running the school, you know, repairing the toilets and fixing the lights and firing people and seeing that they get enough to eat and all that stuff.

That would drive you mad. It did once upon a time, but I'm past that madness stage. So I said, No, I won't do that, but I'll be glad to step into the breach to help out.

So that's what I'm doing at the moment, at least for this next six, seven, or eight months until they get a new president. But I'm working up to something. Bear with me.

The commercial will soon be over. The unique thing is this, that we lived on the edge of the campus in a home that we built. When I left, I sold it to the school as the president's home.

And of all things, that is vacated now until they get a new president, and they asked us if we'd like to live there. So here we are back again. After 27 years in that house that was our old homestead, we're back in the place again without a stick of furniture in the spot, not a cake of soap when we came in, nothing, absolutely nothing, but are we having a ball getting it all fixed up so we can at least live there comfortably? Now, it came to Christmas Day, and for the first time in years, we have four sons, and they are all involved in the Lord's work, scattered all over the country and around the world.

Our oldest son has been a missionary in Spain for a great number of years, and so we never had him home for Christmas until this year. Eleven years, eleven Christmases, we weren't together as a family. We

were scattered.

This Christmas, we had the chance to be all together with all the kids and the grandkids, and I hate to admit it, even some great-grandkids. And they all came from all over, and we had 37 people for Christmas Day. So if I look haggard and have bags under my eyes, pity me.

It was the wildest melee I have seen in a long time. And my poor wife is recuperating from that back there. And since our youngest son, who is pastoring in Minnesota, is staying on for three or four more days beyond Christmas, I left them the morning after Christmas to come here.

They are having a good time, a fellowship, and she hopes to join me here at the end of the week, and I hope it won't be too long. Some friends are driving her down. Now, that's my family.

That's a thumbnail biography, but it may explain to you why I'm looking so down-the-mouth. But it's just because I am so accustomed to having her along with me that it does seem as though I don't have an arm over here when she's gone. And I appreciate the opportunity of being here and fellowshiping with you and ministering the Word, and I give God the testimony of praise because a few years ago, just a couple, I lay at the door of death in the hospital, and I knew I was dying, and everybody else thought I was, and they brought our boys on from all around the country for the last time.

And God was pleased to raise me up. And as I lay on that bed and realized that He was giving me another lease on life, I promised to give Him every ounce of strength and energy I'd have until the end to serve Him if He could use me. And I testify tonight to God's wonderful, glorious grace that has supported us throughout this year, and this past year has been the busiest year of ministry in my whole life, and I give God the praise and glory.

I would solicit an interest in your prayers. On behalf of Northeastern Bible College, you may never see the school, you may know nothing about it beyond what I say to you now, but we're training young men and women as preachers of the Word of God, soul winners, and missionaries, and we need your prayer support as a Christian that this institution will be kept straight as it moves on in training young people. Have you ever thought about the logistic problem that Moses had in moving the children of Israel out of Egypt into the Promised Land? Just stop and think about it for a brief moment.

How many were there? Well, we don't know, really. We don't know. Bible students vary in their estimates of how many Jewish people were brought out of Egypt, or bondage in Egypt, anywhere between a half a million to a million and a half, and some say even those figures may be a little bit low.

However, if we slice it down a little bit, I'd say he had about a million people to move. Now, that's a lot of people. That's almost as many people as there are in stark Florida, but at any rate, that's a lot of people, a million people.

You've got to move them. You've got to feed them. You've got to locomote them.

You have to find water for them in a dry and arid land. You have to bring them through hostile territory where they're going to be maybe attacked by marauders, and you're going to have some discouraging days. It was a monumental task that Moses faced.

And when we're thinking about men of great faith, we must never overlook this man because he could only do it by faith, faith in the living God who was able to do exceeding abundantly above all he could ask or

even think. And one of the problems, one of the logistical problems was communication. Now, that word has assumed a new definition to us, and we think of communication today in technological terms.

No problem. We have radio. We have television.

We have all the refined means of communication. Why weren't they available? Well, we know, of course, they weren't because this was long, long before the age of technology. How in the world did Moses communicate what he wanted to say and order some piece of information? How did he get it across to these people? A million people.

Suppose you were given the task of communicating a piece of information to a million people. Maybe, I don't know what the population of the city of Jacksonville is, but maybe it's pretty close to a million. I don't know.

I have no idea. But just take that. Suppose you were given the job of communicating to the city of Jacksonville between now and tomorrow night a piece of information so that every person in Jacksonville would hear it, and you didn't have a telephone, you didn't have a radio, and you didn't have television.

How'd you do it? Sign language, you say. That wouldn't help. Messengers.

How many messengers would you need? Stop and ponder this a minute. That was a big problem. Now, the word of God is very clear, however, in indicating what method Moses used.

I invite your attention to turn to the book of Numbers, chapter 10. And let me read a few verses from the tenth chapter of the book of Numbers. Commencing with the first verse.

And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver, of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

When you blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east part shall go forward. When you blow another alarm the second time, the camps that are on the south side shall take their journey. They shall blow an alarm for their journeys.

But when the congregation is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. Apparently there was a different sound to the trumpet note. Any of you who have served in military branches of the government, you know, you learn after a while.

You better learn. If they use a bugle, if they use a trumpet, you better learn the difference. There's a big difference between the one that says, get under the covers and go to sleep and come get some chow.

If you get mixed up, you'll starve to death and never sleep. So you just have to know the various tones and messages of the trumpet. So what he's saying is, when I want you to move, there's a certain sound that the trumpets will make.

But when I want you to gather together, it's another sound. It's not quite the same as the alarm sound that you've heard. All right.

But when the congregation is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets. They shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations.

And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppressteth you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets. And you shall be remembered before the Lord your God. And you shall be saved from your enemies.

Also in the day of your gladness and in your solemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial before your God. I am Jehovah your God. Now that's a remarkable passage of Scripture.

And the way it concludes with that statement is also itself significant. The book of Numbers, and particularly this portion, has a lot of instructions given to Israel. But none of them conclude with a statement like that.

I am the Lord your God. Why is that inserted? Oh, that will then entail some further consideration of something else that these trumpets were significant of. Indeed, they were used in the daily life of the traveling pilgrims who were on their way from land of bondage to land of promise, Israel.

And the trumpet became a very important and vital instrument in the daily activities of God's people. But beyond that, beyond that, I think there's a spiritual significance here. All the things that happened unto Israel were redemptive object lessons.

Everything that occurred in their life was bent toward the concept that they had to get that they were a special, peculiar people unto God. He had made promises and covenants to them because they were a redeemed people. They were bought by God.

They belonged to Him in that very special way of redemption. And they had to learn this. And it took them a long time to learn it.

But everything in their life was bent in that direction. So, we go back to these trumpets, and they are saying something that is fundamental and basic in Israel's relationship to God. First of all, I want you to notice that the instructions that are given here to Moses, as found back there in verse 2, is, Make thee two trumpets.

He was to fashion the trumpets. He was to manufacture these instruments. They were not borrowed from the Egyptians.

They were not bought from their erstwhile taskmasters. These were two instruments that were manufactured by Moses. And they were made out of a metal.

He says, of silver. They were made out of silver. They were silver trumpets, and they were of a whole piece.

Now, the first thing we need to ask is, Where did Moses get the metal to make these two trumpets? Well, you don't have to wonder too long because I'm going to ask you to turn backward now to Exodus chapter 30. Thirtieth chapter of Exodus, and the eleventh verse of the chapter, the Lord is speaking again to

Moses, and he says, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them. You can take a census at certain times.

It's legitimate to do that. And you do it only then so that there will be no plague among you when you number them. Other times they were threatened with dire consequences if they numbered themselves without divine approval.

This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary. A shekel is twenty geras. Now, I'm sure you know what that is.

All you got to do is divide geras into dollars and dollars into shekels and multiply the shekel by the dollar and divide two geras. And when you wind up, I don't know what we're talking about. But it was apparently a small coin.

It was one that anybody could afford. This is not a big price. It was a heavy taxation here.

This was a very small coin. A half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the Lord.

The rich shall not give more. The poor shall not give less than half a shekel. You're all even at this point.

It doesn't make any difference whether you're rich or poor. When you stand before God at this particular moment, you're all equal. You must bring just a half a shekel when they give an offering to the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.

In other words, this somehow was involved in the atonement process for Israel. When they paid the half shekel, they were acknowledging that they needed God's salvation. The payment was not to buy their atonement, but it was in recognition of their need of such an atonement.

So they paid for it. And thus they said they were redeemed now not only by other factors, the blood of the sacrifice, but by the silver coin that they paid. And this is why Peter says in his epistle later on, for as much as you know that you are not redeemed with silver and gold, like the traditions of your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ alone.

At any rate, this is now called atonement money. It's a silver coin. And thou shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord to make an atonement for your souls.

I take it then that Moses was allowed to use these coins, these half shekel silver coins for the service of the tabernacle, whatever that involved. And inasmuch as the silver trumpets were to be used also in connection with the service of the tabernacle, then I think this is where he got the silver metal to make these silver trumpets. So that when the trumpets blew, everybody in Israel's camp knew what they were and how they were made, and the materials from which they came.

And inasmuch as this ore or this metal was identified with atonement, then I would say that these trumpets were constantly announcing to Israel that whatever demand the trumpet is now making upon you, and there are demands, and we'll go through them as quickly as we have time to do so in just a moment, but whatever the demand, it's legitimate because you're redeemed. You are a redeemed people. And the

silver trumpet reminded them of that great fact.

You're purchased and bought, and you belong to God. Ladies and gentlemen, our God makes great demands upon us. The demands of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His disciples, are so imperious and they are so severe that as we measure the contemporary Christian experience and Christian living against the demands of discipleship as announced by the Lord Jesus, most of us are counterfeits.

Most of us are shams. Most of us are so shallow that there is a vast difference between what we portray and what He demands. And do you know why it's so? It is so because we are always debating with God when He makes a demand upon us.

You've got a smoking problem, eh? And so the moment somebody comes to you and tells you that as a Christian you have no right to smoke, you start to argue. Who's to tell me what to do? I'm my own boss. I don't care what people say.

And so we begin to debate it. The Lord hasn't spoken to me about that. So you've got a drinking problem.

So you've got a drug problem. So you've got a dancing problem. So you've got a movie problem.

I don't know what your problem is, but I'm ticking off the ones that really touch us where it hurts. And most or a great many Christians enter into constant debate with God at that point, trying to convince God that He is a little bit unreasonable in the demands that He makes. What is it the Apostle Paul says? What? That's the way he puts it.

What? You can't read that Scripture. What? That's too flat. What? Don't you know that you are not your own? You're bought with a price.

Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirits which are God's. Don't you understand that? You don't belong to yourself anymore. Not since you laid claim to Christ as your Savior and Redeemer.

You belong to Him. And whatever He asks of you, no debate, no argument, no question. He has a right to ask it.

Why? Because you are a purchased people. And that's what Israel had to learn. Now let's notice a little bit more here.

Make two trumpets of silver of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly. It's a stop right there. For the calling of the assembly.

In another place it is stated that when the trumpets sounded, they sounded loud and long. That's very interesting. Loud and long.

Particularly when the call was to assemble themselves together. God wanted to impart to them some information. The place to come was the tabernacle of the congregation.

That was the appointed place. That's where the Lord spoke through His mouthpiece, Moses or Aaron or whoever the prophets may have been. And there were times when God wanted His people to drop all their tasks, to quit all the things they were doing, leave it all behind, and gather themselves together in order to hear what God has to say.

Now, if I draw a quick line from this passage to application in the New Testament, I remind you of the passage that says that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another and so much the more as you see the day approaching. Where are God's people who lay claim to the Savior on the Lord's day? Well, that all depends. If the weather is nice, we go to Grandma's house.

If the weather is rotten, we stay home. It's always amazing to me how people can get their car out of their garage with no trouble at all on a rainy Monday morning who find they can't even get the wheels moving on a Sunday morning. We used to have a lady in our church that called up my wife on Friday night and said, I can't serve in the nursery Sunday morning.

I've got a headache. She had it Friday night. She knew she was going to have it Sunday morning too.

And if she was working, you'd think she would call up her boss and say, I can't come to work on Monday because I've got a headache. She's calling him on Thursday afternoon. What would he tell her? Pick up your pink slip on Monday morning.

She'd be there, headache and all. Or, there's always a little tablet called aspirin that will help a little. See? The problem is that we, and especially in our day when we hear so much all these parachurch organizations, don't ask me how it can be.

I agree that home Bible studies are valuable. I agree, of course, that when we meet together in little tiny groups to study the Word of God, that's vital and important. But I'm going to tell you something.

There is an ingredient mixed in the public worship of the Son of the living God that is not present anywhere else. And that ingredient is intended to make us grow and mature spiritually. And the Christian who absents himself from the gathering together, the assembly of the saints, is a Christian who's flirting dangerously with spiritual impotence.

I've never yet met a Christian in my whole life and ministry who habitually absented themselves from the house of God on the Lord's Day who was a strong Christian. Never. Weak, flabby, shallow, complaining, defeated.

Why? Because somehow they found some other things that were more and more important. God says, when I blow that trumpet, I want you to assemble yourselves together. I've got something I want to say to you.

I want to talk to you. And then when you come, I want you to listen to what I have to say. It's amazing how people hear what we hear.

It's too bad that in our modern culture we've done away with church bells on Sunday morning, eh? One of the delightful things about traveling in Europe is they still maintain the old-fashioned church bell that tolls on the Lord's Day and at service time. And it's lovely to ride through the valleys of Switzerland and hear everywhere the bells tolling when the time comes for divine service, as they call it. Well, we've eliminated all of that now.

And we don't have any bells that call us to the house of God. Nothing calls us to the house of God but that inner compulsion that says I must go because there I will meet with Him. And I'll also meet with those who love Him.

And we will mutually share our faith and we'll grow strong in Christ. I say it's strange what people hear. They tell a fine story about Luther Burbank, that great naturalist that on an occasion he was walking with a young businessman on their way into a small town, small community.

And as they walked along, all of a sudden, Mr. Burbank stopped and he reached down and turned over a rock and there under it was a little cricket of some sort. And he picked it out and he held it up and he gave a lecture, this great naturalist, on the characteristics of this little insect. And then in a moment or two, after finishing his lecture, he opened his fingers and let it go.

And that young businessman said, that's strange, Dr. Burbank. He said, I didn't hear that cricket. I said, I know you didn't, but I did.

So they walked on into town. When they got in the middle of the town, about Broad and Main Street or so, all of a sudden, the young fellow stopped and said, just a minute. And he stooped down and picked up a quarter.

I guess you got the point, didn't you? I know some saints of God even whose ears are so sharply tuned to that strange stuff called money that they know, they can hear the crinkle of a dollar bill around the corner. They even know there's a difference between the crinkle of a one and the crinkle of a ten. Slightly, but it's there.

They're all tuned sharply to this stuff. But when the clear call of the Holy Spirit comes, on the Lord's Day, assemble yourselves together with God's people. I want to talk to you.

I want to reveal something of myself to you. Strange how they get deaf all of a sudden. Can't hear.

No call. What do you hear when the Lord's Day dawns? The silver trumpets? Can you hear them above all the din of life? The fever of it all saying, gather yourselves together. Remember me.

Let me talk to you. Well, he goes on to say something else. Sound these trumpets for the calling of the assembly and for the journeying of the camps.

Now that was a constant problem to these people. They were a pilgrim people. And they were not allowed to forget it.

I suppose there were some spots between Egypt and Kadesh Barnea, the edge of the land, that could easily have been the permanent home of these people. There was water available. Maybe there was some there was something there that could support their flocks.

Why didn't they settle down? You and I can both of us, I guess, remember how we tortured kids in daily vacation Bible school by making them memorize the journeyings of Israel. Isn't that a horrible thing to do to kids? The encampments of this and we made them get it down their little gullets and tuck it away in their heads and then they forgot it. And so have we.

Doesn't seem very important, but there's a lot of times they had to move. And just as they got settled in sometime and they said, this is a nicer place than the one we had last week or last month. And they're just getting settled and all of a sudden, there's a trumpet call.

And they say, wait a minute, we heard that before. That means pack up and let's go. Where are we going? We don't know where we're going.

We only know one thing, we're moving on to a land that God has promised us. And so we have to move again. And I suppose they grumbled against Moses' leadership from time to time because he made them move so many times.

Why did they have to move so many times? So they wouldn't get their roots down deep anywhere. They were not called out to locate in the wilderness. They were called out of Egypt in order to settle down in a land of promise.

And until they arrived at that land, they must never forget that they were pilgrims and strangers. Beloved, we're on the way too. We look for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

We're looking for a land that flows with milk and honey. We're looking for another possession that's beyond us. And that's the reason why we're strange people here.

As we move on our journey, we're constantly saying to the world, we don't belong down here, friend. We're pilgrims. At least we ought to be.

But I fear, oh how I fear, that God's people seem to have forgotten. They've gotten away from their pilgrim character and pilgrim nature. The stamp and the mark of our separateness is fast disappearing.

We merge our lives and our lifestyle with the world round about us until they're a bit surprised when they say, you a Christian? Really? Never would have suspected it. You're so much like us. That's what we like.

That's nice. You're not like a piece of cactus. Now we know some folks, they go to that brethren assembly down, oh they're queer people.

They're always saying, don't, you can't, you mustn't. They're negative, you know. But it's so nice to see you.

You're so positive. You're just like me. And that me is a pagan.

See? Isn't it sad? Isn't it tragic? We've lost our pilgrim character and pilgrim nature I fear. We, the prophet Ezekiel, had something against Israel. He said, the thing I've got against you is that you have created a climate of consent.

The pagan around about you, they feel comfortable in your presence when they ought to feel uncomfortable. And the reason is because you have created such a climate about you, an environment, that you are inadvertently giving consent to their way of living. Now Israel had to journey often so that they would not forget that they were a pilgrim people.

So the trumpet would sound now and again and call them to that. All right? We have to move on down. Let's go down to verse 9. And if you go to war in your land against the enemy that oppressteth you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies.

In other words, whenever the moment came for a conflict, battle with their enemies, then the silver trumpets were to sound. And when that special note was heard by them, first of all it reminded them that God was on their side. This issue, this very week's issue of United States News and World Report has a full page ad.

Bill Moyer, formerly in the White House, has a series on television right now on God and politics. Have you seen some of it? Well, the full page ad shows a great chasm as if the earth is split and two men are standing facing each other across that chasm. And the question is this.

Surprising to be found in such a news magazine. Who is God really for? That's a question, isn't it? On whose side is God really? That's becoming a pertinent question. Well, Israel never had to guess about that.

That silver trumpet reminded them. When the enemies came in against them, the silver trumpet said, Look, I'm on your side. You can count on me.

Now, you know they were never a match for their enemies. Never. These people didn't know how to fight.

What have they been doing for 400 years? What did you do, Mr. Lubinsky? He said, I made bricks. Oh, really? How about your father? What did he do? Oh, he made bricks too. Yeah? Grandfather? What was his business? He's a brickmaker.

How about your great-grandfather? He made clay bricks. Your great-grandfather? He was a brickmaker. How about your great-great-grandfather? They've been going through this for 12 generations.

They've padded clay and stuck straw in it and made bricks. You know, according to any simple law of evolution, if you take 12 generations of people who are padding mud, they wind up with hands like hams. They've lost all skill.

They didn't know how to play instruments. They didn't know how to wrap their hands around a javelin. They didn't know how to pull a bow string.

They couldn't handle a sword. They're clumsy people. They were brickmakers.

What prey they were to the marauding tribes through whose country they were passing. And often, those people would attack them. What were they to do in a moment like that? Let me remind you too, you and I are no match for the enemies that we have.

We have enemies. The world is no friend of grace. Let me tell you that.

That's an enemy. We live in hostile territory. And then there's the enemy, the devil himself, who's our adversary, constantly on the alert.

When you and I are not on the alert, he is. Walking about, seeking whom he may devour. And then to make it all worse, there's a quizzling inside that betrays us to the world and opens the gates to the devil.

And that's our own flesh. And no man, no woman, is able to overcome this combination of enemies. So, what do we do when the enemy comes in like a flood? Listen for a moment.

Hold it. What's that sound? God's silver trumpets. You shall be remembered before the Lord, He says, and you'll be saved from your enemies.

Hallelujah. You don't have to live in defeat. You can live in victory.

Day by day. Not in your own strength, to be sure, but because He gives it to you. And He gives victory.

Now, I press on very quickly. There's much that challenges us for thought here, but the trumpets are sounding at various phases of Israel's history, and now there's a cluster of things in verse 10. Also in the day of your gladness and in your solemn days.

Let me just stop right there. I recognize the true exegesis of this passage would make these solemn days mean they're religious feast days. See? But I'll confess to an exegetical sin, brethren, and say that without too much violence, let me pull that phrase out from that basic application and talk about it in another way.

All our life is a bundle of days. You know that, of course. And life is made up of glad days and solemn days, isn't it? And maybe for the most part, more glad days than solemn days.

The problem is that we only remember very keenly those solemn days when life suddenly is grim, when sorrow assaults us, when the roof caves in, when bad news, economic disaster, marital disintegration, children not walking with God, and on and on and on it goes. We have those days. Everybody has those days because we're Christians.

We're not exempt from those solemn days. But when those days come, what do they hear? They hear the silver trumpets of God blowing. And it has a special kind of note in those solemn days.

When I was a student in seminary still, I became pastor of a church in the northeast corner of the city of Philadelphia. And as soon as I arrived, I guess I was there maybe a Sunday or two, a very fine young lady who was the pianist in the church and a brilliant pianist, known all through that part of the city for her skill at the piano. And she had gathered about her a girl's trio that was singing on radio and they were quite popular.

But this girl Millie, just call her Millie, she met me in the hallway of the church and beside her was a handsome young fellow. And I could tell by looking at them what they were going to ask. So I said, what date did you want? They said, how'd you know? I said, how do you know? It's written all over you.

You want to get married, right? So they said, could you do it in August? And they, I'd forgotten the exact date, but they gave us a date and I said, it looks okay. This was maybe in May. And so Millie and Freddie planned their wedding.

All the excitement of preparation. But along about June or so, I think, Freddie became ill. And the illness developed and it got very serious.

And finally it came to the point where we all of us recognized that he wasn't going to make it. He was dying. He had a violent form of tuberculosis that raged through his body.

And as a young pastor, I sat beside his bed and held his hand when he crossed over the river. And that August date was not a wedding day. It was a funeral day.

And we buried Freddie. And Millie was devastated, of course. But I'll tell you something.

She was victorious. Beautifully so. And I said to myself, she must be hearing God's silver trumpets.

He must be saying to her in his own way, this is a solemn day, but I haven't abandoned you. I haven't forgotten you. Well, I also happened to be teaching at that time on the faculty of the Philadelphia College of Bible.

And a large number of the young students would come up to our church on Sunday nights to hear me preach. After all, I was teaching homiletics. How do you preach? They said, let's see how he does it.

And then they would pick me apart the next week in class. So we had a large number. Well, it was a handsome fellow after all, Herbie was his name.

Handsome. Oh boy, was he a nice looking guy. And he came.

And I noticed that he always maneuvered. We only had a small church. I think our auditorium was about this size, maybe a little smaller.

And God was blessing us and it was packed to the doors. People sitting on the stairs and so on all around on the platform. But he always maneuvered, that guy Herbie, to get over near the piano.

You wonder why. Well, he had his eye on Millie. And I'm not going to prolong this story, but after a little while they came.

And they said, would you marry us? Of course, I'd be delighted to. And so there was joy and the sorrow was put away. Well, they got married and he was called to a little church I think out in Ohio.

He was out there for a few years and one night the telephone rang and I was sitting long distance in my home. And on the other end of the line was Millie and she said, Pastor, I've got a problem. I said, I don't know what's wrong with Herbie, but something very serious is wrong.

So the last few weeks he's been losing his place in the pulpit. He says strange things. He starts to quote a verse.

He can't finish it. And then if he goes downtown he gets lost and he'll call me and say, Millie, I don't know where I am. Come get me.

I'm in front of a store that's got a sign. And she said, finally, they've diagnosed that he has a brain cancer or tumor. And she said he's to be operated on on Monday.

Would you pray for Herbie? Of course, she said we would. And we waited very anxiously for the next couple of days for the word. And at last it came and she called and by now they had three children.

She said, Pastor, Herbie didn't make it. He died on the operating table. And I listened hard to see if there was any bitterness, any resentment against the way of God.

Not a note. So I said, what are you going to do, Millie? She said, I don't know, but I've got to go on for the kid's sake. And I told her she was a beautiful pianist.

And there must have been hours when she'd sit at the piano and pour out her heart in the great hymns that she loved and we all loved. Well, she went to work in a factory. She had a wonderful brother out there in Indianapolis.

That's where they were living at the time. And he took good care of them all along the way. But she worked in this factory and she was on a machine that had a great sharp knife that came down and cut the product again and again.

And one day, somehow, something went wrong and her hand slipped under and the knife came down and severed three fingers on her right hand. Well, that was a major disaster. Let me ask you something.

Would you feel...

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