

Believe His Word Powerfully

by Don McClure

The key to turning the world upside down is believing something powerfully and passionately, like the early church did.

Duration: 49:03

Scripture: Acts 1:1-8

Topics: "Passionate Preaching", "Faith Transformation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of preparing and delivering a sermon with passion and conviction. He urges preachers to not just go through the motions of sermon preparation, but to truly allow the message to penetrate their own hearts first. The speaker highlights the need for preachers to be transformed by the message themselves in order for it to have an impact on others. He also emphasizes the importance of having a strong belief in the message and a passionate love for God. The sermon draws from Acts chapter 1 and encourages believers to have a powerful belief and a passionate love for God.

Transcript

Turn this session, if you would, to Acts chapter 1. Acts chapter 1. The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach until the day in which he was taken up after he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he also presented himself alive after his sufferings by many infallible proofs, being seen of them for forty days, and speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and being assembled together with them, he commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, You have heard of me. For John truly baptized you with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in his own authority, but you shall receive power, after which the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in both Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

Father, we pray that as we look at this section of Scripture that we have all studied and taught numerous times, Lord, we ask that you would just in a fresh and simple way open our hearts to what you would have to say to us and strengthen us by it. Refresh us, Lord, in so many wonderful fundamental issues. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, as we look here and, you know, obviously we're picking up the book of Acts in chapter 1 here where we're looking at it, we're looking, of course, at the first century church. And it's obviously to me, I suppose, when we do look at church, the book of Acts is where it's kind of our study manual, isn't it? And where we kind of look at things, not because it's at all a perfect church, there never has been.

Only in heaven will that be as we're finally conformed to his image, and the body of Christ finds its full identity of then. But until then, the church has always been the church. As you look through the book of Acts, you find virtually everything that we're still been dealing with for the last 2,000 years, they were already being dealt with in the early church.

There's really, as you know, the word says, nothing new under the sun. And what they, you know, what we're going through, you can pick up the book of Acts and find that they went through it. And the Lord allowed them to have the same problems and distractions and diversions or struggles or problems and divisions that could always have always been around.

And it's something, I think, sometimes it's just so refreshing to go back and kind of look at a little bit and to reflect on and to see what it was to me in a sense that the early church was so much all about. And here as we look at these verses in Acts chapter 1, there are just three things I want to pull out of it and then reflect on. But just to give them to you first that we're going to look at is that we see here a group of people that whatever else you want to think about them, you realize that they believed something powerfully.

They believed something powerfully. And then secondly, they loved someone passionately. And then third, they lived expectantly.

Now those are things, I think you just say them and they're easy to kind of just say, but I think they're such important things to contemplate and to really find ourselves sometimes looking at in the sense that here first of all, as I said, they believed something powerfully. As powerfully as I suppose anybody could. And I think, you know, the world has always been a confusing place ever since the fall of man.

There's always been tremendous spiritual confusion in the whole world. And particularly today, it seems to be worse than ever, I think, in our world, in our society, than at least our country has ever known. We're being taught everywhere we go that we live in a pluralistic society now.

We're being constantly, there's this constant deluge of views and opinions, you know, that there are on all sorts of things and we're being taught there that we need, we're a pluralistic society and if we are going to make it as a society, if we're going to live through these things, it's going to be because we're a blending pot of the world. We're a melting pot of the world's thinking and it's something where people are going to make it if we're open, if we're flexible, if we're somewhat negotiable on things. You got to give a little and take a little in order to be able to put a, you know, melting pot of the world together in America.

And it's going to be, it's going to succeed because people are somewhat flexible in certain things. And so you've got to be social, socially open-minded on things. Morally realize, well, you may have some standards and you may think different, but at the same time, you've got to realize a lot of people don't share those things.

And we've got to function together, we've got to exist together, we've got to work together, we've got to go to school together, we've got to live in neighborhoods together, we've got to find a way to get along. And we seem to be living in a world that anybody that is narrow, that's what you become. If you believe

anything intently, if you've got something that you believe powerfully, there's very little room for that.

You're very, you're painted out to be narrow, you're fanatical, you're bizarre. And of course, there's always, you know, the ones that the press can pick up on that are kind of the epitome of weird people because they're narrow. There's always, you know, the militias that are hiding off in the mountains, storing up their weapons, waiting for chaos to break out, and enough for the news guys to go out and pick them out and just say, this is what happens to people that just, that aren't flexible to the world around them, that don't realize that there is a world around them that has different things.

They're gonna end up one day shut off into the world and in their weird little compounds preaching their own little dogmas, and they're gonna be the enemies of the world around them, and the world will be the enemies of theirs. And as a result, there's this constant sort of a little bit of pressure that's unending, that there seems to be precious little room for anybody with deep convictions, for anybody that has something that is very strong about them. And not that it's not okay to have them, but at the same time, you've got to realize you've got to learn how to keep them to yourself, and to hold those opinions inside.

And you've got to realize the world in which we're living and functioning together. Well, that's something, though, when you think all those things about the world, and yet when you look here in Acts chapter 1, you realize there's a hundred and twenty people there that didn't think that way at all. This hundred and twenty people ended up, you know, turning the world upside down, or right-side up, depending on what your vantage point is, I guess.

But they seem to think the exact opposite from that sort of thinking. They were absolutely convinced that actually what the world, while it was thinking as it was thinking and functioning as it may be functioning, in all reality, as far as they were concerned, the world was desperately looking for something to deeply believe in. The world was longing for somebody with convictions.

The world desperately had this hunger for what it was that they actually had. And they were a group of people, and that's 120 in the upper room, that they had something that they believed in, and they believed in it as powerfully as I suppose anybody has ever believed in anything in all of history. And very simply, they believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of the Living God.

And then about that, they had absolutely no more flexibility than you had about the law of gravity. I mean, that was not up for discussion, that wasn't up for negotiation, that wasn't up for varied opinions. It was fixed.

And the silliness as far as they were concerned, even to, you know, you could talk about it if you wanted to, and have all those sorts of things. But in the final analysis, truth was truth. And, you know, we live in a democratic society where, you know, morality and truth and ethics are all quite negotiable.

You know, they're just voted in and out. We live in a society where the majority rules. And society is governed by people, and by the mind of man, and whatever the majority says it is, it somehow or another has a way of becoming that.

Well, they looked at that, and that was ridiculous. They were no more negotiable, as I said, about Jesus being God than they were about the law of gravity. And that is something you vote on.

You don't vote on the law of gravity. You know, 51% of us or 80% of us decide, you know, we want to vote on the law of gravity. We never liked that law.

It was just a difficult law. And the older you get, the more you hate that law. You know, type of a thing, anyway.

Everything starts falling, you know, anyway, and it's being pulled down. We don't like that law. We're gonna vote it out.

And so we decide. We hold an election, and 99% of us vote against it. We don't believe it any longer.

As if, so what? You know, I mean, you can win all those elections you want, but you can climb to the top of a ten-story building and jump off it, and all there'll be is one less voter. You know, I mean, sort of a thing. It has nothing to do with anything negotiable.

These are fixed things. They are things way outside of the realm of any man's opinion. And here it's something to where, when they look there, I mean, you know, God was a creator of the universe, of the world.

He was God in heaven above and earth below. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. It was the most wonderful truth in the world when they looked at the cross, and they looked at the sacrifice, and it was as sure as anything ever was.

It was. No negotiation about it. You can call it, I think, as far as they were concerned, dogmatism, fanaticism, legalism, zealotry.

I don't think they cared a hoot. You know, pick your word, you're right. You know there's something on it if you want to.

We are that. We're absolutely sold on it completely, 100%, and there's no negotiation to us about it. And I think what the world is desperately looking for is just such thinking.

That is, not just being something that's made up, but when they see that there are people that absolutely, truly, totally are convinced of things, and about it, there is no discussion with them. It's something they're completely given over to. And this is what they had come to realize.

And this was to them the great realities. And we already read here, in Acts 1, the former treatise of Otheophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, till the day that he was taken up. After he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen, whom he had presented himself alive after his sufferings, by many infallible proofs being seen of them forty days.

And speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God, about that, for that last six-week Bible school that they had been through after the resurrection. From that point on, there was no more discussion. There was no more negotiation.

These were the greatest facts in all the world, and they had come to see them by all these many infallible proofs. And here was something, as far as they were concerned, to transform them. They had not only spent some three years with him.

They had seen him day and night, and they had seen him from every possible angle that you could observe anybody. They had seen him with their eyes. They had heard him with their ears.

They had touched him with their hands. They were there for his miracles. They watched him as he walked on water.

They watched him still the seas. They watched him there as he multiplied loaves and fishes, as he healed the sick. They watched him raise the dead.

They heard him preach sermons, give sight to the blind. They watched him forgive sins. And everywhere he went, they watched a mass of humanity that was eternally transformed by his presence.

And about that, there was no discussion. It was real. As John says in his epistle, that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, which our hands have handled, and we're concerning the word of life.

The life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness. And we declare to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, was manifested to us. That which we have seen, heard, we declare unto you, that you may also have fellowship with us.

And truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And here, he looked there, he said, this is, there's no negotiation about this. What we have seen, what we have heard, what we have handled, it's absolutely overtaken us.

And this is the reason now it became the defining reason for their existence. It was such a powerful truth to believe in this. As Paul, when he stood before King Agrippa in Acts 26, he explaining who he was and what he was all about to Agrippa.

He says, while I thus occupied, I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests. And at midday, O King, along the road I saw light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining round about me and those who journeyed with me. And when we'd all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me, saying in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? Is it hard for you to kick against the goads? So I said, who are you, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

But rise, stand your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness of those things which you have seen and the things which shall be revealed unto you. I will deliver you from the Jewish people as well as from the Gentiles to whom I now send you, to open their eyes. And in order to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

Here Paul looked, and this was something that absolutely from that road to Damascus experience on, he had a truth that he believed, and he believed it so powerfully, it took over his being. It transformed his identity. It became the definition of what he was as a human being, why he lived, why he breathed, why he woke up every day, why he functioned, why he existed.

It gave definition, recognition, focus, purpose to all of what he was. And this was why we're all alive. Everyone's alive for this reason.

That's why each one of us hopefully exists. And it was something that they believed it, and they believed it more important than even breathing. As far as you look at the early church, and you know what they were all about, they had something they had come to believe so powerfully, that for that the issue of even

negotiating their lives was a small price to pay.

It meant absolutely nothing to them. They believed something so powerfully that it was greater to them than their own lives. And as history has suggested of the Apostles and so many early church leaders, when you go through the list and you look at Stephen, whom Paul had stoned in the streets of Jerusalem, or you look at James, John's brother, who was beheaded for preaching Christ in the temple.

You look at Matthias, who was tied to a cross, draped in molasses, and eaten by vultures. You look at Jude, Thaddeus, who was crucified and shot to death with arrows. You look at Nathanael, skinned alive, and then crucified in double agony.

You look at Philip, hanged on the columns of the great temple. Andrew, crucified in Egypt. Matthew, beheaded in Alexandria.

Mark, dragged to death behind a chariot. Luke, crucified in Acacia of Rome for preaching Christ. James, Alpheus, thrown from Herod's triple roof.

Thomas, speared by a mob. Simon the Zealot, sawn in pieces, alive. Paul, beheaded on the Appian Way.

Peter, literally forced to watch his beloved wife being crucified on Batacale Hill, and all through her death and agony, he cried to her, oh beloved, remember Christ, remember Christ, Peter himself, who felt so unworthy to die in the manner in which his Lord had asked and was end up being crucified upside down. But you look at a group of people who believed something and believed it. They're more precious and more glorious and more wonderful than life and breath itself.

That's what they had. We, so oftentimes, we want to look around and you say, I'll believe your gospel if you can show me proof. Well, you look at the early church and they had all the proof you could dream of seeing.

There was something about then, there was the blood of the martyrs that just poured constantly, because what happened, they believed something so powerful. And how these ordinary men and women who ended up turning the world upside down, what had simply happened at the core of them was that they had come into a reality, into a truth, into a knowledge, that to the very end, even many of them on their own crosses, did nothing but preach a triumphant Christ for which they believed greater than life itself. And I think to me, you know, and I wonder about them today.

If you look at these group, you look at the Apostles, you look at the early church leaders, and if they were at a lot of our conferences or our meetings or our strategy sessions or the things that the church is so often doing, what do we, what are the people looking for? What do they need? What's society at? How do I be, you know, somebody that's relevant, you know, in all of these things that we're kind of trying to be? What's the greatest and freshest approach to people? What are they looking to? What are they interested in? I'm not saying that God is entirely unknown, has no interest in any of these things, but it is something there. I think these men and women of the early church were watching a lot of our strategy and planning and thought meetings about defining who we are in our vision, would look and say, what are you talking about? What in the world are you talking about? That there is something, I think, that when people don't have something that they believe so powerfully and passionately, they need a lot of strategies. They need a lot of other sort of support systems to come, but you take a person and you give them the deepest abiding conviction that the brain is capable of embracing, and then you make that the truth, that Jesus

Christ is the Son of the Living God, and God was in Christ, reconciling to the world, to himself, and either you come to Christ and you live forever or you live without him forever.

But, you know, it's something to me that this is so powerful and all in and of itself, that there would be something that each person ever stood in the pulpit, and when they stood in the pulpit, you realize there is somebody that they stand there and they believe something powerfully. They believe something so deeply that it is more important to them than life itself. It is more precious to them.

You realize that when they stand up there, they've got something they believe in. They believe in more than life. They believe they have something for which they would gladly, willingly, without a second thought, give their life for.

That's what I believe the world is looking for there, when they can see that. And to me, if there's somebody that stands in a pulpit and doesn't have that, get out of the pulpit. Get out of the pulpit until you can stand.

People are coming to church looking for heaven. They're looking for a way to go to heaven and to be there and to have a truth that can absolutely transform their life, and if you do not have it for which you are willing to live and die, go do something else. And for God's sake, do something else.

For your sake, do something. And for the poor people's sake, you know, do something else until there is something where you realize, I believe it, and I believe it passionately. I believe it powerfully.

I believe it completely. But they were not only people that they believed something powerfully, they also, as I said, they loved someone passionately. You look at them, they had a belief that was quite powerful, but they also had a love that was quite passionate.

In verse 6, it says, therefore, when they had come, hereafter this seven-week, you know, 40 days Bible school, the Lord kind of gave them through the ultimate training seminar, if you can imagine being at that time with them. But therefore, when they were come together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Here they were coming right now, and they had been without Jesus for the three most devastating days of their lives. There as He had died on the cross, and before He was risen, and made known unto them.

Their heart and their soul had gone through a process of agony and turmoil that had to be devastating to them. We can't, I don't think, understand what fully we can think of it and meditate on it, I suppose. But there is something during that period where now they saw Him alive and risen from the dead.

How that had to just absolutely inflame the passions of love. And to look there and realize that He is alive. And that just as Mary, when there she went to the tomb, and she embraced Him, she grabbed on to Him, where he had to say, Mary, don't cling to me.

She was determined, I'll never take my hands off of you again. I'll never let you out of my sight again. I'll never be away from you again.

She not only had something she believed powerfully, but they also had a love that was passionate. It's something about them that had overtaken them. They wanted Him, and they wanted His kingdom now.

Lord, what do you mean? You're going, you can't go, don't ever leave us again. Tell us that you're just gonna set up your kingdom. You're gonna be here with us, to lead us, to guide us, to fill us.

You're going to reign. We want your throne. We prepared for your throne.

We understand your throne. We understand your majesty. And we love you.

Please, don't tell us you're going away. And something here that is just as important as believing something powerfully, is loving someone passionately. I think we've all found, and one of the sad things to me, and I mentioned it a little bit last night concerning Wilbur Smith, but I found through life and through ministry, there's a lot of people that I think, they're truly sound theologically.

In the sense, they believe all of the right things. They believe in Jesus Christ. They know He's the Son of the Living God.

They fully subscribe to all the right doctrines and biblical Christianity. They know man is sinful, and God is holy. They know that Jesus Christ came into the world.

They know that He took their sins to the cross. They know He died. They know He rose.

They know He ascended to heaven. They know right now He ever lives to make intercession for them. They know He's coming back again.

They preach it. They teach it. They believe in it.

They communicate it to others. They know that He's going to take us home, conform us to His image. We'll reign with Him forever.

But somehow or another, though the mind is fully educated, fully trained, fully convinced of things, it's somehow or another, with many people, it falls short of capturing the passions, of capturing and keeping the heart on fire, and the heart in love in a great way. And it's something there that it doesn't, all these wonderful things, they don't sustain a passionate love for Christ, a deep, profound, abiding desire for communion and for fellowship with Him. So many, I think, are like, and we can easily become like the church in Ephesus in the book of Revelation, when John writes, the Lord speaks to him, but to the angel of the church in Ephesus, write these things, says he who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands, I know your work and your labor, your patience, that you cannot bear those who are evil, that you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars, and you have persevered, and you have patience, and you have labored for nine names' sake, and you have not become weary.

What a church. Doesn't that sound like a fabulous church? Wouldn't you, I'd love to go to that church, when you look at it, think of this, I know your work, your labor, your patience, you cannot bear those who are evil, you've tested those who say they're apostles, they're not, you found them liars, you persevered through all of these things, you're still in there, you're still fighting the good fight, you have patience, you've labored for nine names' sake, and you're not tired of it, you haven't even grown weary. What a great bunch of people to be with, until he then goes on to say, nevertheless, I have this against you.

You've left your first love, you've got all the right persuasions, the doctrines are there, you will stand for all the right things, you will fight for it, you will nail every false doctrine that comes along, you'll call them liars, you'll produce the truth, the proof of it, the evidence will be out there, right there, and you'll hang in there, and you're in, as soon as you're ready, with finished with that battle, you're ready for the next one. And you'll stand up, and you'll identify the next false thing that comes in, the next error, the next problem, and

you'll nail it to the wall, and you won't go tired of it, you'll almost be, give me another one, I'm hungry for another weird thing, you know, to defend for the kingdom of heaven. I love it, you know, or something, but here the Lord looks, and at the same time, he says, but that isn't how we started.

You didn't become a Christian to become a defensor, the defender of God, he didn't need any defenders, he needed lovers, he needed people that he loved, that he died on the cross, where he didn't die for defenders of the faith, he died for us. Now, hopefully, along the way, we become tremendous apologists and defenders of the faith, but at the same time, that that's just a side issue to a mind that believes powerfully, and a heart that believes passionately, that there were those two, when you get those things together, when you've got the mind, and you've got the passions, and the heart, you've got those united, you've got an awesome thing, you've got somebody, you put like, somebody like that in a pulpit, you put somebody like that, you put the Word of God in front of them, and say, now here, go feed my sheep, but to me, I'm convinced, if you don't have those things, you can't give them enough things that the congregation can sit at and listen to. And while on one hand, we can be the, you know, the proud ones that we realize that we're still standing when others are falling, and we've outlived all the weirdness and the doctrines that have come and gone, and all the other things, but in the process of it, and even though we're determined, we're gonna keep doing this as long as our heart beats.

I believe so often, the Lord says, that's not what I was all about. I was in somebody there where I got in, I've been their mind believed powerfully, and their heart loved me passionately. That's far greater than anything else.

It's far more glorious than anything else, and anything else than that is a lesser, and not acceptable to God. But it's also something there, that because they believe something powerfully, and they also love someone passionately, they then thirdly, they lived expectantly. They were a group of people, it tells us in verse 12, it says, they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, on a Sabbath day's journey, and when they had entered, they went up into the upper room, where they were staying, and Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Celadon, and Judas, the son of James, and they continued with one accord, in prayer, and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Here there's something they now, they were somebody, they believed something powerfully, they loved him passionately, and they lived expectantly. All of them said, well we're gonna go back and do exactly what it was he told us to do, go wait. And they found themselves there, as they gathered together in the upper room, and there was such tremendous sense of expectancy, they continued with one accord in prayer.

If there was now something they were absolutely sure of, and convinced of, as that the very God that they believed in powerfully, that they loved passionately, there was a full expectation that now they were going to become fully engaged with him, and the power of his indwelling Holy Spirit, and he was going to transform their lives. And there was a full expectation that God was going to transform them, and use them mightily. There was a full sense of, of course this is what he's going to do.

We will expect in a nothing less than this. We are going to go back until we have received the promise of the Father. Until that anointing, and that power, and that enabling, that God who was in Christ reconciling the world himself, now he wants to be in us, reconciling the world.

Now he wants to take us in the full sense, of course he wants to use us. On one hand there's a, we're Christians, I suppose we ought to be kind of an interesting dichotomy, or a paradox, or something. There's one part of us, inside of us, that is absolutely amazed that God would even talk to us.

That he'd even acknowledge we exist on the planet, and yet at the same time that somehow or another to be blended with somebody that there is a full expectation that if God spared not his own son, will he not give us all things? That there is this sense within us that God wants to use us. He longs to use us. He loves those people with all of his heart.

He's no respecter of persons as much as he himself went out on the Mount of Olives and preached and prayed. As much as he went on the hill of the Beatitudes and preached his sermons. As passionately as he spoke to any that while he was here in his own body, as passionately as he wants to speak today through ours.

To touch lives, and to transform lives. And when they expected this, they realized, if I do believe something powerfully and I passionately love it, I have the right to fully expect an anointing, and an outpouring, and a hand of God upon me to achieve the eternal purposes that he has for the people that he loves, as much as he loved his own son. As Jesus prayed in John 17, for Father, thou lovest them as thou has loved me.

He looks there and he realizes, there God, you just scratched the surface when Jesus was here for a few years, but now you want to go into all the world. You want to go in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, or Amsterdam, or Russia, or wherever else it is, and there's somebody that can expect and long to go to whatever city you're going back to, and say, God, you want to minister to them. God, is there somebody going back that has something there that I don't know if I believe it that powerfully? Well, you better straighten it out.

If you don't, and you're not sure, and when you open the word, and you begin to prepare, and if it isn't something that arouses your own passions, and if it isn't something that thrills you, if it isn't a message that pierces your own heart, as you study and prepare for it, how do you expect it to do anything to anybody else's when you're the first person it ought to be touching? And you're just trying to get through the preparation yourself. God, just please help me. Get this sermon together.

There's a football game on, you know, or something there, and then finish this thing. I mean, to think somebody can think that way, and then expect anything to happen tomorrow, I don't think so. But when there is somebody, they sit down, and the greatest truths, the greatest passions that are ever stirred up within them, they, you know, we as Christians, we ought to make these bizarre, weird people you see on TV at football games, and they are bizarre.

You know, so you see these guys, they're standing in the freezing snows in Green Bay, you know, naked with a barrel tied around them, and a cheese stuck on their head. You want to say, this guy, he obviously seems to believe something very powerfully, and is quite passionate about it. I hope he's got something on under that barrel, you know, or something.

But it's probably too late, you know, anyway. You know, but the thing is, is it there, but it ought to be something there that any of these other people you'd see in the world, they ought to, people come to church, and see something that strikes them in the same, though a different way, something to realize this guy, he is a believer in what he is saying. I don't know if I believe it yet, but I know he believes it from cover

to core.

It's transformed him. He has nothing that his mind is more absorbed in. There's no greater truth than that which he is actually talking about right now.

He's absolutely absorbed in it, and you realize this has grabbed him, and it's taken him from cover to core. Alan Redpath used to say there's two types of people in the ministry, and you're just referring to the evangelical, essentially. He says you can give two men the exact same message, exact same sermon, and they can both go out and preach it, but one of them you sense there, though it is all right, and it's doctrinally there, every word is absolutely accurate and true, but somehow or another you sense that what he said, it came over the top of his head.

It's true, but then there's another man who stands up that you sense that everything now when he says it, it went right into him at the gut level and utterly turned the man inside out and upside down and turned him around, and it came out in power, and to me that's what the world is looking for. Somebody there that when he stands before people, there is something that you realize it has grasped him, it has transformed him. For this there is nothing else in life that means anything to his mind or to his heart that has drives him as powerfully and as wonderfully this, and he lives with a full expectation that God is going to take his life and use him, and expects there the Lord to anoint and to do wonderful and glorious things within them because of it.

There was no doubt within them, and there was no sense, it was just simply, okay, we're gonna go wait. The only thing is how long we may wait. Is it a day or two? How much longer? When is there the spirit of God going to come? It's not if, it's when.

We are waiting for the promise of the Father, and about that there's no question. We are waiting to be able to go out into the streets of Jerusalem and preach, and we are fully expecting all sorts of unbelievable things that we maybe even haven't dreamed of what they'll be yet, but they'll be awesome, and they'll be earth-changing, they'll be world-changing, they'll change society, they'll change the planet, they'll change the future of mankind because we believe them powerfully, and we love passionately, and we live expectantly. And to me that's when, when those, you get those things together.

I, you know, when you, when I look at all the other things that so many meetings, and planning, and discussions are all about many times, even sometimes in our own circles, and wonder what is it that, you know, could you imagine the early church looking at us? And we, I think the reason that they would look at us and think we're such weird birds is because we spend so little time looking at them, and realizing this is what made them tick. This is what happened. This is why worlds were transformed, why societies were transformed, why the face of the planet is transformed.

And when we realize the potential of our life for our city, for our world. I have a grandfather, actually my 16th grandfather, a long way back, direct. He was born either 1499 or 1500, and never quite sure which one it is.

He grew up a Catholic, became a Catholic priest, graduated from Cambridge in Greek and Hebrew. And as a Catholic priest though, in the early 1500s, when he began to hear about what was going on down in this place called Wittenberg, he was so moved by it, he went down to see what it was. My grandfather's name was John Rogers, not known to many today, but at any rate, he went down there to this place called Wittenberg, and there he met and was converted to Christ by a fellow named William Tyndale, a name we

do know.

And there is Tyndale, and another fellow, Coverdale, disciples him. His life was transformed personally, turned upside down. He believed something powerfully, loved someone passionately.

A greater reason for existence now began to infuse his being. He ended up, but Tyndale actually never finished the Tyndale Bible. He was martyred before it was done, but John Rogers and Coverdale actually finished it.

But then Rogers, because he was a Greek and Hebrew scholar, he ended up writing his own English translation of the Bible while he was doing this, known as the Thomas Matthews. I've been trying to find, I've got pages of it, but I want to get the whole thing. Cheapest one I've been able to find is 7,000, so actually maybe from the \$30,000 check from the airplane ride, I may get one.

But anyway, but it's something that someday I want to get one. But at any rate, he was so powerfully moved by what happened. He couldn't get it printed in England, so he had it printed in Switzerland.

Put it in Switzerland, he then brought it back with him to England, where he began to preach in Catholic England these things. And there is he began to preach essentially the fundamentals of the Reformation, that is, salvation by faith and not by works. And then began to preach that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man.

It isn't the Pope, it isn't the priesthood that does any of this. Began to preach that salvation is by the blood of Christ, transubstantiation. Well, there is no such thing.

By taking simply the aspects of communion and attending church, you will not live. And there he brought these things back to England. The father of the English Reformation, that what Luther did in England, Rogers did.

I mean, what Luther did in Europe, Rogers did in England. One man when he came back. And there he ended up, because he wouldn't stop preaching this, this heresy, he was brought in before Queen Mary I, now historically known as Bloody Mary.

But there is he was brought in before her, but because he knew the languages so well, Greek and Hebrew, and was able to give an answer, the bishops couldn't argue against him and they let him go, but told him not longer to preach these things until they had been determined better. He wouldn't stop. He continued to do it, so they brought him in.

He was in prison for one year. At which time he had a long court case, of which I've got a volume of some almost 400 pages there of his documents, where he came back to a cell day by day and he wrote down the records of what actually happened in this court case, on how he presented his biblical arguments for salvation by faith. And here just one man going through all of this, one man coming back to country, beginning to believe something.

And any of us today that are oftentimes of British heritage in one way or another, to realize this man back finally in the year 1554, it had gone on so long and they couldn't stop him. And there as they kept him in prison for a year, they finally came to a place of realizing this thing called the Reformation, we can't contain it, we've got to stop it. And so Queen Mary I, he was brought before her and given opportunity to recant, and if you recant, you can live.

But if you will not, you will be burned at the stake. We, they've got to stop this thing, and Roger's famous statement as he turned to her and he says, that which I have said with my lips, I will seal with my blood. And the next day on February 4th, 1555, that's precisely what happened.

Is there they took him out of the prison early in the morning because there was such a huge following of this thing starting to happen in London. Thousands of people were coming to Christ, the Reformation was beginning to sweep, so they took him out early in the morning according to Fox's Book of Martyrs. And as he was being led to Smithfield, he became the first of some 300 martyrs under Bloody Mary.

But as he was brought out and taken there, they brought him out early in the morning, ordered the the lamps of the street to be dimmed so that people would know they didn't want any rebellion happening. But the word got out. But instead of a rebellion, the streets were lined with people that as Fox's Book of Martyrs describes it, as an event instead of going to a funeral that's as if they were going to a wedding with the worship.

And here as he was led there, and with his wife and his ten small children there at her side, whom he hadn't been able to see or talk to and never did get to before he died, but led to the stake, giving one last opportunity there to recant to the sheriff. And saying that he wouldn't do it, the says, I will not pray for you. Which to a Catholic, not to have somebody praying you out of purgatory, that's a bummer.

But you know, he looked at him and he says, but I will pray for you. And there as they have it described of his death there of his hands lifted up to heaven until he lost consciousness and died, praising God. He will give his life.

And to me, I think what the world is still waiting to look for is people that burn for the kingdom of heaven. That they can see people who when they stand in a pulpit, you sense their heart and their life lifted up towards heaven. Lifted up long that they would have the honor of living, of burning, of loving, with all of their passions for the kingdom of heaven.

And a person like that will know anointing. They will know a reason for which they exist. And when we realize this is the stuff that not, you know, when you look at the world and what people are willing to do for the world, how much more ought to be for the kingdom of heaven? My heritage there, both my mother and father's side, if you ever know anything about the Scottish Covenanters and heard anything of them, there are a whole group of people, descendants of Rogers, who because of the fact that after what happened, of course, after Rogers brought the Reformation to England, then initially the throne hated, you know, and fought the Reformation.

But then it got clever. Can't beat him, join him. One of the things that the British throne always hated was the fact that 16 times the amount of money every year left Britain that the throne got, Rome got 16 times more from the Catholic Church.

And they're looking at all this money, you know, going out every year and the British throne, how can we get it? The Reformation offered them a way. They said, look, not because they had a one thought whatsoever spiritually or any hunger for God whatsoever. They were just merely looking there and how can we get the church and the state together so we can have it all? And they found a way to hijack the Reformation.

They found a way to look, say, hey, we'll take it. We'll create the Church of England. They put in all the political, you know, appointees over the thing where all the money came into it and now was funneled back to the throne of which the king still to this day is known as the defender of the faith, the head of the church.

But all these descendants of Rogers into the body of Christ in the Reformation, they said, hey, we just came out from under one man ruling us. We'll never have another. And they call themselves covenanters because of the fact that they determined we have a covenant with Jesus Christ in the Word of God only and no man.

And therefore the Church of England rejected them, rebelled them. They outlawed field meetings and church and home meetings because they wouldn't go to the Church of England under this political system set up. And there as they went on, many of them, the capital crime is what it was.

And you read through like Fair Sunshine and some of these historical books of which England tried to blot out, of which it's all there, of the hundreds of thousands of these covenanters who did to the the last drop of blood within them, their life and their love for Christ and in wanting to preserve the Reformation within their heart and their love for Christ. And then the whole reason we as a country exist was in 1620. Another couple, honestly, of my relatives, Rogers, and it came over in 1620 on the Mayflower.

A lot of people don't realize that was a church, 100%. All of the people on that Mayflower were covenanters. There was a congregation of people that came over seeking religious freedom from Britain, from the Church of England.

And then most of the settlers in our country, they came, they left everything they had from either the persecution from the Catholic Church in Europe, many of them, or the persecution from the Protestant Church in England. And they came over and were willing to give their lives and to give up everything they had for their children, their future, there to want to see the gospel, there be able to take hold in a new country, to bring the Word of God and have the freedom without any fear and oppression to worship and to study and to grow in Christ. And here, I mean, I've got two of my direct relatives fought at Bunker Hill, fought at Ticonderoga, they were at Boston Tea Party.

And there they were willing to put their life on the line there just simply for the cause of Christ. They were highly committed Christians. They didn't care.

And the reason that we're here today, that whatever there is left of this country is we are, we stand on their blood today. We stand on millions that gave their blood for the freedom and Christ and for the Word of God and the passions. And we are still heirs of that.

But the responsibility that we have to stand up, do we truly believe it ourself? Is it something there again where there's another generation that has caught fire and they can look at their homes and their cities and they believe the power of the Word of God and that they can stand before a congregation and communicate these truths with all of the heart, with all of the mind. And that's what the world needs. And then when there's somebody that simply has got some new little ditty to preach, hey I was at a conference and guess what I heard? Let's try this on for size and to see if it just might shake our city.

And you know, do this or do that. How weird. I think the book of Acts, the early church would look and say, wait, what, what, what conference? What are you, what are you short-circuiting of the kingdom of heaven?

That until the, that when we are talking about eternal life, that when we look there and we realize God, take my life, I've got the highest and most glorious message ever known.

The very reason that the human brain was, was created to hold these truths. And I have them. The greatest reason for which the heart and the passions of man were ever even spoken into existence was that he could have a passionate love for God above all else, the first and the greatest commandment.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all of your heart and all of your mind and all of your soul and all of your strength. And when there is something that they, that the mind and the heart are so connected and empowered and driven, and there is now engaged a full expectancy, who knows what'll happen? I know Rogers never dreamed many of us today would be sitting here because one man came back from Europe to England and he says, this must be taken there. And he brought it.

I'll write it and I'll transcribe it. No inkling there of his descendants, no inkling of the covenanters, no inkling of the, of the, the pilgrims, no inkling of all of these other things yet to be born out of the English tongue. But when people look and they realize, God, this is why I'm alive too.

I may have, I don't care what inkling I have of why I'm going back to the city I'm going back to. Other than God, send me there, alive and on fire and with passions lit. Truths convicted, you know, convicted deeply within me that abide within my heart.

In a full expectation, God turn my life and my city and my congregation upside down for the kingdom of heaven. Dear Father, we thank you for your love. Thank you, dear Lord, for the early church and for the Word of God.

And Lord, what these men and women discovered and how for the joy that was set before them they endured the cross as you, Jesus. The cross you gave to them. They despised the shame as you despised yours.

And they have now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God seated in Christ with you. And Lord, may we be ones that even dream of such a glory of resting and being seated in Christ. May we pay no lesser price.

May there be no lesser convictions. May there be no lesser passions. May there be no lesser expectancy within us.

Then God take our lives and transform our lives. Set us ablaze for the things of the kingdom of heaven. That Jesus, who you are, is deep and real.

Lord, I pray for those that may be here whose minds have been wandering, who were once rooted in things, once driven by the passions and in powerfully. But somehow or another it's just as you looked at the church at Ephesus when here they were like this. And you said it's somewhat against you, but you gave them a wonderful answer.

You said remember. Remember when we met. Remember how it began.

Remember when the passions were alive. Remember when the love was deep. Remember from which thou had fallen and come home.

Jesus, I pray that even through these few days here, that it would be a wonderful time of reflecting in the brain and remembering in the heart and reigniting the passions. And Lord, that the things which we know, the places our mind has been, we may never grow weary of them. We may never let them go to go search for another truth.

We have the greatest of all. And may our hearts never depart from the passion of being in love with Jesus Christ who gave himself for us. And Lord, may you take over our lives in a great and rich and wonderful way.

And for your glory. And may there be cities turned upside down, beyond our dreams, that we could ever wonder how such a thing could happen. But Lord, may we realize we have a reason to exist far beyond ourselves.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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