

(Early Anabaptism) the Anabaptist Vision

by Denny Kenaston

Denny Kenaston's sermon explores the Anabaptist vision as a model for contemporary believers to seek God's will and engage in active discipleship.

Duration: 1:17:57

Scripture: Genesis 6:14, 1 Samuel 3:1, Proverbs 29:18, Romans 8:4, Revelation 3:14

Topics: "Anabaptism"

Description

In this sermon, Peter references the words of the Prophet Joel to explain why it appears that the men are drunk at 9am. He emphasizes the importance of receiving the vision from God and getting serious with Him. Peter challenges the audience to examine their own vision and what is consuming their hearts and lives. He urges them to respond to God's call, whether it be to accept Jesus as their Savior or to recommit themselves to Him.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

This message is not copyrighted and is not to be bought or sold. You are welcome to make copies for your friends and neighbors. If you would like additional messages, please go to our website for a complete listing at www.charityministries.org. If you would like a catalog of other sermons, please call 1-800-227-7902 or write to Charity Ministries, 400 West Main Street, Suite 1, AFPA, 17522.

These messages are offered to all without charge by the free will offerings of God's people. A special thank you to all who support this ministry. Amen.

I also never get tired of hearing the testimonies of the grace of God in the lives of people. I was sitting here this evening and it dawned on me, you know, all these ten days I've been hearing one testimony after another. And you know, we live where we live.

This is Lancaster County and, you know, it's a very religious place, area. Yet, I keep hearing these men get up and give these testimonies of their drinking and their drugs and their cursing and their smoking and all of those things. And I'm sitting here thinking, okay, now that's my testimony.

I grew up out there in the world, a heathen, an atheist, with no hope, with no light, with no understanding at all. But here you are all growing up in this community, very religious community. But look what the flesh does if there's no new birth in there.

Same thing. Same thing. Though you put a black hat on it and put a beard on it and put a certain kind of clothes on it, it still does the same thing, doesn't it? And I thought about Emma's testimony here this evening and I thought, you know, that little story that she gave to us that was lived out thousands of times by the early Anabaptists, just like that, as they wrestled their way through the will of God and as peace left them.

And they so longed for it again that they found themselves coming to that place of fresh obedience and yieldedness and God's grace was there and that was lived out thousands of times among the early Anabaptists. How my heart thrills that there are people today that are wrestling through the same things and praise God, finding the same grace that they found back there nearly 500 years ago. Now here it is today the same way.

And all this is just kind of overflow. It's not the message yet, but you bear with me. Kind of have to get it out of your heart before you can get on.

But you know, I also thought about it, you know, we spoke a lot about evangelism here through this week. Brother Raymond and myself and maybe others also. And I just want to remind us all again that there are dozens and dozens and dozens more just like the testimonies that we've heard.

They are here. They are there. They're in that house.

They're out there in that farm. They're in that woodworking shop. They're over there hanging their clothes on the line.

And all those things are going on inside of them just like they were going on inside of these that we've heard. They're there. They're the elect of God.

God is drawing them. They're searching these things out. They don't know what to do.

They're looking for answers. Oh, wouldn't it be a blessing if we could just be an angel that dropped by that one day when they were hanging their clothes out on the line and asked them that one question that opened up the door for all kinds of other things. They're there.

I'm telling you, they're there. It's enough. No longer.

We will not be satisfied any longer. With a few little conversions and then everything just kind of dies down and goes back to the way that it was. Which, that's the way it's been for the last 25 years that I remember anyway in this county.

But no longer is it going to be that way. We are not going to do that. We're not going to settle back down.

We're not just going to go back to business as usual. We're going to get busy for God. We're going to get out there.

We're going to overcome our fears and talk to people in our community. And blessed be God, if there's 10 meetings a year from now, we'll have another 20 who can give their testimony. Amen? Let's do it.

All right. Let's stand for a word of prayer. Can we do that? Oh, Lord.

Yes, our heart is full this evening, Father. You have made it that way. And we thank You and we praise You.

God, we come to this meeting again tonight with our cups lifted up. Lord, we look beyond men tonight and we look unto Thee. We look unto the throne.

We see You sitting there this evening, God, watching over everything that is being done here, Lord. And we ask You that You would settle down upon this meeting again, God. Send us that still, small voice that speaketh into the heart of man deeply.

The Holy Ghost. Lord, I need Thee. Oh, how I need Thee tonight, dear God, to say the things that I need to say.

But, Lord, we all need You tonight. We need You just to hear the things that we need to hear. Give us, Lord, by Your Spirit, ears to hear what the Spirit of God is saying to the people in Lancaster County, 2008.

Lord, please do that tonight. We trust You for that. We thank You for hearing us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Well, again this evening, and probably even more so this evening, I have the blessed challenge of finishing a series that I've been preaching on Christ in the early Anabaptists. But while I'm finishing this series on Christ in the early Anabaptists, it's also Sunday night of a tent meeting.

And all of you are here. And I in no way want this just to be a teaching that we can take some information, historical facts, home with us tonight. But I trust that God will give me the grace to bring the teachings and the historical facts to bear upon our hearts.

May God give a prophetic spirit this evening that it's more than just historical facts, but rather that God would challenge us deeply in our own hearts and our lives. That has been my prayer today. The title of my message this evening is The Anabaptist Vision.

The Anabaptist Vision. The Scripture uses this word vision in two different ways. Number one, a supernatural seeing something like Ezekiel when he saw the glory of God there in Ezekiel chapter 1 and 2, and a few other places in Ezekiel.

And there are many places in the Bible where there were supernatural seeing. And I believe in those. I've never seen one myself, but I believe in those kind of supernatural visions that God gives from time to time.

But there is also another word, vision, in the Scriptures, which means a spirit-born revealing of the mind and will of God. A spirit-born or burst revealing of the mind and will of God. And in this message this evening, I am using it in this second way.

Noah, the prophet Noah, received a revelation of the mind and will of God about judgment by a flood upon the earth. And because he had a vision of what God was going to do, he was moved with fear and built an ark to the saving of his household. Amen? Oh, that God would put a vision in our hearts that we would also be moved with fear to the building of an ark to the saving of our own households.

Amen? But that's what Noah did. Noah was a man who walked with God, and God spoke to him, and God revealed to Noah the will, the mind and will of God. And Noah, with that vision, was moved over a period

of time of nearly 120 years, and he built an ark to the saving of his household.

Proverbs chapter 29 and verse 18 says these words to us this evening, Where there is no vision, that is, a spirit born, revealing of the mind and will of God. Where there is no spirit born, revealing of the mind and will of God, the people perish. Did you get that, brothers and sisters? In the days of Eli and his wicked sons, Samuel was still a boy, just growing up and learning to hear the voice of God.

The Bible says in 1 Samuel chapter 3 and verse 1, That the word of the Lord was precious in those days, for there was no open, clear revealing of the mind and will of God. There was no open vision, the Bible says. It was a sad day in the life of Israel.

Eli had lost his way with God. He did not restrain his two sons. They were bringing all kinds of wickedness into the temple or the tabernacle of God there.

And the word of God was precious in those days. You know why it was precious? It's because there was no open vision. There was no revealing of the mind and the will of God by the Spirit of God in those days.

And praise God, as we read a little bit further there in 1 Samuel chapter 3 and 4, that God did raise up young Samuel to be a prophet. And the Bible says that the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground. He was a man of vision, a beautiful man of vision.

Blessed are the people to whom God reveals by His Spirit a clear and open vision of His heart, a vision of His will, a vision of what He wants to do. And brothers and sisters, if there is anything that we stand in need of this evening, it is that very thing we need, we long for, we should be longing for, but we greatly need for the Spirit of God to reveal to our own hearts the mind and will of God for our own lives. I mean, we're here.

We've got families. We're men. We've got wives.

We've got children. We're leaders in churches. Oh, we need a Spirit-born revelation of the mind and will of God.

And the Bible calls that a vision. And without a vision, the people perish. But with a vision, the people prosper.

They prosper. The Scripture says, I believe it's in the book of Zechariah, and if not, it's the book of Haggai, that the Scripture says that in the days that Haggai and Zechariah were prophesying that the people prospered because there was a Spirit-born vision in the hearts of the people of what God was wanting to do. And oh, brothers and sisters, we need that tonight, even as we sit here in this tent.

And I believe that God has been doing this for some of us this week. The vision has been getting very clear about what God wants, and it's been exciting to contemplate the future. Amen? We have been walking about Zion, and it has been refreshing and challenging, just like the Scriptures tell us to walk about Zion, go round about her, tell the towers thereof, mark well her bulwarks, that you can tell the generation to come what God was like in days gone by.

And brothers and sisters, that's what I've been doing for these ten days. When I've had my opportunities, I've been telling you what God was like in days gone by. But I'm here tonight to tell you that this God is our God, and the God who did those things for the early Anabaptists 500 years ago, the same God lives

today, and He wants to do the same thing in your heart and your life, whether it be in your family, whether it be in your personal life, whether it be in your church, whether it be in your neighborhood.

But God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Hallelujah! Do we believe that this evening, brothers and sisters, that our God is a mighty God? He is the eternal, self-existent One? Beside Him there is no other God? And that God who breathed out on those early Anabaptists is still alive and well today.

What are we going to do with the fact that He is? May God help us. It is very evident to me that the early Anabaptists had a vision, amen, that is a Spirit-born revealing of the mind and the will of God. And because they had that vision, they prospered like few have ever prospered.

None of us would doubt that this evening. But this evening, beloved, we are promised the same kind of spiritual prosperity. God wants to do the same things for us.

He is not a respecter of persons. He did not respect those people in a special way back there, but He does not respect us in this our day 2008. God is not that way.

He is not a respecter of persons or peoples. He is not. We are promised the same kind of spiritual prosperity if we will walk in this vision today.

In my studies of Zion, I have gazed backward on Christian history many, many times. Much different Christian history. But in all my gazings, there is one thing that I have noticed again and again and again, and that is when God wants to do something, He starts with a man or a few men, and He infuses and inflames them with a revelation of His will.

That is called a vision. With that vision and in that vision, the joy of seeing God's will that is going to come fills up the heart. The faith that is the witness that God will do what He said He will do comes right along with the vision.

The grace to walk it out in everyday life is imparted right with the vision. And the prayer burden to pray it through is laid upon the heart as the vision is imparted to the heart. And lastly, that warrior-like spirit to persevere and see that vision through to the end is also imparted.

And that's where you get warriors in the Kingdom of God. That's where you get warriors. This is what happened in the days of the Reformation when a few men bowed their hearts to a Spirit-born vision from God of what He really wanted to do.

Like one of the writers wrote, Zwingli and Luther started the Reformation, but the early Anabaptists finished it. And I have to agree with him after I've spent all this time studying it. They started it, but the early Anabaptists finished it all.

Turn with me to Acts 2. You pray for me. I feel just like Chris did when he was up there. You pray for me.

In Acts 2, verse 16 is where we're going to read. We're beginning here with Peter's sermon. He's trying to explain to all of these that have come gathering around why it seems like these men are drunk in the middle of the day, 9 a.m. Peter says it this way in verse 16, This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

And I don't know who said it. I don't remember who it was, but I so loved what he said that I remember it to this day. Is this that which was spoken by the prophet Joel? Now, Peter looked at what he was seeing there and what was happening, and he said to the people, This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

But this evening, brothers and sisters, the question is, Is this that? Good question. Amen? And it shall come to pass, he goes on to say, that in the last days, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, that's that same word that I just talked to you about, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on My servants and on My handmaidens, I will pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy, that is, speak forth the mind and will of God in the power of the Holy Ghost. Oh, what a beautiful picture it is as we look here in the book of Acts and realize that that is exactly what happened in the streets of Jerusalem.

The people were filled with the Holy Ghost. The sons were filled with the Holy Ghost. The daughters were filled with the Holy Ghost.

The servants were filled with the Holy Ghost. The handmaidens were filled with the Holy Ghost. And they all prophesied, speaking forth the mind and will of God in the power of the Holy Ghost, is what they did.

Yes, that was this which was spoken by the prophet Joel. But brothers and sisters, what we've been looking at as we've been looking at the early Anabaptists, I would say that that is also this which was spoken by the prophet Joel. Same thing happened all over again.

And oh, bless God, I believe if we do some digging around and searching here and there, you would find out that it didn't just happen in 1500. It happens time and time again wherever there is a group of people whose hearts are so set upon God that they would look to God and believe God for the promises of God upon their own hearts and lives. And if they're willing to walk in obedience to that which God shows them, you'll see the same thing happening again.

But this that we've been looking at all week is that which the prophet Joel prophesied about all over again. Common people filled with the Holy Ghost going everywhere preaching and teaching the Word of God. That was early Anabaptism.

Amen? This promise, this prophetic promise, still stands tonight, brothers and sisters. Look up here. It still stands tonight.

We are still living in this age where these things are offered to the people of God. And I want to say this. These early Anabaptists, theirs was not an Anabaptist vision.

It was an apostolic vision. And I think we need to make sure that we keep our focus in the right place because brothers and sisters, if all we're going to do is go back 500 years, that's not far enough. Amen? Because what God did for the early Anabaptists is exactly what God did in the early church.

And that's what God wants to do in this area where we live. He wants to do the same thing. He hasn't changed a bit.

So theirs was not an Anabaptist vision. It was an apostolic vision. But we are focusing on the Anabaptists because they were a people who found the grace to live this out even as we've read it here in the Scriptures.

Oh, may God make us a people like that also. They had a vision. It was a vision to return to apostolic, primitive Christianity.

It was a vision to follow Jesus Christ in true discipleship like our brother Dean so beautifully explained again this morning. That was their vision. They didn't have a vision to reform the old church, but to restore it to its original state.

And there's a big difference between reforming something and restoring it. Amen? I mean, you know, we just want to help this thing along a little bit, you know, and change a few things here. No, that's not the vision that the Anabaptists had.

They looked at it and realized this whole thing is off the foundation. Tear it down and start all over. Now, I don't believe that we're in that place, frankly.

I don't believe that we're in that place that you need to tear it down and start all over. But there may be a few stones that need to be thrown out. Amen? But that was their vision.

To return to a clear presentation of the gospel of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, one that changes people's lives. Oh, God, bring us there also. Their vision was to return to kingdom living that removes the question mark.

Oh, that God would grant such a work in our hearts, that we so live in His Kingdom that there's no question mark about who we are. Because there was no question mark on those brothers and sisters in those days. They had a vision to return to kingdom living that would remove the question marks.

Number six, they had a vision to return to a people who were in the world, but not of the world, who were in the world, but kept from evil in the world. That was their vision. They were not ready to go run to some mountain somewhere and hide in a hut somewhere like a hermit.

That wasn't their vision. They knew that God had left them in the world, and they were to live in the world, but yet not be of the world. They were to live in the world, but yet not let the world infect them with its evil.

And praise God, they found the grace to do it in such a beautiful way, which is an example to us and has been all week long. And lastly, and there's probably 20 more of them, but they had a vision to return to apostolic soldiering. Amen? I so appreciated Brother Dean's words this morning about soldiering.

You know, I don't believe that the Apostle Paul was just using illustrations about soldiering when he wrote about being a soldier. He knew what war was all about. Amen? To return to apostolic soldiering, to fight in a different kind of war with different kind of weapons and different rules completely.

Brothers and sisters, do you realize there is a war going on? It's going on every day, but the rules are different. We need to find out what the rules are so we can get in there and get going. We need to find out what the weapons are so we can learn how to use them.

Because there's a war going on. But the rules are different. Amen? I mean, the way up is down.

That's very different rules for war. The battle is fought on your knees. That's very different for rules of war.

Love your enemies. Be sheep in the midst of wolves. Suffering defenselessly is the way you overcome.

Using spiritual weapons will do things that no one else can do. And you win by dying. You win by dying.

Amen? These are the rules of the war. And those Anabaptist brothers and sisters, they learned those rules very well. And they proved them out.

And look what happened. Like one authority said, I don't know what to do. The more I kill them, the more they multiply.

That's right! That's exactly right! This is a different kind of war they're fighting. You win by dying. You overcome by dying.

You overcome your sin by dying. You overcome your sin and you get victory and you can fight in this war. It's a different kind of war.

This afternoon I thought about our precious Jesus. He's our example, you know. I thought about those beautiful words there in the book of Revelation.

You know, there in the beginning of the book of Revelation where they were searching everywhere. They searched in heaven and they searched on the earth. And they looked everywhere for a man who was worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereof.

And they couldn't find anybody. And John, giving his testimony, says, I, John, wept much. And one of the elders stopped him and said, Weep not, John.

The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed. He will open the book. Now, if you could just picture yourself being there with John that day in that revelation, I would imagine that he would have turned his head to look for a lion.

How many of you would look for a lion if somebody told you those words? The lion of the tribe of Judah, he hath prevailed. John turned to see a lion. And behold, he saw a lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne.

Oh, brothers and sisters, that's how you prevail in this war. Just like our lamb commander. That's how you prevail.

These early Anabaptists, they had a vision to restore apostolic soldiering. Oh, I agree with Brother Dean in what he said this morning. I am not a pacifist.

Sorry. Yuck! I am not a pacifist. I don't believe in fighting in that war out there.

But, bless God, I believe in fighting. I believe in fighting this way. I believe in being in the war.

I believe in suffering. I believe in being a man, bless God. For the Lord, I believe in quick you like men.

And I believe that that's one of the things that's missing, oh, brothers and sisters, if we could somehow get a glimpse of that and realize, get a vision of what God wants us to be. Oh, that God would raise up hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of soldiers that are willing to pay the price and get in the war. I wonder what would happen.

Beloved, they had a vision. Amen? They had a Spirit-born revelation of the mind and will of God. And that vision was so clear in their hearts that it would not be dim no matter what hell threw against them.

It was so clear, they had such a fire and desire burning in their heart, it would not be quenched no matter what happened to them. They had a destiny that would not be denied. They set their hearts on doing the will of God.

They saw eternity. They saw the other side. They saw heaven.

They saw a martyr's crown. All those things consumed them. They saw their destiny and it was way beyond anything in this world.

And they would not be denied. Oh, my brothers and sisters, God is also calling us to the same, to the very same. It hasn't changed.

We're not just studying some history about some people. Brothers and sisters, this is the Word of God. And we still live in the same age that those men and women lived in.

It is the age of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. What are we waiting for? Amen? Now it's our turn. What is our vision? That's a good question this evening.

What is our vision? Since it's our turn, what do we see with the eyes of our heart? What is consuming our heart, even as we sit here this evening? What is our vision? And maybe we need to face some painful realities this evening. What we are and what we have. Brothers and sisters, what we are and what we have is the fruit of our vision for the last so many years.

What you are and what you have is the fruit of your personal vision. What do you have in your hand? What has been driving us? What has been consuming my heart, my life, my time, my focus, my mental capacities? What is it? What vision do I have? That is a good question to ask this evening. Let me prove you with a hard question this evening, ok? Something that I noticed as I was studying the early Anabaptists, you know, there was a lot happening in Europe and the Spirit of God was working in many, many different places all at the same time.

And it happened pretty often that the Anabaptists would discover a little group of believers here or there that they didn't know about. And when they discovered those things, there was a bit of dialogue between them and as they talked a little bit, maybe this little group would say, well, brethren, can we sit down and confer together? Let's spend a few days together and see if we'd be brethren. They did that.

Let's spend a few days together and see if we'd be brethren. It was a common practice among them. So they would do just like that.

Spend a few days together, living together, fellowshiping, visiting, walking together, sharing their hearts, opening up the Bible together, looking at real life in light of the Bible and at the end of however many days they spent together, sometimes those early Anabaptist leaders would say, I don't think we're brethren. You don't believe the Trinity. You don't believe this.

You don't believe that. I don't think we're brethren. But other times they would say, we'd be brethren.

And the right hand of fellowship was given. That's beautiful, isn't it? Let me ask you this question. What do you think they would say if a few of them dropped in on us? July, Lancaster County, 2008.

What do you think they would say if they walked with us for a few days and they sat in our houses and they saw how we lived and we sat and opened up the Bible and all those things? What do you think they

would say to us? I found that question rather probing this afternoon as I pondered it and prayed about it. Don't you know that they would probably think that we're pretty worldly? How many of you think so? They would probably think we're pretty worldly minded. Don't you know they would be shocked by our wealth? How many of you think they would be? What do you think they would do as they saw the whole family gather around the TV, I'm sorry, the computer, to see the latest news cut from CNN? What do you think they would do? What do you think they would think and say of all of our fun and games? Our houses.

Our expensive cars. The hours of time we fritter away. Our big meals here in Lancaster County.

What do you think they would say? Would we even want them around? Would we write them off and say, Weird. Extreme. Eccentrics.

What would they do if after two weeks, or what would we do if after two weeks they said, we're not sure about you all. Why don't you just, let's just take a couple of months and you know, we'll drop back in and visit with you in a couple of months. What would our response be? Would we start justifying? Would we start explaining it all away? Would we start slotting all of the things that they said or what they believed in this slot and that slot and pretty soon slot them all out and here we are sitting in our nice, comfortable complacency again.

I thought, you know, that's a good question for us to ponder. Since we've been looking at these brethren for all of these days, it's good to bring this thing down home, amen? And I guess the question is this, have we lost our vision? Have we been blinded by the good life and lost our vision? We don't see very clearly what God wants to do with His people in this, our day. Have we lost our vision? Say, brother, what do you think you're doing? Things have been going on very nicely here for 250 years.

Don't rock the boat now. Yeah, I know they've been going along nicely for 250 years. Turn with me to Revelation 3. I want to read a little bit here this evening for our edification and for the challenge of our own hearts.

We want to read a little bit out of Revelation 3. The words that Jesus spake to the church of the Laodiceans. Verse 14 says, And under the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. I know Thy works.

I know Thy works. And we all know very clearly because we're all good theologians that God also knows our works. Amen? I know Thy works, that Thou art neither cold nor hot.

I would Thou were cold or hot. So then, because Thou art lukewarm, right in the middle, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew Thee out of my mouth, says God. These are pretty strong words to a complacent Anabaptist community, aren't they? Pretty strong words.

Oh, they're keeping me in water. Thank you, brother. Let's read a little further.

Let's read why they're lukewarm. Let's read why Christ is saying, I'm going to spew Thee out of my mouth. Because Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.

I am rich and I am increased with goods and I have need of nothing. And knowest not, you know not that Thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. That's why I'm going to spew you out of my mouth.

Because you, you're not seeing right. Church of Laodicea. You have an eye disease.

You have a disease in your eyes and you can't see right. And it's all the prosperity that has brought in this disease into your eyes that you can't see right. And you actually, though you are poor and wretched and blind and naked, you think that you have need of nothing.

I have trembled a few times in my 26 years that I've lived in this county as I've heard people say almost these very words, not realizing what they're saying. I have trembled a few times. I heard one preacher say from the pulpits, I was sitting there listening, he was preaching a sermon against pietism.

And I don't agree with pietism. But in the midst of his sermon against pietism, he started talking about revival. And he said to the people very boldly with a smile, we are revival.

We are revival. And then he gave his reasons. We believe in non-conformity.

We believe in separation of church and state. We believe in non-resistance. And he went down the list, you know.

We are revival, he said. I trembled when I heard those words. I thought, oh, my friend, what a word you just said.

I mean, we're the Anabaptists. Listen, God is able to raise up children of these stones out here in this field. It's not enough to have a heritage.

God has no grandchildren or great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren either. Every generation has the responsibility to pass on a lively faith to the next. Amen? Every generation has that responsibility.

I am rich! We're increased with goods! And we have need of nothing. Oh, what a commentary of the place where we live. Have we lost our vision, brothers and sisters? God said to the Laodiceans, I want to give you some counsel.

I counsel thee to buy of Me. Buy of Me, God said. Buy of Me gold tried in the fire.

That's where the Anabaptists got their gold, by the way. Tried in the fire. That thou mayest be rich! And buy of Me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.

And the Anabaptists knew where to get their white raiment. Amen? And multitudes of them shall be gathered around the throne someday in white raiment. Because they died, they shed their blood for their dear Lord Jesus.

They knew how to get their white raiment. That thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear. Someday you're going to stand before God.

That's what God was saying to the Laodiceans. And if you don't get busy and start buying of Me, the shame of your nakedness is going to appear. And last word of counsel to them was, anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see.

As many as I love and rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent. That's what God said to the Laodiceans. And it was the church of the Laodiceans.

It was the church that He said that to. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent. The way we heard about repentance this week.

A turning from and a turning to is what God is calling us to this evening. And lastly, behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice.

Notice He says, voice. If any man hear My voice. If any man hear My voice.

You hear Him? When was the last time you heard His voice? Oh, what a beautiful sound. If any man hear My voice. John, Samuel, Mary, Steve.

If any man hear My voice. And open the door! Hallelujah! I will come into Him and will sup with Him and He with Me. Hallelujah! That's Christ Jesus promised to us even this evening.

To Him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne even as I also overcame and Him sat down with My Father in His throne. Oh my, what a reward that will be. He that hath ears, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Have we lost our vision, brothers and sisters? God is telling us how we can get ourselves back in that place where a Spirit-born revelation of the mind and will of God can come to our heart again. You know, years and years ago, I don't know what was it, in the 1800's, I don't know my world history very well. I know Christian history better, but in the 1800's there were some leaders sitting around a table talking to Napoleon one day and they were talking about all the countries that they had already overcome.

Napoleon and his great French army. And someone threw the name of a country out on the table before Napoleon and said, Ah, Sir Napoleon! What about China? Let's take China! Sir Napoleon sat for a moment and didn't say anything enough that he had everyone's attention. And a general knows how to do that, by the way.

And once they were all listening to see what he was going to say, he said these words, China is a sleeping... Let him alone. Those were some real words of wisdom that Napoleon spake that day. China is a sleeping giant! Yes, it is a giant! And he knew it! Yes, it has more population than any other country in the world and he knew it! Yes, it's a very industrious country and he knew it! But it was a sleeping country.

And he said, China is a sleeping giant. Now, everyone knows you don't wake a sleeping giant up. Amen? Or you will have your hands full very fast.

This analogy is powerful! And by the way, the giant has awakened! And the nations of the world are beginning to tremble since that giant woke up, sat up, and stood up, and shook himself. And the rest of the world is trembling. And they should, by the way.

They should. Napoleon knew these things. I want to tell you this evening, brothers and sisters, if I can just tie this analogy together with our subject, Anabaptism is a sleeping giant! It is a sleeping giant! And Satan knows its history.

Satan knows its size. Satan knows its potential. Satan remembers what happened when those twelve men got on their knees in that room and Golasanites surrendered everything to God.

Satan knows what those twelve men did. He knows. And Satan would say tonight to all of his evil demons which run to and fro working out his will, Satan's will on this earth, let him sleep.

Those people are a sleeping giant. Let him sleep. Leave them in their proud complacency.

Let them pride themselves over their heritage even though they're anemic. Leave them in their gluttony and their greed. Let them sleep on in their wealth and their luxury.

Let them enjoy their fine farms and their fine houses, but let them alone. Because if that giant ever wakes up, you better look out. Shh! Let them sleep.

Let them be satisfied to be a tourist attraction instead of the salt of the earth. Let the world come and make movies about them. Let them be known for their quaint little lifestyles.

No problem. But don't wake him up. The truth of the matter is, brothers and sisters, that giant is going to wake up.

He's going to wake up. I promise you, he will wake up. I just pray he'll wake up sooner rather than later.

But he's going to wake up. Troubles times are coming. Amen? Everywhere I go, I ask this question.

How many of you believe that persecution is coming to our land and soon? How many of you believe that? Let me see your hands. Put them up there so we can see it real clear. Look around you, everybody.

Look around you. The staggering point of all those raised hands is we believe that, but it's not moving us to action. And it is coming, brothers and sisters.

It is coming. And it's coming sooner than you think. But, oh, I'm greatly encouraged this evening.

The Spirit of God, it seems to be brooding over the Anabaptist peoples all around the country and around the world. It seems like the Spirit of God is hovering over the Anabaptist people groups. The Mennonites, the Amish, the German Baptists, the Hutterites, the old colony Mennonites, the Kleine Gemeinde, and who knows how many other ones there are.

There are others also. The Spirit of God is brooding over these people, and I believe it's God in His mercy giving us a chance to wake up and prepare. But I'm telling you tonight, brothers and sisters, this giant will wake up.

I only pray that we'll wake up sooner rather than later. Because the sooner we wake up, the more prepared we are going to be to shed our blood like those who went on before us. And we are going to get to shed our blood.

Are you ready to shed your blood? Persecution is coming. But you wait. You baptize a few of them in blood again, and that giant is going to wake up, sit up, stand up, and shake himself.

And when he does, look out. Look out. I personally believe that most of the Anabaptist people, they are not going to compromise.

They won't do it. They won't compromise. There's something in them that will not let them compromise.

Today, as I stand here, many of them are not ready to face the baptism of blood. They're not ready. But I guarantee you when it comes face to face with it, they're not going to compromise.

They're going to find what they need. But my encouragement is, let's find what we need now. Why must we wait until they throw us in a prison? Let's wake up now.

I don't believe they're going to compromise. Oh, I'm sure, as I thought about it this afternoon, I think, yes, the departing Mennonites will compromise. They will.

Because they've been compromising one after another after another. I wonder how many, yea, hath God said, sessions they've been through in the last 20 or 30 years. Those, they will compromise.

But I don't believe the others are going to compromise. I believe they're going to shake themselves and wake themselves and realize what's going on and fall on their face like their forefathers have done and get through to God. But, oh, brothers and sisters, why can't we do it now? Why must we wait until they take the plate away from us to fast? You know, we're going to fast someday.

I mean, big time fasting. Why must we wait? Why must we wait until they take our Bibles away for us to treasure our Bibles? Why must we wait? Yes, that giant is going to wake up, shit up, stand up, shake himself and start prophesying again. I love the illustration that Peter Hoover put in his book.

One of the books that I read on Anabaptism written by Peter Hoover. He used the illustration of Samson in relating to the Anabaptist people and gave all the illustrations of what a powerful man Samson was as long as his hair was uncut. And then he also gave the illustration how that he, through compromise, lost his hair.

And through that compromise, he lost his power. But in the end, his hair grew back. And he stood up again and destroyed the Philistines.

I like that illustration. So what shall we do? Men and brethren, what shall we do? May I suggest to you that it's time to change our lifestyles? It's time to change our lifestyles. You know, some time ago, I was in another state preaching.

And I believe it was Sunday night. It was Sunday night after a whole week of meetings and I was preaching out of the book of Romans, chapter 8, on walking in the Spirit instead of walking in the flesh. Walking after the promptings of the Spirit of God instead of walking after the promptings of this flesh of mine.

And I mean, I made it out there and I put the standard right up where the Bible says it's supposed to be. Amen? You know, God did plan for us to walk with Him every day. Amen? And after I finished preaching my heart out for an hour and gave an invitation and some people responded, one brother came up to me on the side, you know, and he said, Brother Denny, I need to talk to you.

I think you're putting the standard way too high, brother. That's what he said. I thought, boy, this is going to be interesting.

And I said, oh. He said, yes. He said, I listen to what you're saying.

If I do what you're saying, I'll totally have to change my whole life! I thought. I think he got it. That's what I was trying to tell him.

And what he meant by that was his farm and all his money and all the things he was doing and all the hours he was spending on his tractors and all those things, he's going to have to change all that in order to

walk with God. And I thought, amen, brother. And by the way, I did tell him gently just that.

I said, brother, you need to change those things. Walking with God is at the top. And if you can't walk with God and do all those things, then can it? We need to change our lifestyles.

Amen? It's called repentance. But I thought I'd put a different flavor on it. Change our lifestyle.

Amen? It's called repentance. And brothers and sisters, let's just be real honest tonight. If we go away from all of this and all that God has been doing and all the words that we've been hearing and the beautiful movings of God's Spirit upon our own hearts, if we go away from all of this and basically we are no different two weeks from now, this didn't mean a thing.

It didn't mean a thing. God wants us to change our lifestyle. We've been sitting here listening for all these messages.

God wants us to repent. Change the priorities of our life. Some of us need to sell our houses.

Whoa! Some of us need to sell our houses. Some of us need to get rid of that fancy car. Some of us need to lose 50 pounds.

Some of us need to go see our neighbors. Some of us need to forget about our retirement programs. There is no retirement, bless God.

There is no discharge in this war. That's what it says in Ecclesiastes. There is no retirement.

Some of us need to retire into full-time Christian work. Amen? You do that for the last 20 years of your life, praise God. Don't be figuring out how you can make another 100,000 before you can't walk anymore.

Why don't you just give God the last 10 or 15 years of your life? If we have that long. We need to change our lifestyle, brothers and sisters. Some of us need to go see our neighbors.

And then go again. Weeping and pleading with them. We need to sit down with our neighbor and say, You see, I'm concerned about your soul.

Do you realize what would happen if everyone in this tent would do that just once? It would shake this whole county. I mean, there's got to be a thousand people here tonight. They're not all of us adults.

I'm sure there's 500 adults in here. It would shake this county. Then if you did it the next weekend with another one, whoa! But I believe that God is calling that way.

He is calling that way. Let me say something to you young people. Do you realize how old most of these early Anabaptists were? Do you realize? They were 17, 18, 19, 20.

I mean, there's account after account of young men, 19 and 20 years old, kneeling before the brethren and being commissioned two by two and sent out to preach the gospel in the villages beyond where they were. And most of those young men didn't live for six months and they did that when they were 20 and 19 years old. And we're making daisy chains while the world goes to hell.

Playing ball. Please. Please don't misunderstand me.

It's okay for little children to play games. I'm not against that. It's time to enlist.

Young men, young ladies, it's time to enlist. Don't you see? Don't you see, young people? Don't you see the vision? Don't you see the souls? Don't you see they're going to hell? Don't you see that you have what they need? Don't you see or are you blind? We need to fast and pray for this county. We need to do that.

I beg you. I beg you to go back to your churches and gather together a group of brothers and sisters that are willing to get together and fast and pray for this county. Not once, but again and again and again and again.

Again, do you realize what would happen if a group like this all went back and started a prayer meeting and began to sigh and cry before the Lord with fastings and prayer for this county? Do you know what would happen? God would work. I know God would work. God would save souls.

Real souls. Souls that are going to hell. Whose blood is on our hands.

God would save souls. Let's do it. Let's do it.

You say, Brother Denny, don't rock the boat. Come on now. Don't rock the boat.

You know, that's what the reformers told the Anabaptists. Now look, okay, you've got some pretty radical ideas here, but just, you know, we need you. Just settle down a bit.

Yeah, we've been settling down a bit. Long enough. It's time to rock the boat.

It's time to shake the bush until the skunks run out. Oh, Brother, you are going to make trouble everywhere. No, I don't think so.

I think if you go forth on your knees, it's not going to make trouble. I believe that people will listen to you. If you go forth on your knees, if you go forth in humility and brokenness, if you go forth in sincerity of heart, God will use it.

Well, that's enough. I have two more pages. The Anabaptist vision.

Do you see it? Aren't they beautiful? Oh, what a beautiful people. Oh, what does it say in Psalm of Solomon? An army terrible with banners. Oh, amen.

An army terrible with banners. Do you see the vision? God wants us to receive it into our hearts. And God wants us to get serious with Him if it's a little blurry tonight, even as we sit here.

Maybe you sit here and you think, this guy is a nut. I mean, wow, he is really off. Don't write me off too quick.

Go get alone for a few hours and ask God if I am that nutty. Or maybe you're not seeing very clear. That's my plea to you.

Now, we're going to give an invitation this evening. We're going to give you an opportunity to respond. If you need to do business with God, you may be here this evening and you've never been born again.

I know there are people like that in this tent this evening. You're not born again. You're holding out.

Maybe you want to sow your wild oats. I don't know. God is calling you to His Son.

And you may be here this evening and you may just realize my vision is so dim, I can hardly see it. It's time to buy of you eyesalve and anoint your eyes. Would you do that tonight? Do we have a song of invitation, Brother Melvin? Song number 90.

Do you want to turn to that song number 90 in your book? Let's stand to our feet for a prayer. Oh Lord, it's late. We've gone long.

It's been a full weekend, Father. It's been a beautiful weekend. Thank You, God.

So many good things. Here we are before You tonight, Lord. I just give this invitation to You.

You know, Lord, what needs to happen in this tent tonight. I ask You to work in our hearts. Go deep, Lord.

Go deep. Take us way beyond a little prayer at an altar. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18111.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/denny-kenaston/early-anabaptism-the-anabaptist-vision/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net