

(Luke) 37 - Kingdom of God-Chap13

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores the healing power of Jesus and the significance of the Sabbath, emphasizing God's desire to liberate those burdened by sin and despair.

Duration: 44:28

Scripture: Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 13:31-33, Luke 4:18-19, Luke 13:10-17, Luke 13:22-30

Topics: "Kingdom Of God", "Spiritual Liberation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a miracle, two parables, and a sermon given by Jesus. The miracle involves a woman who had been humped over for 18 years, and Jesus heals her, demonstrating God's desire to liberate and set free those who are spiritually bound. The two parables, comparing the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed and leaven, illustrate how God will bring about His kingdom. The sermon addresses the question of who will be in the kingdom, emphasizing that anyone who passes through the narrow door, which is still open, can enter. The speaker encourages listeners not to give up on spiritually lost loved ones, as the Lord can transform them in an instant.

Transcript

Yeah, finally, huh? Well, good morning. Good morning. Well, we haven't begun.

We're just ready to begin. In our study, by the way, welcome back. We're thankful you're here, and we pray you had great holidays.

We did. But it has, since we've been in Luke, it was at the end of October. So, as Peter said, let me refresh your pure minds by way of remembrance and stir up some of these things.

The book of Luke, we're in the Gospel of Luke, and we're about midway through the book now. The book of Luke presents our Lord Jesus as the Son of all mankind, not just related to the rich, to the important, to the smart, not just for the Jew, but Luke, the Gentile writer, presents the Lord as the one who's come for everybody, for all mankind. And as you go through the Gospel of Luke, you see, and we've been pointing out how Jesus continually touched those who were considered low class, the downtrodden, the rejected.

And so Luke is full of talking about the untouchable. In Luke, you find the lepers, and in Luke, you find the fallen women, and in Luke, you find the thieves getting converted, and so on. Because Luke goes after that to illustrate that Jesus comes to everybody.

Now, when we left off at the end of October, we were discussing the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. You'll remember that Luke divides the ministry into two sections. Chapter 4 to 950 are the miracles of our Lord.

In other words, his ministry when he did things. He was active. And then, the teaching of our Lord.

He's the teacher of all mankind. From chapter 951 to 1927. It's a lot easier to teach the first part, when he does things, because there's action.

Okay? And there are miracles. And you can sort of see these object lessons. But when he lectures, when he preaches, when he teaches, it's a little hard to teach what he teaches, because then it's necessary to follow his logic, and examine his illustrations, and figure out his points, and how he applied it, and the audience he was talking to, and so on.

So to simplify it, I've tried to divide the teaching section into topics. And if you could glance at the handout sheet that I handed out this morning, I've listed seven topics that Jesus spoke on. We've already discussed many of these.

Our attitude toward those who differ with us, discipleship, missions, prayer, the Christian life, the kingdom of God. And then he ends up his teaching section with a whole section on the salvation of God. Now, I give that as an overview to let you know where we are.

In that outline, last time, we had just wrapped up his teaching on the Christian life. And actually, I began to introduce his teaching on the kingdom of God. So that's where we are in the outline.

We're just beginning from chapter 13, verse 10. We did introduce that last time. So if you missed that and would like that, because I'm not going to go into a lot of the background of this woman who was all humped over, because we did that last time.

Just see Lillian, she'll make sure that you get a taste. Now, Jesus is just living. In other words, he's moving from place to place.

And as he starts teaching, someone asks a question. And in conversation, he answers that question. And then someone else raises another point.

So then he answers that. I don't want to miss that by analyzing this and say, all right, he talked about this. Now, number two, he talked about this.

Number three, he talked. It wasn't that way. He was living.

He was flowing. And these teachings came out of his conversation. And then the enemy would oppose him and he would answer that opposition.

So if you can hang on to that idea that his teaching is his living and his conversation and his flowing. But I'm sort of stuck here as the instructor. And so for the sake of analysis and so we can handle these things, I'm the one that divided it up into topics.

So I'm just praying that those topics won't get in your way. Chapter 13, verse 10. If you'll turn there, please.

This is the beginning of the section on the kingdom of God. Let me give you a simple outline that I think will help us get into the heart of it. This section is composed of a miracle, two parables, and a sermon.

You have a miracle. The woman who's humped over, 13, 10 to 17. You have two parables, verses 18 to 21.

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed and the kingdom of heaven is like leaven. And then you have a sermon that he gave, starting in verse 22. And it sort of answers the question, who is going to be in the kingdom? It's a story about the door that is narrow but not shut.

And there's still time to get in. And he gives this wonderful sermon. The way we're going to look at it is by answering, or I think the story answered these three questions.

The miracle answers the question, what? What does God long to do for you, for me, for us? Individually, corporately, what does God long to do in the kingdom of God? And I think you'll see the answer to that in this woman who was humped over for 18 years. And then the two parables answer the question, how? How will God do that? And the answer is, like a mustard seed and like leaven. And that answers the question, how? And then the sermon answers the question, for whom will he do it? Of course the answer is, anyone who passes through the narrow door that's not shut.

And so what is he going to do? Let's look at the miracle. How will he do it? Let's look at the parable. And for whom will he do it? Let's look at the sermon.

So that's basically what we're going to talk. I'm going to ask you to follow along as I read verses 10 to 17, the miracle. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

And there was a woman who, for 18 years, had had a sickness caused by a spirit. She was bent double and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, Woman, you are freed from your sickness.

And he laid his hands on her. And immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. But the synagogue official became indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath.

And began saying to the crowd in response, But the Lord answered him and said, You hypocrites! Does not each of you... I missed a whole verse there. Yeah, all right, let me... There are six days in which work should be done. So come during them and get healed.

Not on the Sabbath day. Verse 15. The Lord answered him and said, You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead them away to water them? And this woman, the daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for 18 long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day? And as he said this, all his opponents were being humiliated.

The entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things which were being done by him. This is the miracle of that woman who was humped over. She was bent over double.

And she had been that way for 18 years. As I suggested last time we were together, I began to introduce this. And so I won't give the same background on this woman.

If you missed that, Lillian will be glad to make sure you have the tape. Notice though verse 10. The occasion for this miracle was the Sabbath day.

It took place on the Sabbath day. Now that's not just another fact that we read la la la. That is very important.

Because as God opens up the truth of God's heart, the Sabbath day is everything. And sometime you'll have to study under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the seven Sabbath miracles that Jesus did. Seven times he did miracles on the Sabbath day on purpose.

He did it on the Sabbath. He could have done it any day. One was born blind.

He could have waited another day. Another one was 18 years humped over. Could have healed her on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Another one was crippled for 38 years. He could wait another day. It doesn't have to be the Sabbath.

But he did it on purpose on the Sabbath day because man had stolen the Sabbath day. He realized when God gave the Sabbath day, as soon as God created man, He no sooner made man, and the next thing he did was institute the Sabbath day. That's what he did.

As soon as he made man, man's first day was God's Sabbath day. God finished the work and said all I want man to do is enter in to a finished work. And of course that became a picture of redemption.

He did all the work on the cross and he wants us just to enter in. So Sabbath is a very important day. But in the hands of man, it had lost its meaning.

When God instituted the Sabbath, it was a picture of rest. Picture of blessing. A picture of completeness.

Picture of satisfaction. God did it all. This is all for you.

Enter in. Enjoy it. You don't have to work.

And the idea was it's not by work. It's by grace. The Sabbath was God's great picture of grace.

But then man got hold of the Sabbath and he turned it around. Instead of being rest and completeness and enjoyment and blessing, it became a time of rules and regulations. Do this.

Don't do that. You can't do that on the Sabbath. Violations.

Restrictions. And the Sabbath, which was intended to picture God's heart to give us rest and set us free, had become abandoned. And by the New Testament time, these people were in such bondage.

They could only walk so many steps on the Sabbath day. They could only do certain things with their food. They couldn't rub their toe in the ground because they'd be plowing.

And they couldn't pick something because they'd be reaping. And they couldn't crush it because they'd be threshing. And oh, it was an awful time.

And Jesus said, in effect, I want my Sabbath back. You've destroyed it. And so right in the face of the Pharisees and the scribes and the priests and the religious leaders, he went in and did these things on the

Sabbath day on purpose in order to take it back and to show his heart.

And they never did. Like you see that here, how indignant this person becomes. Now, this woman is bent over for 18 years.

And they get angry because she was healed on the Sabbath day. He broke the rules. Not supposed to work on the Sabbath day.

And they missed the point completely. Anyway, so this miracle took place on the Sabbath day. And it is the sixth of the seven miracles.

We're sort of in Luke, so we're not doing the Sabbath miracle. But each miracle comes, if you take the seven miracles in order, you have God's complete picture of rest. There is an order to it.

And so every miracle sheds new light on what it means to rest in the Lord. But here we pick it up in the sixth miracle. Verse 11, look at this woman's condition.

In verse 11 it says, It was caused by a spirit. Verse 16, Satan has bound her for 18 long years. The Greek doesn't let us know for sure whether 18 years ago Satan did something leaving her in that condition for 18 years.

Or if Satan for 18 years was holding her down for the full 18 years. It doesn't matter because her condition is the same. The illustration is that it's a spiritual problem.

Satan is behind. It's a spiritual problem. Now I'm not saying it's not literal.

It's a physical problem. She is bent over double. Her spine, curvature of the spine.

She is bent over and she's been that way for 18 years. But like all the healing miracles, it's a redemptive miracle. And by that I mean the Holy Spirit selected it to illustrate a spiritual truth.

We say he healed the physically blind to illustrate how he healed the spiritually blind. He healed the physically deaf to illustrate how he healed the spiritually deaf. He healed the leper.

Cleansed the leper. He didn't heal him. He cleansed the leper to show how he cleanses sin.

Moral lepers. And every miracle he did had a spiritual counterpart. What is the counterpart of the humped over woman? In other words, a blind man illustrates spiritual blindness.

Deaf illustrates spiritual deafness. What does this humped over woman illustrate spiritually? In other words, what is spiritual curvature of the spine? What would that be in a spiritual life? Let me illustrate it. I think two things are included.

But let me illustrate it by this wonderful verse from the book of Psalm. Psalm 44, 25. And it's clearly a spiritual thing the psalmist is writing about.

He said, our soul has sunk down into the dust. Our body cleaves to the earth. Now he's talking spiritually about depression, I think.

Our soul is bowed down and our body just sort of cleaves to the earth. Look at this poor woman's focus. I mean physically.

I don't know her heart. I'm not suggesting she would like this in her heart. But her body illustrates someone who was bent over and focused on this world.

She couldn't get her eyes off of the earth. She would just sort of bow down. Even if she tried to lift her head after a little while, she would gravitate back to the earth again.

She had no natural power to lift her eyes above. I think it's a picture from our own lives. It frustrates me to death.

I've known the Lord for a lot of years. And sometime I want to spank myself. After all those years, why do I keep doubting the Lord? Why do I keep getting anxious? Why do I keep fretting? And worse of all, how come abiding corruption is still in my heart? Why do I keep sinning? You know, after knowing the Lord all these years, you'd think something would change.

And sometime I just want to scream what in the world is happening. Because I find myself like this woman gravitating to the earth. And I don't want to look down.

I'm a Christian. I'm supposed to look up. This gloomy pessimism that always makes you look down and keep focused on the earth and so on, she pictures that.

I don't have a doubt about it from my study of the scriptures that Satan would love to have God's people looking down all the time. And negative all the time. And pessimistic and focused on this earth.

That's part of it, this drooping pessimism. The second part is in verse 11. The way it's worded, she could not straighten up at all.

Another translation says, and she could not walk uprightly. Take a concordance and trade that through the Bible. Walking uprightly.

You know that's a picture. Walking uprightly. Job walked uprightly.

Abraham walked uprightly. And here's a woman illustrating. Again, I'm not judging her heart.

I'm judging her body. Her body pictures someone that can't stop focusing on this earth and can't walk uprightly. What a tremendous picture this is.

I just felt like this bent over woman. I just said, Lord, come on. Help me walk uprightly.

And help me stop being so negative and keep looking down. So she couldn't get her eyes off the world. She couldn't walk uprightly before God or man.

And to use our own expression, if ever in the Bible someone needed to be straightened out. This woman needed to be straightened out. And sometimes I think, Lord, I need to be straightened out.

And you're going to have to straighten me out. How often we pray for those we love. Lord, straighten out my son.

Straighten out my daughter. Straighten out my friend. Straighten out my neighbor.

Straighten out my husband or my wife. My loved one. Because they have this sort of spiritual curvature of the spine.

And spiritually, like this woman, they're humped over. And they've been that way for years. They're held by Satan.

It's a spiritual thing. And sometimes we wonder if they'll ever straighten out at all. If they'll ever stop this worldliness.

And if they'll ever walk uprightly before God. I suggested that this miracle answers the question, what? What does God long to do? Well, the answer is, of course, in verse 13. He longs to touch people, like this woman, who are bent over and can't walk upright.

He longs to touch them so that they can look up and be positive. And get their eyes off of this world. So they can walk uprightly by a mighty miracle of God.

Did you notice, and of course, if you put yourself in her shoes, you'd know why. Did you notice how she glorified God after she was straightened up? God did two things for her. Gave her a word first, and then a touch.

A word and a touch. And the word by itself wasn't enough. She needed the word, and then she needed the touch of the Lord.

And when she got the word and the touch, she immediately, I can't imagine, after 18 years, picture this woman, bent in half, bent over double, and then straightened up. It's not a surprise to me that she began to glorify the Lord. Let me encourage anybody here who either feels like that woman or knows somebody that you think answers that description.

And you might have this idea, well, 18 years is a long time. You know, when your back is out, if you've ever had a bad back, everything's gone. It's like a tooth, the back of a tooth.

When that hurts, everything upsets your whole life. After 18 years, her back was established in that condition. On the level of earth, if you had tried to straighten her up, you would have broken her back.

There's no physical way that she could have been helped. She needed a miracle of God. And we look at our loved ones sometimes, you know, it just touches your heart because they're so established in their ways.

They're so established in the world. They're so established in not walking uprightly. And you wonder, is there any hope at all? Because they've been there so long in that condition.

On the level of earth, there's no hope. There's none. You'll break their back if you try to straighten them up.

And you probably, if you're like me, like the little child that grabbed the flower and broke. You know, and there's some time you just, you see somebody and you just, they're all like that. And we try to straighten them up.

And actually we hurt them by trying to straighten them up. You know, it's God's work to do that. We think that we can go to our loved ones and say, look at you now, you're not walking uprightly, and you're worried.

Straighten up. And we try to do it. I think we can do harm by doing that.

And what they need is a touch of God, a word from God. And that's what he longs to do. It's not like he doesn't want to do this.

The tragedy is that today, like then, Christian religious leaders have destroyed the Sabbath. And they're given all, the only thing that those scribes, the religious leaders, the only thing they had for that woman was rules. Not going to help her to have rules.

She needed a touch of God. And without that touch, she would have never glorified God. She would have never been able to walk uprightly and stand up.

So let's not be too quick to rule out and say, well, I'm looking at their folk. I'm looking at how established they are. I'm looking at the fact they don't walk upright.

Well, look at Jesus. He makes a difference. He really does.

And look in your own life as he touched you. Remember the days perhaps when you were negative and always looking down, and then the Lord touched you and you're looking up and you have hope and you have faith now. You're trusting the Lord and he's moved in your life.

That's what he desires to do. It's always on his heart to liberate, to set free, to deliver those who are bowed down and those who can't walk uprightly. So don't give up on that most deformed loved one that you know spiritually.

The Lord can undo in a moment of time years of bondage. I've seen him do it overnight. I've seen him do it overnight.

People who are so worldly, and then the Lord touched them. Someone so locked into this world, so sinful, and the Lord gave a word and gave it time. And years of bondage can melt away like snow in a spring fall if the Lord touches them.

So that's what he wants to do. A glance for a moment at verse 14. We won't spend a lot of time on these Pharisees, but the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd, there are six days in which work should be done.

Come during them and get healed. Not on the Sabbath day. Man's natural heart can't stand Sabbath.

Doesn't like rest. And what these religious leaders were saying is, do it by works, but not by rest. I can't stand it by rest.

They don't like this message. And one reason is it's too simple. See, they would say, if you want to straighten out, then you've got to do something.

Pray, fast, tithe, serve, minister, go to church, read your Bible, get baptized, get confirmed, get involved, be busy, and they give you a thousand rules to do. The real message is, let the Lord touch you. What a difference.

But they can't stand that, because it doesn't give them anything to do. The legalists, those who are inclined to given rules and regulation, they're a million light years away from God's heart on Sabbath rest. His way is the simple way, if God doesn't touch you, you don't get help.

If God doesn't touch me, I don't get help. But if He does, what a deliverance He gives. And so these Pharisees, they want you to think that they really agree with you sixth, seventh of the time.

You come six days and you can get it done. They don't agree with you at all, if you hold the grace of God. They don't like Sabbath.

They just say, do it by works. There's time to do it by works, but don't do it this way. Anyway, what does He long to do? He longs to set people free who are like that.

Glantz in verse 18 to 21, after He did this, He gave this wonderful, two wonderful parables. So He was saying, what's the kingdom of God like? To what shall I compare it? Like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden, it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches. And again He said, to what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It's like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three packs of flour until it was all leaven.

He gave these two parables to answer the question, how will God do that? There's a lot of discussion about these two miracles, or these two parables rather, for two reasons. In Matthew 13, when He talks about the mustard seed, after He said, the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed into his garden, in verse 32 He said, this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is grown, it's larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree. That's Matthew 13, 32.

And Bible botanists say, well, now that's not true. There are many seeds smaller than a mustard seed, and many plants larger than a mustard tree. And so some have had some problems with that.

The fact is that a mustard tree is not really a tree. It's sort of a plant, a garden plant. It's one of the largest of all the garden plants.

You'd be surprised if birds came and made nests in your tomatoes in your garden, in a plant. It's a tree that grows like a tree. But it was an idiom.

And that's why people have trouble understanding it. It's like we say, don't make a mountain out of a molehill. Someone would say, well, now that's not good because an anthill is smaller than a molehill.

And you should have said, don't make a mountain out of an anthill. It's just an idiom. You get the point.

Don't make something big out of something small. And the mustard seed was a small thing. And Jesus was saying that when I work, it's going to start in an insignificant way.

And it's going to develop into something unusually big. And we have plenty of idioms and we don't really mean them literally. I told you a million times.

My mother used to say, I'm so poor I couldn't rub two nickels together. Why nickels? Why don't you say pennies? See, that would make it more, she'd be poorer. I can't rub two pennies together.

It's just an idiom. And so this mustard seed was just an idiom. A second reason people have a struggle with these two parables is because of leaven.

Over and over, leaven pictures what is bad, not what's good. And so Jesus said, beware the leaven of the Pharisee. Beware the leaven of Herod.

Beware the leaven of the Sadducee. Paul, when there was immorality in the church, he said purge out the leaven. A little leaven leavens the whole lot.

Get rid of the leaven. Leaven is bad. And you remember in the Old Testament, that's why they had unleavened bread.

Leaven wasn't allowed. They were to search with lights to make sure there was no leaven. And now Jesus said, the kingdom of God is like leaven.

And people scratched their heads and said, well wait a minute. How can that kingdom of God be like leaven if leaven pictures that which is not good? If it pictures moral or theological corruption, how could it be good? When you come to study the Bible, you're going to see that there are many pictures. And some pictures are used in different ways.

The same picture. So you've got to study the context. Sometimes the vine is Jesus.

Sometimes the vine is Israel. Sometimes the rock is your God. Sometimes the rock is their God.

Idolatry. So when you see rock, that doesn't necessarily mean it's always God. Birds.

In one parable, the birds came and plucked up the seed. That was a bad bird. But there are good birds.

And so just because you see birds, you can't say that's always bad. If I said to you, the serpent, what does that picture? What comes to your mind? Adam and Eve or Satan, the serpent. But as Moses lifted up the serpent, so shall the Son of Man be lifted.

The serpent's also a picture of Christ. And Jesus said to the church, be as wise as serpents. Harmless as dogs.

So just because you see serpents, that's the devil. That's Satan. And so pictures are used in different ways.

Sometimes Satan's a lion. But there's also the lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus. And Micah 5 talks about the Christian, the believer, as a lion.

And our ministry is lion. All of that to say, leaven doesn't have to be bad. In this case, it's not bad.

Why did Jesus choose these two illustrations? Don't forget to tie it in to the humped-over woman. It was right after He did that miracle that He said, the Kingdom of Heaven's like a mustard seed. It's like leaven.

And I believe it's because He answers the question, how does God work? How is the Lord going to set His people free and liberate them? You see, the Pharisees, the scribes, the religious leaders, they were insisting on works, not grace. They didn't understand rest. They didn't understand the Sabbath day.

And they couldn't help this woman. She was sort of an embarrassment to them. She was sort of... I don't think she would have been invited to their party.

She was sort of an outcast and all. And here the Lord Jesus comes in and He begins to work with that which they considered low and last and the last or first again. They were angry when the Lord touched her.

They were angry when He did that on the Sabbath day. And the Lord was saying, look, the Kingdom of God is not what you would expect. It's something that's very small like a mustard seed.

But it's life. It's not works. It's not something you do.

A seed has latent in it life. And from the seed will grow this tree. See, they were upset because the people began to flock to this woman like the birds flock to the mustard tree.

And He's explaining why they're flocking. Because there was something wonderful here. Life had come into this woman in an insignificant way.

They weren't expecting it that Sabbath morning. There's a second answer, how does God work? Not only by life and by grace, but also like leaven. Notice verse 21.

The leaven was hidden in three pecks of flour. Don't forget, their pecks are not your pecks. It's about 50 pounds of flour.

So she hid this meal. He said the Kingdom of God isn't on the outside. It's not external like these Pharisees.

Don't do this and don't go here and don't do that and don't walk that and don't eat that and don't wear that. It's not like that. It starts inside like leaven.

It's hidden. It's secret. It's planted on the inside.

And notice the leaven had to come to the bread or come to the flour. It's from the outside. We don't have, some people want us to think that naturally everybody has good in them and that God will use the good.

Grace is not great because of what it finds when it knocks at our door. Grace is great because of what it brings with it when it knocks at our door. God comes to us and He brings this marvelous leaven and He puts it in our hearts.

And He starts the change, begins from the inside and works out. That's how God works. And then it not only begins on the inside but what does the leaven do? It begins to radically transform the flour.

And so how does God work? Like a little seed. How does God work? On the inside. How does God work? He begins with this energy that He put in there.

Of course energy has a name. Holy Spirit. And He puts this Holy Spirit like leaven in us and He begins to radically transform what's in it.

Now if it's barley flour, it will be barley bread. If it's wheat, it will be wheat bread. He's not going to change barley to wheat but He is going to radically change the character of the flour so that it finally becomes whatever bread that it is.

I used to think when somebody comes to the Lord, God will change their temperament. And then I find people that trust the Lord and they have the same old temperament. They weren't changed at all.

No, God's not going to change your temperament what you trust in but He's going to liberate it. He's going to show others with a temperament like yours what He can do when you're surrendered to the Lord. And so He's going to work.

He comes inside. He works from the inside out. He begins to radically transform from the sinner to the saint.

He doesn't create you. He transforms you. And then notice how it ends in verse 21.

Until all is leavened. I'm so glad for that word all. Until all is leavened.

How does God work? Like a little seed. How does God work? On the inside. How does God work? He begins to transform me.

How does God work? Thoroughly. Until it's all done. You know, it scares me to death.

Sometimes I look ahead and say, oh, I'm never going to make it. You know, I've trusted in the Lord but down the road I'll probably fail and I'll probably sin and I'll go off. No, no, you're going to make it.

You know why? Because there's leaven in your heart. And leaven's goal, it's not going to stop until you're completely transformed. The whole lump of you and the whole lump of me.

By grace, you've made it safe thus far. And grace will take you home. God never has an unfinished symphony.

He who has begun a good work will complete it. You will move from grace to grace. From faith to faith.

From glory to glory. And your path will go brighter and brighter until the perfect day. What does God want to do? He wants us not to be humped over.

Let's walk out of here looking up and straightened out and walking upright. How does He do it? By a word and a touch. Like a seed on the inside which changes us gradually.

Sometimes it's so gradual I wonder if it's happening. It's like the freezing of a pond. You're just thinking, where's the growth? It's in there.

The leaven's in your heart. And someday you'll be like Jesus. Someday I'll be like Jesus.

Sometimes you wish it would happen faster but the leaven is in there. And once it's planted it does its work. So that's how God works.

Like the seed inside changing, transforming, gradually until the whole lump becomes like the leaven. And God makes us like Himself. Now to whom does He do it? We'll look at that next.

Comments or questions? Oh, thank you. Good to be back. And they leave church like it's the Indianapolis 500.

Yeah, it's... But God is good, isn't He? And He touches those who seek Him. God, not you. God is doing His best.

No, no, but my point is as a mother, as a friend wouldn't we do our best to... God is doing His best. You gotta fight tooth and nail to resist the Lord. And so we got to trust the Lord.

He'll just keep calling and calling. And someday they'll hear that word. Now let's bow.

Father, we thank You that these things are so far beyond us. And we long... You say this is Your heart. That You want to do it.

Well, we long to have You do it. We want You to do it. Thank You that You have compassion on those who have been established in sin and bent over and whose proclivity is this earth and this world.

Thank You for touching us. Thank You for the promise that You'll touch them. We wait for that and we will glorify You.

But we know, Lord, that it's like a mustard seed. It's small. We look for big things and they don't happen.

It's like leaven. It's a secret work. It's something that You do.

Help us to trust You and just to know that You always do Your work well. Thank You for bringing us back to meditate on Your precious Word. Bring us again, we pray.

Work these things in our heart, not because we deserve it, but because the Lord Jesus deserves it. And we claim it in His matchless name.

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