

The Secret of Holiness

by Dennis Kinlaw

Dennis Kinlaw's sermon explores how God seeks individuals to make a difference in the world, culminating in the incarnation of Christ as the ultimate answer to humanity's need for salvation.

Duration: 57:08

Scripture: Isaiah 5:1-7, Isaiah 42:3, Isaiah 59:1-2, Isaiah 59:4-5, Isaiah 59:9-10, Isaiah 59:15-16, Ezekiel 22:25-29

Topics: "Holiness"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of finding just one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth in order to bring salvation and forgiveness to a city. The speaker refers to several passages from the book of Isaiah to illustrate this point. The sermon also touches on the idea of how one person's salvation can be found in another, highlighting the need for individuals to pursue and support each other. The speaker concludes by discussing the pain and challenges that may arise in the process of God's redemptive work, but encourages Christians not to shy away from it.

Transcript

One of the interesting things that has taken place in American culture in the last 30 years, and a lot of people have commented on this, is the disappearance of the hero. And if you will read the literature on the films and on literature, you will find that we have had a period of the emergence of what they have called the anti-hero. I think that's one of the reasons that Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North made such an impact on this country.

Because I think we had reached a place where we felt that one person can't make a difference. Now there are reasons why we came to the place where we felt one person could not make a difference. I'm not about to go into all those.

I don't know enough to analyze all those. But all you have to do is think of things like the day when a single individual could be a pioneer and could push the frontiers of human experience and human knowledge. And so we had our Daniel Boone's and we had our Columbus's and this kind of thing.

But now when you talk about pushing the frontiers in space, you're talking about thousands of people and billions of dollars to get it done. So you may have an occasional name. But it's interesting how you forget the early names of the people who moved in there because it is a group venture and almost a culture venture.

Now the same thing has happened in terms of scientific discoveries too. One of the problems in giving Nobel Prizes anymore is the fact that so oftentimes an individual single-handedly has not achieved what he did. But I had a whole group of researchers that worked with him and he would just see perhaps a central cog.

And so it's departments in major universities, research departments, or research departments in big corporations and this kind of things. And the individual gets lost in the mass, in our technologically advanced age. But you know, if you will read the scripture, it seems to me that the scripture indicates that as far as God is concerned, one single individual can be incredibly important.

Now I've been interested in finding some passages in the Old Testament that pick this up. And I now am convinced it is a motif that is in the Old Testament that I really don't think I've ever heard anybody discuss. There are five passages which present to us the picture of God looking for an answer to the human problem, an answer to man's condition.

And in every one of those five cases he says, I look for a person. I look for a person. And the implication in the passage is that if I could have found one person, there would have been a way to do something about it.

But because it could not find one person, there was a sense in which God's hands were tied as to normal ways of working and so then God had to act himself. Now the first of these is in the tail end of chapter 41 of the book of Isaiah. He says, I stirred up one from the north and he comes, verse 25.

One from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay. Who told of this from the beginning so we could know, or beforehand so we could say he was right? No one told us of this.

No one foretold it. No one heard any words from you. I was the first to tell Zion.

Look, here they are. I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings. Now here's the verse.

Listen to this. Verse 28. I look, but there is no one.

There is not a single individual. The Hebrew is there is no man, no ish, and it's the Hebrew word for an individual person in isolation. I look, but there is no one.

No one among them to give counsel. No one to give answer when I ask them. See, they are all false.

Their deeds amount to nothing. Their images are but wind and confusion. Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight.

I will put my spirit on him, and he will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or cry out or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.

In faithfulness he will bring forth justice. He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.

Now it's an interesting passage in that God is looking, and he says, I looked for one person, couldn't find him. So he said, I had to send my servant. Now the second passage is in Isaiah 59, and I'm going to labor the scriptures for a few minutes so that you, I hope you will have them, at least you will have heard about

them so they will begin to stick in your head because it's the way they relate to each other that lays the basis of what I want to share.

The 59th chapter of Isaiah is a fascinating chapter and an incredibly miserable one. Now it begins gloriously because in the beginning of the 59th chapter it says, surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save nor his ear too dull to hear. There's nothing wrong with the power of God and there's nothing wrong with the willingness of God to hear.

His arm is fully able to save and his ear is ready to listen. And then he says, but your iniquities are separated between you and me. And so you cannot pray so I can hear you and there's nothing I can do.

Then describes what to me reads like a Detroit race riot. Justice is perished in the society. There is no such thing as concern for individuals other than to exploit them.

He says, it is dark enough that men stumble in the middle of the day when the sun is at the meridian, when the sun is directly above. Men stumble in the darkness like blind men who are groping for a wall to find their way. And he says that's the way it is with Israel, God's people.

And then you come down after that to verse 16. Let me read verse 15. Truth is nowhere to be found and whoever shuns evil becomes a victim.

The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. He saw that there was no one. Now that's the translation I have.

The Hebrew says there was no man. No gender in that. It's an individual.

There was no individual person. He saw that there was no one. He was appalled that there was no one to intervene.

So his own arm worked salvation for him and his own righteousness sustained him. He put on righteousness as his breastplate and the helmet of salvation on his head. He put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.

Now you will notice the passage, the thrust of what is being said. He said here is this incredibly horrible situation when I have no option but judgment. Evil is so abounding that people are consuming each other.

And so he says I will have to act. I did not want to act in judgment. I wanted to act in mercy and look for one person.

Now the implication I think is clear. If I could have found one person it would have been impossible to have turned it around. But when I couldn't find one person he said I had, when there was no one to intervene God says so his own arm worked salvation for him.

Now remember that expression his own arm worked salvation. Now the third of these passages is in Isaiah 63. Who is this coming from Edom, from Basra with his garments stained crimson? Who is this robed in splendor striding forward in the greatness of his strength? It is I speaking in righteousness mighty to save.

Why are your garments red like those of one treading the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone from the nations no one was with me. I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath. Their

blood spattered my garments and I stained all my clothing.

For the day of vengeance was in my heart and the year of my redemption has come. You see he is pouring out judgment upon the earth and he is looking for a way so that judgment can be halted and he can redeem. Now notice this verse.

I looked but there was no one to help. I was appalled that no one gave support. So my own arm worked salvation for me.

You notice in 59 it said when there was no one God had to show his own arm. In this passage same thing. When there was no one God had to show his own arm.

Now the fourth of these passages is in Isaiah 5. Beginning at the beginning of the street. Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem. Look around and consider.

Search through her squares. If you can find but one person. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth I will forgive this city.

It is as if the salvation of the whole city of Jerusalem the city of God hangs on one person but he can't find one person. Although they say as surely as the Lord lives still they are swearing falsely. O Lord do not your eyes look for truth.

You struck them but they felt no pain. You crushed them but they refused correction. They made their faces harder than stone and refused to repent.

I thought these are only the poor. They are foolish. For they do not know the way of the Lord the requirements of their God.

Now that passage is a passage about the people of God and the city of God in Jerusalem. Now the fifth passage is in Ezekiel and it's chapter 22. And it's a familiar passage I suspect to a great many of you.

In it he describes the people of God Israel and what has happened to them. He tells about how their leaders have become corrupt and their only interest is in what they can get and they will do anything to anybody to get what they want. The leaders of the people, the princes.

Her priests do violence to my law and profane my holy things. They can't distinguish anymore between the holy and the common, the unclean. Her officials, again her princes within her are like wolves tearing their prey.

They shed blood and kill people to make unjust gain. What about the prophets? Her prophets whitewash these deeds and instead of rebuking the culture put their approval upon the evil deeds of the princes and the priests. They whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations.

They say this is what the sovereign Lord says when the Lord has not spoken. I looked for a man. I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it but I found none.

So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger bringing down their own heads because all they have done declares the sovereign Lord. Now you will notice there's one consistent theme in all of these. God says the culture is in a great mess.

The culture merits my judgment. The people of God are not any better than the worldlings around them. So that the pagans and the nominal people of God are equally sinful before me and I look for something.

I look for something that I could do and I look for a person and I couldn't find a person. Now it's interesting. Those passages come from the most serious period in Israel's history.

Isaiah was looking forward to the collapse of the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah. Jeremiah was in the collapse of the southern kingdom after the northern kingdom had disappeared, the kingdom of Judah. And Ezekiel was in Babylon after the collapse.

So it was in that period when the people of God were carried into captivity because of their sins. God said, if I could have found one person. Now, in each case when he said, if I could have found one person, when I couldn't find one person, my own arm brought salvation.

Now, I kick that around. Is it possible that one person makes a difference? Then it began to dawn on me. God said, I needed one person and when I couldn't find one person, you know what he did? Now this excited me.

He became one. When he couldn't find a human, he became a human. And that's the whole story of Bethlehem, isn't it? You will remember the angel said, you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Which is Emmanuel, God with us. And God with us in the form of a person. Now, I want to share something that I'm not sure I can say with complete theological accuracy everything I want to say.

So, if once or twice something I say sounds a little heretical, stick with me in the general thrust of what I'm saying. I preached part of this recently and I had a lady come up to me after she was very distressed. I said, well, stick with me.

About the fourth night she came to me and said, I'm glad I stuck with you. So, you stick with me. But it's interesting, God says, I wanted to save the world.

And I couldn't find a person, a human being. So, I became one. Now, I want to suggest something.

It is very clear that the gospel says there is no salvation except in God. There is no salvation except in God. There's nothing saving in us.

It is when God in Christ died that we were redeemed. It wasn't Jesus. It wasn't Mary's son as a human being that is our redemption.

I remember a great theologian that I heard early in my ministry saying to a group of liberal Methodist preachers, he said, I can split you right down the middle on one question. And he said, the way you answer that question determines whether you have a gospel or not. That question is, was Jesus the son of Mary who became the son of God? Or was he the son of God who became the son of Mary? And he said, if you think he was the son of Mary who became the son of God, you have no good news.

But if he was the son of God who became the son of Mary, you have a gospel and you ought to go preach it. There's redemption there. Now, you will notice the Scripture is clear that only in God is there saving power.

But isn't it interesting that his saving us hinged on him becoming one of us. And he became so much one of us that the priests said when he was dying, they said, see, he can't be the Messiah. He's one of us because he dies just like we die.

Now, you notice our theme is Christ in you, the hope of glory. I'm convinced that God is still looking for individuals. Now, he is not going to save the world now by becoming a man again.

He's done that and he's done that eternally. And when we see him, when we see God, we will meet God in Christ and we'll see the scars in his hands. But if he's to reach the world now, he's looking for individuals, individuals.

Now, you know, I've seen some places where one individual did make a difference. And if you go through church history, you will find there are cases where one individual is the center of something that causes a spark, that causes a radical change to take place. Even the course of history can be changed by one individual.

Now, let me use some smaller illustrations first. Elsie came from Schenectady, New York. That area was about as blighted spiritually as any area that you could find anywhere in the world.

That was the area that Charles G. Finney moved over in the 19th century. And great revival swept across central New York just to the west of Schenectady. But Schenectady was involved in that.

And when Elsie was born in Schenectady, it was as rankly liberal. Any evangelical witness was almost non-existent. It's 15, 17 miles from Albany, which in a good bit of the 20th century has been the second most important political city in the country, providing governor after governor who became president from Franklin D. Roosevelt on down the line.

Well, anyway, I remember when we were there, when we were 30, they put together two little CNMA churches in Albany, New York, to get a Sunday school of 95. That was the strongest evangelical witness in what I suspect was the second most important political city in the country, anyway. One preacher came into that area.

He was a young Presbyterian. His name was Herbert McKeel. And somewhere or other, he got a call to be the pastor of the first Presbyterian church, which was the oldest church in the community.

1787 built, or something like this, you know. Right in the center of town. Cemetery around it.

Middle of town. Historic church. He became known as the only person in that city's history who built two churches.

The first Presbyterian church with people who led to Christ, and the second Reformed church with the people who couldn't take his preaching and went to the second Reformed church. He began his Sunday evening service with seven people in his study, teaching on the book of Revelation, and began to teach about the second coming. And these people were horrified.

The Vassar graduates and the Harvard graduates. He always managed to keep a majority of one on his board, his session. I suspect there are 20 evangelical churches within 50 miles of that church now that came out of that one man's ministry.

I had the chance to get to know him. He was one of the most amazing men I ever knew. He was a bachelor.

Laid his life on the line for the gospel. And it was interesting. He made a radical difference in a whole community.

Now at the same time, there was a man in Boston whose name was Harold John Ockingay, who had the same burden for New England that Herbert McKeel had for that section of New York. I pastored a church for eight years that came out of that Herbert Surface McKeel ministry. But I'll never forget, I was very impressed by it.

First time I had ever seen a congregation that I could take as I felt as a model. So I asked for an appointment with him. I was a young preacher.

And I went into his study, the most impressive study I was ever in. He had the largest personal library of any preacher I've ever met. He'd read his scripture lessons Sunday morning out of the Greek New Testament and translate his own lesson as he went.

But I walked in his study, you know, sort of shy. I walked in this door and he was sitting behind a desk way at the end of his study and he looked up and said, Good morning, Dennis. Are you happily married? He was a bachelor.

And the way he said it, I knew Elsie and I were half way to the divorce court. There was that incriminating tone in his voice. And I stumbled and stuttered and said, Why, yes.

Good. What'd you want? That was before I got to the middle of the room. He was an expert in counseling, as you see.

So, I went over and with courage, sat down. And I looked across at him and I said, Dr. McKeel, if you were beginning your ministry again, how would you feel about beginning it in a big, great, liberal denomination? He stuck his head down. And when his head came up, his eyes were flashing like fire.

He said, You Methodists, you're the most narrow-minded, church-bound, bigoted people on the face of the earth. Let the whole world die and go to hell. You'll be true to your Methodism.

And I blinked. And I didn't know what to do. So, I laughed.

And when I laughed, I looked at him and said, I notice you're a Presbyterian. And he looked back at me and then he grunted. And he looked down again and he said, Well, if I had it to do over again, you don't think I would be, would you? I suspect he would.

But nevertheless, he said, What I'd do would be find a few people who wanted the blessing of God on their lives and wanted to witness for them and find a street corner somewhere and start to work. Now, that was the passion of his soul. I used to hear him pray.

When I heard him pray, I knew something of the secret of why that area was transformed. Now, in Boston, the first pastor that I ever had at 20 was three country churches in the mountains of Vermont, back up in the Green Mountains. And I remember after about the third or fourth week, the main lady in the church came to me and said, Are you sure you're a Methodist? And I said, What do you mean? Of course I'm a Methodist.

Lifetime Methodist. Well, you surely don't sound like one. I said, What do you mean? She said, You sound like a Baptist to us.

And I said, Why do I sound like a Baptist? She said, You preach out of the Bible. That was New England. That was New England.

There was almost nothing evangelical there. The clerks in the dime store would look at you and say, You're a southerner. You're conservative.

You probably believe in the virgin birth. This kind of thing. We don't believe in that stuff up here.

That was the simplest lay people that were this way. Harold John Ockinga said, This is an area that God needs. So he got a call to the downtown Park Street Congregational Church.

It's interesting. The strongest movement, religious-wise, in New England today is solid evangelicalism. It came out of that man's ministry.

I was on the board of Christianity Today after Harold John Ockinga died. One of his chief laymen, who's on the board of Christianity Today, said, Now that Harold is dead, I want to share a very personal, private story. He said, Dr. Ockinga carried the burden for New England.

And he said he carried it royally. Then he said, God put his anointing on Billy Graham in the Tent Crusade in Hollywood, and he said he made the contacts to bring him to New England. And he said, One day, Billy Graham, during that crusade, came in to see Ockinga.

And Ockinga's secretary said, He's in his study, go on in. So he said, I walked on in, and there was nobody there. And he said, But I heard somebody.

And he said the person was groaning. And he said it was a groaning, but he said I knew the person was in desperate condition. And he said, I listened, and the sound came from behind his desk.

So he said, I went to look. And he said I couldn't believe my eyes. There was a lump underneath the rug on the floor of Harold John Ockinga's study.

And he said to my horror, it dawned on me that it was Ockinga under that carpet, the rug, pleading, praying, talking with God. Now I've lived long enough to see the impact of one like. Christianity today, he was a key figure in its beginning.

He was a key figure in the beginning of Fuller Theological Seminary. He was a key figure in the founder of the NAE. He was a key figure, if you find anything significant in American evangelicalism over a 45 year period, the chances are Harold John Ockinga was right in the middle of it.

But the interesting thing to me is the kind of prayer life the guy had. Now that takes me to this. I could go on with other people who've changed history.

But I've seen a few. Now I noticed that in Isaiah 59, he said, I looked for a man and was astonished, the Hebrew word is strong, astounded that there was no intercessor. Now apparently that's what God is looking for.

That is, if he can find an intercessor, he's got a chance. And if he can't find an intercessor, not even God can save. Now, what is an intercessor? I used to think an intercessor was a fellow who made a list, you know, went down it.

I don't want to scorn that. Ockinga did that regularly and kept a record of when his prayers were answered. He kept a diary of his prayer requests.

And when an answer came, he'd mark the date that it was answered. I don't want to... But I have checked, I checked the Hebrew word on intercessor. It's an interesting word.

It doesn't occur many times in the Old Testament. I want to talk some Hebrew, so you be patient with me and stick with me and I think it'll make sense before I get through. The root idea, in the word which is translated intercessor, Hebrew word is mafgia, the root idea in the verb is to encounter or to meet.

It is used of two people that meet each other. But it is used in a special form in this passage, an intercessor. It is used in what is called in Hebrew a causative form, a hypheal form.

And what it means is, the one, I look for one who caused to meet. I look for one who caused to meet. Now I can see that as an intercessor.

The person who's got a God over here and a lost world over here and he causes them to meet. But now the question is, how does he cause them to meet? I noticed when I checked my dictionary, in Hebrew dictionaries, a good one will give you all the reference, all the places where word occurs in the Old Testament. So I noticed the word occurred twice in Isaiah 53 and I went to Isaiah 53.

Now you know Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 is the passage about the suffering servant. All we like sheep have gone astray, we've turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all.

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But now notice this passage where that form occurs. He says, Surely he took up, surely he hath borne our infirmities, this translation, what it is is our sicknesses.

Surely he has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows. Hebrew word is pains. He's borne our sicknesses and carried our pains.

But we thought he was stricken by God, smitten by God and afflicted. It's interesting. We thought God dumped them on him.

And what he's getting at is he took them. Remember the difference. It is not the Father dumping our sins on him, our sicknesses and our pains.

He took them. We thought God dumped them on him, but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all like sheep have gone astray. Each one of us has turned to his own way, and the Lord has, now you know the line, laid on him the iniquity of us all. Do you know what the Hebrew says? The Hebrew says, the Lord has caused to meet in him the iniquity of us all.

So there's the intercessor. The one who had meeting in himself everything he wanted to save us from. Now the word's used twice in Isaiah 53.

It's used again in verse 12 at the end of the chapter where he says, I will give him a portion among the great, and he'll divide his spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors, for he bore, he carried the sins of many, and he made intercession. What the Hebrew is, he caused to meet in himself the transgressions of us all. Now that's changed my notion of what intercession is.

I thought of intercession as kneeling here and saying, now that guy over there, he needs help. You ought to help him, Lord. I keep my distance, and I keep my lack of him involved.

But when Jesus became an intercessor, the kind of person that God was looking for, what did he do? He identified himself with us. He became one of us. He not only identified himself with us, he took upon himself our problems and our burdens.

And when he took them upon him, something happened that made it possible for us to be relieved from them. Now I want to tell you where I am on that, and maybe in another session I'll have a chance to develop this a little more so it will make a little sense. But you know, our freedom lay in his intercession.

But his intercession cost him heavily. He had to share in our situation, our burdens, our needs, our problems. I've come to the place where I don't believe anybody is ever delivered from anything that's a problem in his life until somebody else gets concerned about it.

Now let me say that over again. I've come to the place where I don't believe anybody is ever delivered from his burdens and his needs and finds God's answer to his problem until somebody else gets concerned about him or her. I suspect my well-being is in your hands and your well-being is in mine.

And if I want you to find redemption, something will have to happen to me before you have a chance at it. It had to happen to Christ before we had a chance at it. I think there may be something here related to the fact in Adam all of us died and in Christ all of us have the possibility of coming alive.

But our salvation is not in ourselves. And God says if I could find somebody who would carry the burden and become an intercessor, I'd be free to do some things. But I can't even do it until I can find the person.

Now you go down through church history and you'll find that that's true. Now I shied away from thinking this kind of thought for a long time because I thought we've got to protect the fact that all salvation is in Christ and Christ alone. And that's true.

But I've come to the place where I've decided Christ himself is looking for somebody who will enter into the world's needs so that Christ can do the work that he died to accomplish. You know the story. Some of you have heard me use it of Amy Carmichael who fought the battle of redeeming girls from temple prostitution in India.

And she met so many rebuffs from everybody that she finally came and said, Lord, it's not my problem. And she said, I had a vision of him. He was kneeling weeping under tamarind trees.

And he looked over at her and said, Yes, Amy, that's right. It's not your problem. It's mine.

I'm just looking for somebody who will bear it with me. And it's interesting that word bear because do you know it's when he bore our sins that there was release for us. That word bearing is a key word.

Now let me come at that from another angle. I have become intrigued by the fact it never dawned on me. And I can't find the commentaries discussing it.

Did you know that God prays? So I found myself asking a friend of mine, to whom does God pray when he prays? And if God prays, why does he need to pray? So a friend of mine said, Well, I know he said the passages you're talking about. In Romans it says Christ stands at the right hand of the Father and interceding for us. And in Hebrews it says he ever lives to make intercession for the saints.

So Christ tonight prays for us. He said he's interceding with the Father for us. Second person of the Trinity with the first person.

I said, Do you mean he's telling the Father something he doesn't know? And the fellow got irritated with me. And I said, Is he twisting his arm to get him to do something he doesn't want to do? And he said, Kennel, you know that isn't true. I said, Then why is he interceding with the first person of the Trinity? What does it mean to intercede? You will notice that Romans 8 says that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Pray tell me why God needs to groan. I don't have all the answers. But I'll tell you where I am.

I've come to the place where I've decided that it's only when one person takes another person's burden that the other person has the possibility of deliverance. And God bears our burdens and it's possible for us to be delivered. And then he says now, will you follow me and bear the world's burdens with me? Because you know it's when people have taken the world's burden that God has been able to save.

Just let me give an illustration or two. You remember John Knox? They said the queen feared John Knox's prayers more than she did the Protestant armies. And you remember John Knox's prayer? They heard him praying and he was weeping before God and he said, Give me Scotland or I die.

And one of the greatest movements of the spirit of God in Christian history swept across Scotland and the roots of a substantial chunk of us came out of that place. A man who said, Give me Scotland or I die. I have been impressed by the journal of Francis Asbury who carried America, the North American continent on his heart and poured his life out for it.

Now, you know in every case, each person that I can find who had that kind of burden, take a David Livingstone in Africa. He spent his life with a burden for Africa. That burden consumed him to the extent that most of his life nobody knew where he was.

No white person knew where he was. And you remember a New York newspaper decided it would be a great story if they could locate him. So they financed Henry Stanley to make a trip to Africa to search Africa out to find that white missionary.

And it became one of the great stories in journalistic history when Stanley met Livingstone and said, Mr. Livingstone, I presume. But what was it that moved? You know, there are more conversions to Christ in Africa today perhaps than anywhere else in the world. What is it? Twenty-some thousand a day they figure.

Let me get to my punchline. I wonder if the liberation of Africa started in the heart of David Livingstone. Are Robert Morrison and Macau concerned for China? And the incredible explosion of conversions in China? I wonder where it started if it isn't the fact that somebody calls to meet in himself the needs of that great land mass and that great mass of people.

Now, I've used illustrations on large dimensions like a John Knox in Scotland or Francis Asbury in America or David Livingstone in Africa. But you know, it's interesting I have seen that in connection with individuals. I can remember when Denny, our son, was in rebellion.

And I can remember watching Elsie as she carried him. I don't think she ever had as much trauma in delivering him, in bearing him for physical birth as she had in bearing him for spiritual birth. And I wonder if God is not saying I'm still looking for people who will take some of my burden and bear it.

And I wonder if every believer should not have a burden to where there meets in his soul the needs of some group, some section of society, some ministry, some individual, some groups of individuals. Now, you know, we don't like to do that because one, we're busy. We keep our time and say our words.

But I'd like to ask you, have you ever let Him give you a burden and then have you borne it? I think one of the reasons we don't do it is because it can get painful. But if that's the only way that God has to get free to do His redemptive work, shall I run from the pain? I knew a Christian who was involved in a Christian organization that had a remarkable ministry. That Christian organization was beginning to, was in great straits spiritually and otherwise.

It looked like it might well fold. There were two people that could do something about it. This guy was one.

He came to the place where he'd find himself waking up at 3 o'clock in the morning. And his way of describing it was, he said, you know, it was like some big giant had my heart in his hand and decided he was going to squeeze it to death. And I could feel the pain of that thing.

One morning he waked up at 3.30 and 4 o'clock, still awake, 5 o'clock, 4.30, still awake. And he said, you know, I thought to myself, I've got a rough day tomorrow. I don't have time to lie here like this.

And he said, Lord, let me sleep. But sleep wouldn't come. He said, Lord, I've got a lot of work to do for you tomorrow.

I've got a lot of work for you to do tomorrow. And if you don't, if I don't get some sleep, I can't do it the way I ought to do it. He said the pain didn't go away.

He said, finally, I thought if I was a Christian, I ought to be, you know, I'd roll the burden on the Lord and let Him carry it. But he said the burden didn't go away, just that tight crushing. Then he said it was as if a voice spoke and said, what if the pain in your heart is part of the answer to the problem? And he said, Lord, if the pain in my heart is part of the answer to the problem, don't take it away.

The organization was saved. Now he said, I don't know whether my experience had anything to do with it or not. But could it be that the salvation of others takes place inside of us or doesn't take place inside of us? I looked for one who would permit to meet in himself the sicknesses, the pains, and the iniquities of another.

And when he did, redemption was provided. Beth turned to me the other day and told me a story. With this I'll quit for tonight.

It's a Hans Christian Andersen story. I love the way my children educate me. I never read Hans Christian Andersen, certainly not this one.

It's a story about the Snow Queen. It begins with, there was a hobgoblin. He was a hobgoblin of all hobgoblins.

He was such a hobgoblin that he was the devil himself. And he had a dream, a vision. And he made a great mirror.

And the mirror had a power that when you looked in it, it would turn the good to evil. And it would make the evil even more perverted. And said it could turn an innocent smile into a leer.

So that every person who looked at it got a false perception on life. Said the devil, the hobgoblin took that with his imps and it was big enough that you could see the whole world in it. And so people got this twisted view of what life was like.

They looked at their friends and thought they were their enemies. They looked at their health and figured it was a threat. And so all society was destroyed.

Said the devil, the hobgoblin was so gleeful that he and his imps decided to go turn it on God and his angels. And so they took it up higher and higher and when they got almost to God, it began to tremble. And it shook so hard that they lost control of it.

And it came shattering to the earth. And when it hit, it smattered into a billion, a million, billion pieces. And everywhere those little slivers went, if one not as big as a grain of sand got in your eye, you saw all things as through that mirror.

And if one got in your heart, your heart turned to ice. Now there were two little kids that were friends. Kay was a boy and Gerda was a girl.

Danish kids, I suppose. And Kay got a sliver in his eye and in his heart. And so everything was twisted.

And now instead of loving Gerda, he didn't want to have anything to do with her. And instead of loving his parents, he was critical of them. And everything he looked at, he was against.

And then along came the Snow Queen and she kissed him. And when she kissed him, he forgot where he was. And when he kissed her the second time, he forgot who he was.

And he followed her beautifully to her. C.S. Lewis was influenced by this in writing *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. And she carried him to her palace at the North Pole.

And there she put him in a big room filled with pieces of ice and said, if you can take these pieces of ice and make them spell the word Eternity, then I will set you free. You can have the whole world and I'll give you a pair of skates. And so little Kay went to work on the pieces of ice to try to make them spell the word Eternity so he could be free again.

But he couldn't. The longer he worked, the more it was obvious he couldn't make them fit. Well, his little friend Gerda became concerned about him.

She'd lost her friend, so she went everywhere asking questions. And there are seven chapters, no chapters tell about her trip. She journeyed, the last leg of it, a reindeer carried her to the North Pole, took her to the palace of the Snow Queen, showed her a side entrance and she went in and here was Kay working feverishly, blue with cold, numb with cold, working to make these blocks of ice spell Eternity.

And none of them had fit. And when she came to him, of course she expected him to say, Gerda, and be so glad to see her. And he shook himself.

He didn't want to have anything to do with this stranger. See, she was evil to him and a threat. And she was so upset.

She was so upset with her friend at his condition that his rebuffs did not hurt her as much as his loftiness. So she burst into tears, cast her arms about him and her tears were so hot that they melted his heart. And he began to cry and washed the sliver out of his eye.

And he said, where did you come from? And where am I? And how did I get here? And he was liberated and suddenly the blocks of ice formed the word Eternity and he was free. But isn't it interesting that his salvation was not in himself. It was in her.

And if she had not pursued him, he'd have spent his life there. Now God says, I'm looking for one person. Now he needs more than that, of course.

But I think he has a burden for every person. I did an article, Christianity Today, three or four months ago. It was one of those things that came and I was racking my brain as to what to write on.

And I thought, is it possible to sum up a generation or an age in a sentence? Some people say it is. We speak about the now generation or so forth. And I thought, can you sum up modern evangelicalism in a sentence? And I thought, yeah, you can.

In my lifetime, the message we've had is we've gone to the world saying, receive Christ. We've told people the benefits of receiving Christ. If you receive Christ, you get your sins forgiven.

You'll have eternal life. You'll have eternal hope. You'll have new life.

You'll have divine love. And the emphasis on what you get if you receive him. And slowly it dawned on me as I was thinking about that, how many times Jesus said, receive me.

You know, he never did say, receive me. He said, follow me. And when he said, follow me, he was talking about going to the cross.

And in the cross was the place where he said, God calls to meet in himself the sicknesses, the pains, the iniquities of us all. And that's what an intercessor is. So I'd like for you to say during these days, and the thing I'm asking God is, what is the burden I'm supposed to have? Should I look at the burden and embrace it? So oftentimes we look at burdens and want to run from them.

But I think he's saying, I'm looking for people who will take a part of the burden that I bear and put their arms around it and embrace it, no matter how painful it is. Because when they embrace that burden, then

those for whom they're burdened have the possibility of being set free. It's an awesome thing to think that your well-being is in my hands and I'm accountable.

And my well-being is in yours and you're accountable. But I'm convinced that's the way life among the people God created and made among us works. And that's what I want to share tonight.

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