

Face to Face Encounter

by Dennis Kinlaw

God is a loving father who wants to know us and be known by us, and sin separates us from him.

Duration: 51:40

Topics: "Encountering God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of meeting God during the summer assembly. They highlight that the purpose of the world is not just to exist, but to bring individuals into existence. The speaker dismisses the debate between science and the creation story, stating that the main focus should be on the significance of God's creation of humanity. They also point out that throughout the first 11 chapters of Genesis, there is a balance between God's judgment and his love and mercy.

Transcript

Turn with me in your Testaments to the New Testament first, to the Book of Romans, and read with me, or let me read for you and you follow in your text, passage from the beginning of chapter 4. It will be a little bit long, but it's a magnificent and a crucial passage, so here. What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If in fact Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about, but not before God. What does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works.

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him. Is this blessedness for the circumcised or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness.

Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised or before? It was not after, but before. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then he is the father of all who believe, but have not been circumcised in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

And he is also the father of the circumcised, who not only are circumcised, who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. It was not through law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. For if those who live by law are heirs, faith has no value and the promise is workless, because law brings wrath, and where there is no law there is no transgression.

Therefore the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written, I have made you a father of many nations.

He is our father in the sight of God in whom he believed, the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were. Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed, and so became the father of many nations. Just as it had been said to him, so shall your offspring be.

Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. This is why it was credited to him as righteousness.

The words it was credited to him were not written for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification. That's a long passage, but it is a key part of the most important book from the Gospels saved in the New Testament after the book of Acts, because here it is that Paul is spelling out what it means for you and me to be followers of Jesus Christ.

This morning I'd like to take us back a long ways earlier than that does. I'd like to go back to the passage and to the historical events that Paul is referring to. As the years have passed, one of the things that has become more and more beautiful to me is the unity of the Scripture, the oneness of the whole thing.

Now, most of us never really get to where we see that. Very few of us get to where we see it to any extent. That's one of the reasons I hate to think of dying yet.

I'd like to see it a little more clearly because it is incredibly magnificent. There is no work of art in any museum in the world, and there is no composition of music anywhere in the musical literature of the world that has the aesthetic quality if we could only see of the fullness of revelation that is in Scripture. Now, most of us get snippets of it.

I remember I had a professor at Princeton, Otto Pieper, who said, Now, you fellows that underline your Bibles, you make a mistake. And I thought, What's this? He said, Because you see, you underline what you like. And he said, I can tell you this morning what you've got underlined in your Bible because I know you.

And I closed my Bible carefully. And then he began to tell us exactly what I had underlined in my Bible. Now, he said, I want to tell you, that's all right, as a child's step toward understanding Scripture.

You see, God has to deal with us where we are, so he gives us a bit. He gives us a verse, part of a verse or a verse, and we say, Isn't that beautiful? And then we live on that for a day or two. And then one day we go back and look and find that that verse is a part of a unit, maybe a paragraph.

And we say, For heaven's sakes, that's not just a little line of music, it's a composition. And then we begin to find that that unit is simply one theme in the symphony. And then we move from a unit to a larger section, maybe to a book, and then we may even get to the place where we can see a theme that runs through Scripture from beginning to end.

Now, that is one of the reasons for the divisions among us, and that is one of the reasons for the lack of spiritual life among us in the full biblical sense, because we do not see the beauty of the message of the whole. Now, as far as I'm concerned, the longer I've lived, the more that has become the reason, I believe, in the inspiration of the Scripture. Because, you see, the thing was written over a period of how many centuries? Centuries upon centuries.

We do not even know exactly how long, because Emotus lived what, thirteen, fourteen hundred years before Christ? A millennium to a millennium and a half? And Abraham, a half a millennium just about before that? And then, what do you do with those early chapters of Genesis? And yet they all fit together and make a whole. Take, for instance, the Bible. It's very careful to tell us how everything begins.

We get in the beginning the story of creation in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Now, some people put those two chapters in conflict with each other, but to me it's beautiful. The one just simply tells us how the world got here, and the second one puts you and me right in the middle of it. Because the purpose of the world was not just to get a world here, the purpose was to get you here and to get me here.

Because persons are what God is after, and so the second chapter gets us right in the middle of it. Now, you will remember that over the last century we've had a lot of discussion in evangelical circles about whether it fits with science. Now, you'll forgive me for a minute, but let me tell you, when you get old there's some things that you don't have time to worry about.

I wouldn't give you a nickel for how he did it because I don't believe that's the main thrust of what is here. He is not even telling you what did it. You see, you go to the university and they will tell you about the Big Bang, and they'll tell you about these creative forces in the universe and all of this.

But the thrust here is not on a what or a how, but it's on a who. That is a radically different perspective on the universe, on human life, and on human history. There was one, a person, who began it all, and God wants that laid down in the beginning.

It wasn't natural law or any of that kind of thing. There is a person out there who started it, and he's going to wind it up. And the rest of this story is his story of making himself known to us.

His original purpose was that we should live in immediate, not mediate, but immediate fellowship with him, with nothing separating us, and we should know him as intimately as Elfie and I, after fifty years, know each other, and more intimately. Now that's what he wanted, and you will remember that they said, we'd rather do it our way. And that's the beginning of all the problems, doing it my way, and separating myself from his face.

Because the end of the creation story is Adam and Eve separated from the face of God. They no longer can see him face to face. Now I wish we had time, I wish I had the genius to spell that face thing out through the scripture.

But you know that's become very personal to me, and I understand that, because I've been married fifty years. And when I walk in the house, if I've been away from Elfie very long, first thing I do is look at her

face, not even listen to the tone of her voice, because I can tell by the lines of her face whether I'm in trouble or not. Now later on you get to Sinai, and you learn all sorts of things about the law, and you get to the New Testament, and you get the Sermon on the Mount, and all of this.

But the purpose of it all is for me to be able to read it, see his face, and read it, and know how I stand with him, and have him look at me and say, I'm pleased. You're my child. You belong to me, and there's nothing between us.

Because when that is true, everything is right. Or if it isn't right, it really doesn't matter. Because if that's true, you can handle anything else that ever comes.

So the first thing you get is, he begins to tell us, we come from a who. You get to the end of the Bible and it says we're going to a who. All right.

Now, sin, as we said, is simply my way instead of his. That's not because he is a Lord, a judge, who wants to impose, a master who wants to impose his way on me. He is a Father who knows what's best for me.

And as a loving Father, did you notice how many times Father is in that fourth chapter of the book of Romans? Do you know we tend to think of the book of Romans in terms of a court, and in terms of, we say, justification by faith, we tend to think of a courtroom. But if you read that fourth chapter, he is speaking about him as being our Father. Now that's a radically different relationship.

You will remember that after Adam and Eve fouled up, then along came Cain and Abel, and they didn't do any better. At least Cain didn't. And you will remember Cain was unhappy with his brother, and so he killed him.

And the end result was that he was driven out of the land, and the text says, the face of the Lord was hidden from him. Isn't that an interesting picture of the person who is lost, the person who doesn't know God? The face of the Lord is hidden from him. Now I think if I wanted to, I could make a case that that is the reference to the second person of the Blessed Trinity, because where is it that we see God face to face? We see him in the incarnation.

And why did he come? He didn't become one of us so we could see him and grasp him in our turn. You see, if he had never become incarnate, you'd have to read Karl Barth and systematic theology to know what he was like. But because he's become incarnate, he is not abstract truth, he is a person, and we can see that he's a person, and we can walk with him, and we can talk with him, and we can know him, and we can be known by him.

You see, the problem of sin is that it makes a hide from him, and the incredible thing is he wants to know me. Do you remember that in Galatians, Paul says at one point to these Galatians, he says, there was a time when you knew God, but then you decided you were going to do it your own way. No, he said, I said that wrong.

It isn't that there was a time when you knew God, there was a time when you were known by God. Now, you see, if you're just simply a metaphysician and a philosopher, the very thought that there's somebody that the omniscient one doesn't know, what is omniscience? It is all knowledge. But do you know there is a world of people that he does not know? Why? Because they will not permit him to know them, and that kind of knowledge is something that cannot be forced or imposed.

I've got to look at him and say, I'm willing for you to know me. That's the reason it all begins with repentance, because if I'm willing to let him know me, I begin to find out how far I am from what he wants me to do, and then if I'm willing to let him know me, then he will begin to say, you know, I can tell you, and I can make you what deep in your own spirits you would like to be, because you were made for me, and you were made for truth and righteousness and holiness. But Cain was separated from the face of God.

Then you get the story of the whole world, and you will remember when you get to chapter 6, we are told that he looked upon the world and found that it was evil and evil only, that every thought and every imagination of our hearts was evil. It is the strongest word in the Old Testament for evil. And he says, this is what the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts were.

And so he said, we will have to do something about it, and so the flood came, and the judgment came. Judgment on Adam and Eve, judgment on Cain, judgment now from the whole world. And but in that whole world he found one man and his family, and with that he started over again.

Then when you finish the flood story, you get the story of Babel. All mankind had one language, and we were united. We were exactly what the politicians would like for us to be, because think what a prize it would be if all the nations of the world were one nation and you could run for czar or king or emperor or president.

It's exactly what the politicians would love, you know. And God said, but you have something wrong in your heart. There is an arrogant pride there that you want to build a name for yourself.

And so he said, I will have to disperse them. So he divided the languages, and we've been fighting that battle ever since. Because our unity, if it is not in him, will be destructive and not redemptive.

Now you get that message, you see, of God being gracious, man-sinning, and judgment coming. But you know, I lived that way for a long time saying, wait until I sin, he'll swat me. And you know, that instant fear that he'd swat you.

For years I missed something in all of these chapters. Are you aware that in every case of judgment in the first 11 chapters of Genesis, there is also a profound testimony to his graciousness and his love and his mercy? Now you've got to remember that this is very old literature. If you have trouble reading Shakespeare, can you imagine this thing, how much older this is than Shakespeare? And it is done very cryptically, because we do not know how long the span of time that those 11 chapters cover.

So it is done in briefer, more terse form than telegraphic. But the message is clear. You will remember that when he said, if you're not going to walk with me, then you've got to live out there on your own, and you'll need protection.

And so he closed them and continued to feed and care for them. You will remember that with Cain, Cain said, every man's hand will be against me. They will know I'm a murderer.

My life will be destroyed. And so God put some kind of mark on him, so that men were afraid to kill him. You will remember that in the flood story, when it's over with, he makes a covenant with nature and says it'll never happen again.

And when he comes to Babel, he has the most interesting, there is the most interesting and significant testimony to grace of all. In every one of these judgments, God is saying, I don't want to destroy you.

There is a priceless line in chapter 6, where it says, he looked and saw that every thought, every imagination of our hearts, every plan was evil.

And it says, the King James says, he repented. But the word is not where a person repents for a sin. Do you know that when you repent, if you really repent, you're in profound sorrow? So there are two elements for repentance for you and me.

One of them is remorse morally, ethically, and the other is remorse personally, because we've offended the one who loves us most, and we're sorry we did it. That word used there of him repenting is that second use. It is his sorrow that's in his heart.

And then Genesis goes on to say, and there was pain in the heart of God. Now it's interesting, the early theologians didn't know what to do with that in the Christian church, because they were under the influence of Greek philosophy, and they believed that God was perfect, and if you were perfect, you'd never have any regrets. And if you were perfect, you'd never have any pain.

But the first picture that we get of the God of Scripture is one who has pain in his heart, because his children have wandered from him. They care more about his gifts than they do about him. Can you picture what it would be to have a little of this world's goods, have a half a dozen children, pour out your life for them, give them everything they needed, and then you get to the place where you were aware they were saying, ah, if the old man had gone, we could divide up the estate.

That's the picture of us. We're much more interested in his gifts than we are in him. And he says, but if you get my gifts without me, they are destroyed.

Do you know the most pitiful two people in the world at the present moment are the two people that won that lottery? I think I'd rather be in Yugoslavia. Can you imagine? Their chances are just about zilch. But you see, we want his gifts.

And he says, I want to give you my gifts. That's what I've made this whole business for. But if you get them without me, they will destroy.

So, the first picture you get is one. Now, here's why I believe the Scripture is inspired. Do you know what is implicit in that sixth verse of the sixth chapter of Genesis? When there is pain in the heart of God over our sin, you don't see the fullness of that for how many thousands of you? And where do you see it? On a cross, on a hill outside of Jerusalem, when a father turns his back on his own son and says, if I'm to get my other children back, son, you've got to go this way.

I used to think that Jesus was the main character in the gospel of John. But if you read it carefully, he's not the main character at all. It's the father who's the main character, because the son is his representative.

And the ambassador to Japan is not the first American. The first American is the one who he represents in the White House. And everything that takes place in that embassy in Japan is controlled by the White House.

The White House is the key to every embassy in the world. And what's taking place on Calvary, Jesus is the ambassador, and the father is the architect of it all. Now, the heart of God in pain over our waywardness.

He's not a judge in the sense of waiting to sentence the guilty. He's a father trying to recover his children. Now, what's the word of grace in the story of Babel? Now he disperses us.

We're scattered across the earth with all the language problems that we've got. It's interesting that every university in the world is a testimony to the rightness of Genesis 11, because there's not a university in the world that doesn't have a foreign language department. I love these little unconscious witnesses to God, to Scripture.

I read the New York Times two or three times a week just to keep up with what the opposition is thinking. I don't know any seat that's more hostile to biblical Christianity than the New York Times. But what I love is that they pay tribute to him every morning.

The second line on the front page. The New York Times. What's the date? July 11, 1943 A.D. Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess, because he's Lord.

He started it and he's in sovereign control. And one of these days, men will look and things like that will turn brilliantly light. And they'll say, for heaven's sakes, the witnesses have been around us all through these years and we never had the eyes to see them.

Now, what is the act of grace in connection with that dispersion? Do you know what it is? It's a guy like you or a person like me. He tells about the judgment and then the next thing is, he introduces Abraham and he gives Abraham to the world. Do you know what the ultimate answer to all of our problems is? The right person.

He didn't build a church, because the church is not what we need, ultimately. We need the church. But that's not the primary need.

It's not a government. It's a person. It is not an institution.

And it's interesting, it's not even the law. I love the fact that Sinai doesn't come until the second book of the Bible. If we'd had Sinai, Exodus and Leviticus in Genesis, what a mess we'd be in, because we couldn't see so clearly.

One man, and with one man he starts the redemption of the world. Now, what kind of man was he? He was a man that didn't have a Bible, and I say person. He could have done it with a woman.

Who knows who it was that witnessed Abraham. It was a woman that witnessed to me. I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for that.

So when we talk about a man, let's don't get hung up on which sect it was. But anyway, he had no Bible, he didn't have the Ten Commandments, he had no religious ritual, he had no church, he had no theology that we know about, he had no creed, no ritual or liturgy of any kind. He didn't even have a hymn book or a gospel chorus.

And God said, but I can take him, and we can begin the redemption of the world. Now, what is there about Abraham that makes him the model for us all? Do you know, when we lead a person to Christ, we immediately begin telling him the things he's to do and the relationships he's supposed to establish. But you see, Genesis says there's only one relationship that is central, essential, and that's your relationship to the Lord.

You see, Genesis just takes everything secondary and takes it out. Everything secondary and gets down to the one primary thing. Now, there's a word which is used about him which is very interesting.

It says that God said to him, walk before me and be thou perfect. That's some word, isn't it? Be thou perfect. But you see, that word does not mean perfection the way we think about it.

What he's talking about is not perfection in relation to a law, an all-encompassing demand. What he's talking about is a relationship with another person, and the standard for rightness between you and a person is different than the standard of rightness between you and another person. That's what Paul is getting at in the book of Romans.

Now, let me illustrate. You're aware that John Wesley preached what was called Christian perfection, and a lot of the theologians, you know, had hemorrhages because he used that. But it's a biblical term.

I love the contradiction, wait a minute, the supposed contradictions in Scripture. You remember that in, what is it, in the twelfth verse of chapter three of Philippians, Paul says about himself, not as though I were already perfect, I press on. And then three verses later he says, let those of us who are perfect be thus mine.

So one breath he says I'm not, and the next breath he says he is. Now, you've got to take the two usages as legitimate usages in different ways. Now, what is this idea of Tamin? It's interesting, the people that it's used about.

It's used about Noah. Noah was Tamin. Then it is used about Abraham here, he is told to be that.

You will remember that Job came from a world remarkably like Abraham, and it says that he was Tamin. Now, I want to tell you what I think it means. I had the privilege of hearing many times Henry Clay Morrison.

You notice next door there is Morrison Hall. He was the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary, president of this institution for 25 years. Incredible creature.

He had an incredible gift in being able to picture the gospel right in front of your eyes. He was a good enough actor that you were not aware that he was acting. I will never forget as a kid hearing him tell a story about a July summer day in Kentucky when the temperature was 100 degrees and there was no air conditioning.

And he and his family were sitting out on the porch trying to get a breath of air and his grandson came up and said, Grandpa, would you like a drink of water? And the grandfather said, My, that would be perfect. Now, being a grandfather, I think he meant two things. I'd like to have the water because I'm thirsty, but I'd love to see you care about somebody else.

So, I'm excited that you want to do something like that for me. So, he said, the kid disappeared. In a few minutes, little tight, he came back with a glass of water and as he handed it to him, he had his finger inside the rim and his hands were dirty.

And he said, I watched the dirty water from his finger run down in my glass of water and looked at him and said, Thank you, honey. You couldn't have done anything that would have pleased me more. And he said, I joyously drank the glass of water, muddy water and all.

Now, that's a father. And I think that's the kind of thing that Genesis is getting at. And that's the reason we get Genesis and Abraham.

And do you notice the first book in the Bible, once you get rid of the first five chapters, all you've got is persons. You don't have institutions. After you get through, well, take the whole thing.

What have you got? Adam and Eve and Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph. You know, Mark has 16 chapters in it and tells the whole story of the life of Christ. And Genesis spends 13 chapters on Abraham and 13 chapters on Joseph.

And the longest chapter in the book of Genesis is Isaac sending his servant to get a wife for his son. It's your world and mine. It's not this esoteric, theological, religious world.

It's your world and mine. He's looking for persons. Now, he's a father and he's a friend.

You will remember that what they said about Abraham was, God said, he's my friend. You notice the relationship. Now, that explains something in the book of Genesis that now is very precious to me.

Do you know the emphasis in Genesis? In spite of this, if you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you're in trouble, or you're not supposed to kill your brother, or you're not supposed to have more than one wife with Lamech, or keep on going, you're not supposed to be evil. In spite of all those, you're not supposed to, and Adam and Eve should have obeyed, Cain should have obeyed. Do you know what the figure, the paradigm for the life that pleases God in the book of Genesis is? It isn't obedience.

And in fact, it really doesn't go much about righteousness. But do you know what the paradigm for us are? And Paul picks it up. It is in that word, W-A-L-K, with a preposition after it to religious.

Walk with. Now, there are a lot of things that come in the days ahead. That's true of marriage.

When Elsie and I got married 50 years ago, we walked down to Broadway Methodist Church in Schenectady, New York, sat down in the front seat of an automobile that I borrowed, and I looked over at her and thought, am I hooked to her forever? Apprehension, fear, what's going to come in this relationship? You know, I've learned all sorts of things that I have to do. I have to pick up. Do you know I never picked up a stitch of clothing in my life except to put it on until I got married? Why pick it up? Just ask anybody who was in school with me here, and then I'd see her face.

She didn't have to say a word. So, man, I learned to pick up everything except in my studies. And occasionally, she frats scowls about that.

But I learned that there's a lot to this business of walking with somebody. But, man, you can be the most perfect picker up in the world, and not know the person you live with. Now, God wants that kind of relationship.

You notice it says, and Enoch walked with God. We don't know anything about the content of that in terms of religious activity or even ethical activity. But what we do know is it was a personal relationship.

And it was so good that one day God, Meyerson used to tell about how Enoch and the Lord would take walks together. And in the evening, the Lord would go home. And then the next morning, the Lord would come back, and they'd take another walk together.

And then one day, at the end of the day, the Lord said, Enoch, this is too much fun. Don't go home. I'll take you home with me.

And so he was not, because the Lord took him. Now, that's the Genesis picture of what I'm supposed to live, how I'm supposed to be when I'm supposed to live. You will remember that that's what's said about Noah.

Noah walked with God. And because he walked with God, there was another chance for the world. And Abraham, at the end of his days, said to his servant, when he sent him to get a wife, not a wife for Isaac, I misstated that earlier, in that twenty-fourth chapter, that magnificent twenty-fourth chapter.

When the servant was speaking to Laban about his daughter, you will remember he said, my master said, the God before whom the Lord, Yahweh, before whom I have walked all my days, will let him look with pleasure on him. And if he doesn't, you've fulfilled your responsibility. Abraham understood his whole life as a walk with God.

I think that's the reason he made him leave her in the Calvary, not because he couldn't do something in her in the Calvary. He can do it anywhere, but he wanted to teach him to walk with Him. That's the reason I suspect the missionary is a better example of what a Christian ought to be than you and I are.

But in reality, in principle, a Christian is a person who turns the control of his life, where he's going, what he's going to do, how he's going to live, what he's going to be, turns all that over to somebody else. Now, our time is going too fast, but if you have any question about that thing about faith, you will remember that God said to Moses, I want you to lead my people out of Egypt through the wilderness, through a sea out there, no bridges. And Moses said, whom are you going to send with us? And Exodus, our translation says, my presence will go with you.

But the Hebrew just simply says, my faith will go with you. I like that, because that's what he meant, that kind of personal relationship and intimacy. Now, how does it begin? It begins with an encounter, because that's the only way you get to know people.

You'll forgive me, but I could take you to the spot where I became conscious of Elsa the first time, in this building. When I became conscious of her, the next step was how do I meet her? I could take you to the spot on the walkway in front of Morrison Library, where I spoke to her the first time. I could take you to the spot where I met her the first time.

Encounter, personal encounter, that's the way it all begins. And do you know, every time a person meets him, you've got the potential for the redemption of the world, isn't it? Because that's what it's all about. God says, how can I redeem my world? Every time you get a human being in face-to-face encounter with God, you've got the potential for the redemption of the world.

J.B. Trout, where are you? Come here, J.B. One of the things I like when you get old, you can take advantage of people. Run. The clock's running, so you run.

He's young, he can do it. One of the most interesting things in the current world scene is the story of an encounter of God with a fellow named Bruce Wilkinson. Am I right about that, J.B.? I think you are.

Will you tell him? God has done one of the greatest things I've seen in my lifetime, putting together a commission, 70 organizations coming together to refresh us. How did that happen? God had to have a

man. About two years ago, about two minutes ago.

Oh, take your time. Well, God began to work, and Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, who was the president of Walk Through the Bible, began to work in his heart. How many of you are familiar with Walk Through the Bible? Good.

Devotional guy. And I don't have time to tell you the whole story, but there were some real miracles that took place, particularly when Bruce was speaking. The Association of Christian Schools out in California, 8,000 teachers.

Now, God used a lady who went to Romania, and the Romanians wanted Bruce to come to Romania to teach the Bible. He said he was too busy, he couldn't go. But through a miracle encounter he had with the lady, Bruce began to think about what God had done.

Tell him about the encounter. And so as he went home in September, he got along with God, and he said for two hours he laid prostrate on the floor. He put Walk Through the Bible, which he loved dearly, on the altar.

He put his family, he put his wife, he put his home, he put everything, he put his life on the altar. He said when he got up, everything was great. He was full of tears.

And it was a new day for Dr. Wilkinson. He said, who should know about this? He said, Paul Eshlin should know about this. Because 10 years before, Paul Eshlin had asked Bruce if he was prepared, the Bible study for the Jesus Film Project.

And Bruce said, I'm too busy someday. He began to talk to Paul. He began to share with him what God had done in his life.

And Bruce had a goal. He said, I want to teach the Bible to 100 million people. So he shared that with Paul Eshlin.

Paul said, does it matter whether it's in the U.S. or overseas? And Dr. Wilkinson said, it doesn't matter. So out of that has come the commission, and it's come a whole new relationship with Bruce Wilkinson. He's God's man.

He's given leadership to this great army, this great task force. How did it happen? Because up until, I believe, that time Bruce had finished studying Walk Through the Bible, some of the goals and some of the ambitions that Bruce had, I think you'd say the same thing if you were here, were more important than really following God's total Wilkinson's life. So I think that's what Dr. Kinloch was talking about, is that encounter.

And it really comes to a place where you put all you have on the altar and the Holy Spirit's in charge. Yeah, tell them about the chapel that came here. Well, I want to prove the challenge, because I don't think there's anybody in the U.S. right now that can communicate the vision, the challenge, the reason why I showed the gospel by Dr. Wilkinson.

Not because he's a good communicator, but because his heart's been broken. I wanted to come to Ashbury, and on March 31st, we had a chapel right here. And as we came across the street, Bruce said, you know, he said, I'm a little nervous this morning.

He said, I had four days of ministry this previous year. I had four days of synagogue college. I've got 30 minutes.

How can we share what God has done in Russia and challenged through the Bible? We pray. And Bruce shared his heart, and in the chapel he asked for the music. I told Bruce how great the music was here, but I don't think I've heard four singing in that morning.

I don't know what was wrong. I think the devil must have been trying to block the work of the Spirit. There was going to be a play, and so there was the five gentlemen, and he said, we don't thank you, but we have an offer for you.

And, uh, but, uh, you know, Bruce was quiet when I was sitting here. He said, who's the first young man that will make up the Asbury one house? No one came. Finally, a young lady, right back there, almost in the back, came to the wall.

She said, we'll take her. And it took 20 minutes for a hundred and seven hoosters of Asbury to come forward and say, we want to go to Russia. If God opens up the Holy House, it's possible.

I haven't been in many services in Russia. It's very, very stressful. I pray to God for that.

That's what the Holy Spirit is doing. And Bruce, he was close to that. Do you understand me when I say that when one person meets God, really meets God, you've got, in that moment, the potential for the redemption of the world.

And that's the purpose of the Summer Assembly. And if you leave here on Wednesday, and you haven't met him, then it really wouldn't have been worthwhile. But if there's one person who meets him in these four days, someday the story will be written.

It'll be a story remarkably like Genesis, and it will be a story in time and space, not just in eternity. You know, there are a lot of us that are a lot more willing for him to save our souls than we are for him to save our lives. Will you let him save your life? If you will, human history will be different.

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