

Revival

by Gareth Evans

Gareth Evans emphasizes the urgent need for revival in individuals and churches to experience the manifest presence of God and transform communities.

Duration: 45:29

Scripture: Matthew 11:28

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker describes a scene in hell where Satan and his demons are celebrating what they believe to be their greatest achievement. However, their celebration is interrupted by the sound of footsteps approaching the door of hell. The speaker then shifts focus to the state of worship in the church, criticizing the reliance on worldly methods and the lack of awe and reverence for God. He also discusses the decline of Christian principles in Canada and the need for the church to repent and seek God's power. The sermon references biblical stories, such as the nation of Israel turning away from God and the decline of the people of Israel in the book of Judges.

Transcript

Good morning. Oh wow, that thing's bright. I love being on the platform with a man or a woman who has a burden that I believe is from God and who is ministering in that burden.

I also, like Barbara, define a moment. I was sitting in an orphanage, also run by Compassion, in Mexico City. I had taken a party from my church here in Victoria down to Mexico City to work with Compassion over the Christmas period.

One of the young ladies from my team was sitting on a gutter in this orphanage with her arms around two little children, orphans, and she was weeping. Francisco, my Mexican friend, was taking photographs of the children for people in Canada to sponsor them, saw Cindy weeping and he said to her, Cindy, our hearts break every day. Yours just breaks today because you're here with the children, but our hearts break every day.

And within my spirit I heard the Lord speak to me and say, yes, my heart breaks every day. I was changed. I came back from that trip far more committed to missions than I'd ever been.

A few years later, when I left the church through a sickness, Youth With A Mission called me from Texas and invited me to be their pastor and go to the Anastasis in West Africa. I had the privilege of being there for four years in Africa. Also in West Africa where children are dying before the age of five, one in five children, 20 percent, same causes.

And I saw and felt the heart of God for those children, for the people of Africa. I also saw some of the great things that God was doing for people who were burdened like Bob, like the young people of the Anastasis, and lives were being transformed and changed. When I left the Anastasis, I came back to Canada and no longer took on the position of pastor in the church, but started to travel quite extensively through many countries of the world, conducting pastors conferences and speaking at Youth With A Mission schools, speaking at other churches, speaking at denominational conferences.

And that is what I've done for the last several years. And it's been my privilege during that time to come in contact with a lot of young men and women, particularly young men and women, who have the anointing of God upon their lives in ministry. In recent years, I've been involved with a young man who was a Canadian, who has been living here with me in Victoria, and I've mentored him.

He has a web page called sermonindex.net. And on that sermonindex.net, you can listen to sermons, messages from some of the greatest preachers of the last century, many of them with a passion and a burden for revival. And I've been asked by Pastor Travis to speak on revival, too, this morning. I've spoken this message in my own Church Fellowship three weeks ago, and apparently Pastor John got on to Travis and said, you must get Garrett to speak.

And Travis was going to be moose hunting today. And so he felt it would be appropriate for me to come and speak to you on the subject of revival. Let me tell you what revival is.

Let me give you a little definition of revival. Revival to me, for an individual or for a church or for a community, is when God's presence is manifest. I've been in many, many church services, where I left the church service and I felt nothing as though God had been absent.

In fact, you may have heard the little story told about the Chinese Christian who came to North America and returned back home to China, and the people of his home church were so thrilled to ask him, what do you think of the churches in America? Canada. And he said, well, he said, I went to some very, very large churches and wonderful services, but he said, I'm actually amazed at much of the churches in America. And he said, well, I'm amazed at what you can do without God, without the Holy Spirit.

And I'm fed up, to be quite honest, of being in churches that can do everything without the Holy Spirit. I want to see God's presence manifested among his people again. I come from the country of Wales.

I married a girl from the little village of Lougher in Wales. Lougher is the place where Evan Roberts, a young coal miner, was mightily used of God in 1904, 1905, in what is often termed, many people have read books by many people, many American people who write books talking about the greatest move of the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost. Started in Wales in 1904.

Great revival. That revival has had an impact around the world since then. The church in Korea, there are Korean pastors who a few years ago were in Cardiff to thank the Welsh people for bringing the gospel as a result of the revival of 1859 and 1904 to Korea.

I was speaking in southern India at a YOM school. The young people there, about 40 of them Indians. I noticed there were three young men there who harmonized in all the singing.

Of course, in Wales, we love to sing. We love to harmonize. I went up to them.

I said, how did you learn to harmonize like this? All we said, we have missionaries planted out churches in northern India. The Thomas churches. Presbyterian missionaries went there after the revival in Wales.

Church in Thailand, a church in many countries, owes its existence, so they say, to the move of God following a Welsh revival. Canada has had one certainly recognized great move of God, what is presently manifest in the Canadian revival. There's a move of God now in the northeastern, none of it.

But I long to see God's present manifest in revival. That is where my passion is these days. I speak at conferences.

In the last two years, I've spoken in conferences in Atlanta, in Canton, Ohio, in Glasgow. Last week, there was one that I was not present at in Indianapolis. There's going to be two in Wales and in Dublin coming up in this next month.

In June, we're hoping to bring a conference here, and that is what I'm now involved with. It's bringing conferences where these speakers come to speak on revival. It has become the passion of my heart to see and to challenge the Church of God to be praying for a sovereign move of God in revival.

While I was praying for these the other day for revival, I was really struck with a question, and I asked myself the question, why do you pray for revival? Why is it you long for revival so much? What is the reason? What is the deep thing that's in you that caused you to have such a passion for revival? I came up with the conclusion that there are four reasons, and I'd like to present those reasons to you this morning. The number one reason that I long for God's presently manifest revival is because I need revival. I can't go one day in this world without the dirt of this world washing up in me, and I find it is so very easy to drift along with the world and with the church to become a normal Christian, or as Watchman Nee called it, a sub-normal Christian.

A normal Christian is a man or woman who is walking daily in revival. I experienced, I came to the Lord when I was 17, and I experienced a mighty baptism, a filling of the spirit when I was in university at the age of 21. I had an experience with God that transformed my life and my ministry and my goals and my purposes.

I was a physics teacher for many years, but all my spare time I lived working with young people because I had a burden of passion to serve the Lord. Then I became invited when I came to Canada to become a pastor in Kitchener, Ontario, and then from there I came here to Victoria and for seven years before I went to the Anastasios. But I've always had a passion for God.

I remember once walking, speaking in a little chapel in Wales. It wasn't a little chapel, it was a big chapel, but there were 25 people present. This had been built after the Welsh revival for a large congregation, well in the thousand, 25 people present.

And the organ was behind the elevated pulpit, and I had to press the keys because there wasn't all this. We sang everything a cappella. The Welsh love to sing.

Only 25 people scattered through the building. At the end of the service, a man came up to me who was sitting in the second or third row to my left with his wife. His wife came up to me first and she said, Mr. Evans, thank you.

I want to apologize for my husband. I said, why? She thought he had fallen asleep in the service. What she didn't realize, he was walking right behind her.

He said, it's okay, Mary, I can apologize for myself. Forgive me, Mr. Evans, if I appeared to be asleep, but I wasn't asleep. He said, I've been making my peace with God during the service this evening.

He said, my mind is taken back to when I was a 16-year-old boy, and in the very same pew where I sat today, I gave my life to Christ. He's now in his 70s, but I've not lived for him as I ought. He said, just after you started the service, I was taken back to that moment and I've spent the rest of this evening making myself right with God.

I remember old Elder Lewis leading me to Christ. I do not know what it was about your opening remarks that made me think of all that. I mean, stop.

He said, yes, I do. It is obvious to me that you, like he, are a child of the revival. Old Elder Lewis had come to Christ in the world's revival.

He had such a passion for God that 10 years later, he'd led this 16-year-old boy to the Lord. And now 50, 60 years later, 70 years later, he sees in me and calls me a child of the revival. I was thrilled.

I drove down the valley that night, singing at the top of my voice that I should be considered a child of the revival. I was out walking with Bruce Friesen. Bruce, as you know, is a pastor here in Victoria.

He was the president of the ministerium. And he and I were out walking one day and he said, God, have I loved being with you. He said, you've got a fire in your belly.

That was meant to be a compliment. My reply to him was, well, why doesn't everyone else? I don't understand why people who can call themselves Christians and are not living the thrill of a present manifest presence of the Spirit of God within them, is come to abide in us, to make Christ real to us, to live out the life of Christ through us as individuals. That's his purpose.

I do not understand why Christians who call themselves Christians can be walking through this world downhearted, miserable, with bent shoulders, no different to the world around them, and they call themselves Christians. I do not understand that. Yet I know how easy that becomes, because I know how easy it is to drift into that position.

But normal Christianity is knowing the manifest presence of the Spirit of God within us. And I need that. That is why in my daily devotions, I spend time each morning seeking the Lord.

Each morning when I do, I seek the Lord, and I spend time just thanking him for all years and worshiping him, because I need to live and to refresh that presence within me. Like Isaiah, I know how easy it is to be a man of unclean lips, of unclean thoughts, of being trapped in the things of this world. The old man rises up his head all the time.

Paul tells us to consider him dead, for in Christ he is dead. But you and I know how easy it is. He rears up his ugly head.

And I need a revival. That is why I have a passion for revival, because I need it. The second reason that I pray for revival is because my church needs it.

I wrote in my notes, soft pedal this one, because I think we should be ashamed in Canada so often when we look at our magnificent buildings, we look at our big wealth, and yet we are ineffective in witness, the world doesn't even take any notice of us, we're impotent in ministry, and we're ignorant of God and his word. That may not be true of this church, it may not be true of you as an individual, but it's certainly true of the majority of churches I believe in Canada. We support missionaries in India who are working with Gospel for Asia, and every week we get newsletters, and every week we celebrate what God has done in another family, in another life that have been transformed by the power of God.

They are planting something like 17 churches a week. I was in Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones' church in London just last November, and there was a visiting speaker, his name was Dr. Nicholas Yezgena, Yegnazar, something like that, from Iran. He's an Iranian minister in Iran.

He made this statement, that in Iran, since the cultural revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini, they have seen over one million Iranians come to Christ. And we are seeing, he said, one thousand a month. Is Jesus Christ alive and well? Is the kingdom of God alive and well? Is he still seated upon the throne? You bet he is.

I don't see much evidence in so many churches in Canada. We have built programs built upon the world's methods. We have bigger and better bands, bigger and better music groups, and so much so that our worship times have so often become nothing but Christian karaoke, a sing-along.

When was the last time you were lost in wonder, love, and praise, as Wesley says in his hymn, because of the awesomeness of the God you worship? I watched a documentary on television last Wednesday, The Life of Joan Baez. Do you remember Joan Baez? You were all about something of my age and a bit younger. The protest singer.

Remember Dylan, Bob Dylan? She sang with Bob Dylan, the protest songs during the Vietnam War. And as I watched her, I began to enjoy watching her, listening to her story, non-Christians, of course. I began to realize that I'd become very much the same.

I'd become a protestant or a protester of what I see so much of in the church. I'm a pastor. I was recently invited to speak to a leader, 12 elders of a church here in the city.

I won't mention the name, obviously. And the email from the pastor wrote to me, and he said this, we are burnt out and weary in trying to reach our neighborhood for Christ. We've tried all the programs.

We need new strategies. We are so tired. Will you please come and help us? So I asked him if I can quote his email to him.

He said, yes. So when I got to this meeting, it was all day long, Saturday with 12 people. I took four points from the email.

We are weary and burnt out and tired of trying to reach our community. Well, I said, that's strange because Jesus said, get yoked together with him, for his yoke is easy and his burden is light. So I said, evidently, the burden you're carrying is not his burden.

Then I find things in the scripture that Jesus says about his disciples. I spoke at the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship on Friday night, and they asked me to speak on this subject, discipleship. One day, Jesus turned to his disciples and he said to them, tell me, what were you guys discussing on the road? Because they had been discussing among themselves, which of them were the greatest.

And I listened to churches and I listened to pastors and I read my Christian, you know, the church news page in the newspaper used to be on the page where all the church service was the least read page in the newspaper. Yet you should read them and you see, you begin to wonder, are we in the same family? Are we trying to reach the same community? We seem to be competing with one another all the time. There are pastors in the city who do not have fellowship with one another, they don't even speak with one another.

And my church, the church of Jesus Christ needs revival, it needs God to break in upon his church. He said, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, but it certainly seems to me in Canada, the gates of hell are very strong against the church, we have no effect. And I pray, I long to see God breaking up on his church and to transform his pastors, anoint his pastors.

Remember when Elijah was up on earth and he had a young disciple called Elisha, oh, let me come back to this IVCF thing. I saw in the scriptures where Jesus turned to his disciples and said, what were you discussing? They said they were silent because they were discussing which of them was the greatest. He let me tell you which is the greatest, he said.

He will be great in the kingdom, must be as the least, must be as the last, must be a servant to all, must be as the younger having no inheritance in this world, must be like a child without a fence. That's what I call great and yet we think of greatness as big buildings, big programs, big congregations where we can stand up and raise up and sing up and the offerings up and everything's up. The only thing that's up is not up is the glory of Jesus Christ.

And what he measures greatness by is contrary to what we measure greatness by, the last and the least. And as a child, as a younger, how many of us seek to be that? And yes, that's what he calls great. When Elijah was a prophet, he had a young man called Elisha following him.

And he crossed over Jordan. He said to Elijah, go back. And Elijah said, no, I'm not.

I'm going to stay with you until God takes you. Because he had heard that God was to take Elijah. You know the story of it.

Finally, Elijah says, if you see me go, then God's glory shall come upon you. The anointing of God shall come upon you. And Elisha, the young man, saw this chariot come and take the old man up in the chariot.

He cried out, the chariot of the Lord. And as he looked into the heavens, the chariot was going up. The mantle of Elijah started floating down to earth.

It's picked up the mantle, the cloak of Elijah. He goes back to join the other prophets, the other side of the Jordan. As he comes to the waters of the Jordan, he remembers that Elijah had crossed it by smiting the water with his mantle, his robe.

And the waters had parted, and they'd gone across on dry ground. And so the young prophet with the robe of Elijah cries out to the God. He said, where is the God of Elijah? And he smites the waters, and the

waters part.

Maybe today we should be crying out, where are the Elijahs of God? Where are the men of the pulpit in this land who stand and preach without fear the gospel of Jesus Christ that calls men to a holy living, to repentance? Church needs a revival. God must weep in heaven looking down upon so many of our churches. But we copy the methods of the word.

David wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant back from the field. They brought it into the land. It had been hidden under tarpaulin in a cow shed for years.

He'd been out of the place where it should have been for almost a century. Since all of Saul's reign of Israel, God's presence represented by the Ark was not in Shiloh. It's a totally secular government under Saul.

And David becomes the young king. And after many years of being a king, he remembers that the Ark is under tarpaulins. He wants to bring it back to Shiloh where God's presence will be among the people again.

So he calls his wise men and they all agree it's a wonderful thing to bring God back, isn't it? Isn't it a wonderful thing to have God back in Shiloh? Can it be anything better? So what they do, they do exactly the same thing as the Philistines did. The Philistines had brought it back into Israel upon an ox cart. And so he prepared a brand new ox cart, trained oxen to bring the Ark back.

And they'd gone barely five feet, and the oxen stumbled. And a young man put his hand up to stop the Ark falling, and he was smitten dead. And 70,000 others in Israel died.

God was patient with the Philistines. They mishandled the Ark. They put it on an ox cart.

He could tolerate that. But once his own people did it, his judgment was severe. Yet in our churches, we've copied the methods of the world.

In our business structures, in our programs, even in our worship, we wonder if God is pleased. And we wonder why the church is ineffective. We need God to break in upon his church.

Now, we can do something about that. I can do something about myself walking in revival. I can make sure I spend time with God daily.

I can make sure I do not switch on the TV to that stuff. I can make sure I fellowship with God's people. I need my feet washed every time I come to church.

That's one of the reasons I go to church, to have my feet washed. And the refreshing of God's people. I can do something about my church.

I can bring in revivalists like the Sutera Twins, for example, who call my people to repentance and making sure there's no issues in the church. The robbers of the glory of God. But the third reason I long for revival is this.

My nation needs it. The land of Canada desperately needs God's presence to be manifested. Here in Victoria, thank God, there are many pastors who are praying for revival.

I often wonder, seriously, a little bit of cynicism, just what they're anticipating when they pray for revival. You get a phenomenon that happens down in Florida, where there are people who are very joyful in what's happening, and they call that revival. The fruits of it certainly haven't been the glory of God.

So many of the fruits. Some years ago in Airport Toronto, they talked about that as a revival. And I went to one meeting there, and I definitely saw things of God.

No question God was doing something. But I also saw a great deal of carnality. And I also saw some things that in other contexts, we've been casting demons out.

And people are celebrating it all as revival. I was at a conference in Glasgow, and one of the speakers made this comment, which really struck me. It is God's mercy.

It is God's mercy that he does not send revival upon an unprepared people. Because believe me, if God broke in upon his people, many of us would be like Isaiah, oh woe is me. The Welsh revival was accompanied by much repentance and much weeping.

And much sorrow before people came in to know the joy of the presence of the Lord. Tell a little story. I led a man to the Lord in my office here.

He lives in Cordova Bay. His name is Les. Les' wife was a Christian, but he hadn't.

He'd just come to the Lord after many years. He said to me, Gareth, he said, I do not know much of the Bible. Will you come to my home? I have so many questions to ask you.

So the following Saturday, we went to his home in Cordova Bay. And I and his wife had invited 14 people. There were 14 of us altogether.

And I'm sitting in the lazy boy chair, you know, with my feet up. I'm the guru. I'm answering the questions.

And Les is just off on my right, and I'm answering the questions. Some of the others are contributing. Les said to me, tell me, pastor, he said, tell me, Gareth, how do I pray? And I said, well, Les, I said prayer is one of those subjects that everybody who asks is going to have a different opinion, different thought of how you pray.

But basically, prayer is dialogue with God. You're talking to him and hearing him talk to you. Now, you must understand I'm a teacher by nature.

I'm a physics teacher. I taught up to university level. And so my whole teaching instinct comes out.

So now I'm going to demonstrate to Les about prayer. So I said to the group present, I said, do you believe the Lord is present here tonight? They said, yes. I asked you here at Mission Church, do you believe the Lord is present here this morning? I hope he is, because I hope when I came in here, he came with me.

If he didn't come with me, I might as well go home now. They said, yes. I said, where is he? They said, well, he's a spirit.

You can't see him. I said, like a ghost, you mean? No, they said, well, he's a spirit. I said, well, that's the same problem God had 2,000 years ago when he wanted to make himself manifest, known to the people.

He became incarnate. So much so that Jesus can later say to the disciples, he that has seen me has seen the Father. Because all the attributes of God that he wanted to manifest to the people, his compassion, his love, his justice, his mercy, was going to be seen through Jesus.

So this group in Les' home, I said, I don't think it'd be wrong if we imagined an invisible man here today. And with that, I leaned back, and there was a dining room chair behind me. And I pulled the chair in, and I said, he is seated there.

And then I laughed. I said, did you see what I just did? The moment I brought this chair in, I kicked, I didn't think, but I kicked down the lazy boy chair. Because I said, the moment I acknowledge the presence of Jesus, even my body language changes.

I said, what would you do if the queen walked in through that door today? They said, oh, would you all stand? I said, yes, you'd all be very deferential to her. Far, far greater than the queen is here. Do you come to church on Sunday mornings, realize the creator of the universe is in your midst? No wonder, if you do not know that and do not understand that, no wonder he's never manifest.

I turned to Les, and I said, Les, let's pray. So I looked at the chair, and you understand I'm just doing the teacher's demonstration. I said, Lord Jesus, I just want to thank you so much for being here this evening.

Thank you so much for being my savior and dying on the cross for me. I want to tell you I love you, Lord. I said, Les, talk to the Lord.

So Les looks at this chair. He said, Lord Jesus, a week ago, I did not know you as my savior. But now you've come into my heart and to my home.

No, no, no, no, no, no. This isn't my home anymore. This is your home, Lord.

I never said that to him. Then his wife talked to the chair. Then my wife talked to the chair.

Then Janet. I went about halfway around the room, and I felt myself getting all goose bumps. Because something was happening in this room.

I watched as every single face was weeping, and the tears were running down, dropping off. Nobody's wiping the tears away. And Gordon, the last one, whispered to the chair.

And I said, you all know what's happened, don't you? He said, yes. The Lord is here. I said, no, no, no.

The Lord has been here all the time. What has happened is that he has made his presence known. Do you long for Jesus to make his presence known in his church? Are you praying for that? That's my longing for him to be once again manifest in his church.

I want to see him manifest in Canada. When the nation of Israel, the covenant people of God turned away, the scripture said, they forgot their God. This country of Canada was founded upon Christian principles, and yet you listen today to the government and to the secular media, and you'll find that there are very few Christian principles even allowed to stand in this country anymore.

We have drifted. We have forgotten our God. And history is replete with the judgments of God against his people.

How much more when his church in Canada is ineffective, impotent, and God withholds his power from? The book of Judges, the last five chapters of the book of Judges tells an awful story of the decline of the people of Israel. It starts with a young man who steals his mother's silver and makes himself an idol. He worships the idol.

Then he finds a young Levite walking around that way, a vagabond priest of the like, looking for work. And so he said, yes, I've got an idol. You can become my priest.

How about that? Wonderful. Become the priest of a man. And this Levite becomes the priest to worship the silver idol.

Then the tribe of Dan is coming around that way, looking for pasture lands, and they hear about this young priest. He says, oh, my master's got this idol. He said, why be a priest for a man? Why don't you become the priest for a whole tribe? We'll give you 10 shekels and a shirt.

And for 10 shekels and a shirt, he sold himself out. And in those five chapters, we read about the whole nation of Israel going into terrible decline. But in each of those chapters, there's one verse that is repeated.

And it says these words, for every man did that which was right in his own eyes, because there was no king in Israel. The religion of Canada today is secular humanism, where man has placed himself on the throne. It's almost a joke.

And I've seen the newspapers. People complain about religion being the former cause of all wars. Every man has a religion, whether it is communism, which is a belief system, it's a religion, or whether it's secular humanism like Canada has.

And you and I have to decide whether we're going to be Christians with a capital C in the midst of a secular humanistic society. And my nation of Canada needs God to break through again sovereignly in this land so that the people of this land will come to know him. And this land will once again get its focus upon God.

And the millions of unborn children who are being massacred in abortion clinics, maybe there'll be something done about that. It galls me when I see Christians waving placards and screaming outside abortion clinics when they could be spending their time on their knees and seeking the sovereign God to intervene. Why are you surprised when the world acts as the world? I'm not at all surprised that the Canadian government does the things it does, or the American government, or the governments of Europe.

I'm not at all surprised when the world acts as the world because they have forgotten God. I'm very surprised when the church acts as the world. And I pray for revival because my nation needs revival.

Desperately needs revival. But there is a fourth reason. And this is the most important of all.

I pray for revival because he is worthy of revival. The book of Revelation, I read that John is seized into the heavens. She's the one seated upon the throne, the awful, majestic creator of the world, God himself.

For all eternity, all of heaven has worshipped him. John sees the angels bowing down and crying out, holy, holy, holy. He sees the four and twenty elders representing the church and representing the tribes of Israel, worshipping and bowing down before him upon the throne.

And they cried, holy, holy, holy, that thou, O God, for you have created us for your own being. Holy, holy, holy. And John saw there was one there had a book.

He had a book, one upon the throne, the book in his hand. It was bound inside and out the seven seals. A voice cried out who is worthy to open the book.

And there was no one found worthy. John began to weep. Yet is there none worthy to open the book? And the angel said to him, behold, the lamb, behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seals that are of your destiny and mine, the destiny of all eternity.

In that book, only one was found worthy. He was called the lion of the tribe of Judah. And John looked for a lion.

What he saw was a lamb that had been slain. And all the angels of heaven, the four and twenty elders, the beast before the throne, all for the first time in eternity took their focus, their attention off the one upon the throne and they centered it upon the lamb. Can you imagine what a defining moment that was? For all eternity, they'd worshiped God upon the throne.

And now they turn and worship a lamb that had been slain. And they cried out, worthy, worthy, worthy art thou to receive honor and glory and might and majesty and power. And a wonderful, wonderful hallelujah chorus, angels, Messiah is birthed from this moment of all of heaven cried out a word.

The apostles through the scriptures declare he is worthy, says Peter, says Paul, says John, he is worthy of our praises. Paul writes into the Ephesians, says this in chapter one, he said, God has consented all things in him and in him you have been saved and have been redeemed and purchased in him. And God has sent because all things in future and all of eternity shall be gathered together in him.

This is the center of God's will. This is the apple of God's eye. God has existed for this one.

And the writer Paul of Ephesians says this, and we are to be to the praise of his glory. Does my life bring glory to the one who is worthy? Does your life, does your church, do you honor him and recognize he is worthy? I like thinking of that day when Jesus conquered death upon a cross. Satan had tried for years and years and years to destroy this manifest presence of God.

And I can imagine the day that Jesus was put on the cross and he cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? As he felt the awful, awful pain of the judgment of God. Satan gathers his henchmen together into the caverns of hell, and there they begin to celebrate what they think is Satan's greatest achievement. I'm sure there are balloons, all black and purple balloons, and they've got a party atmosphere.

And his lieutenants and his captains of his hosts are there, and all the demons are there and they're celebrating. In the midst of their celebrating, they hear some strange noise outside the door that sounds like footsteps. They look around to see who's missing.

And footsteps come closer and closer to the door of hell. And suddenly the door is thrown open. There is the lion of the tribe of Judah having prevailed.

He walks down through the caverns of hell, through the front, and Satan cowers before him. He is disarmed, he is defeated, and my savior says to him, those keys belong to me. He takes the keys of death

and hell.

He walks out and he proclaims to death and hell that they are defeated. He shouts out, Abraham, come forth, David, come forth. And the graves gave up the dead of those men who were trusting in God for their salvation by faith.

And my savior conquered death. Is he worthy? He rose from the dead and he appeared in the garden to Mary Magdalene. She thought he was the gardener, and when he spoke her name or cried out, Mary, through her tears she recognized the one she loved so much.

And she would cling to him, but he said, do not touch me, do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my father. Why did he need to ascend to his father? He had shed the blood of the sacrifice, and like the Old Testament high priest who had to take the blood into the holy of holies, he now had to take that blood into the holy of holies. And his people gather on the first day of the week in a room with a locked door because they were afraid that they would be taken next and crucified, just like their master had been.

And two men from Emmaus come running back. They say, we met the Lord, and he said, come on, you're hallucinating. We saw him die.

We saw him being buried. Mary comes, I just met Jesus. He said, Mary, yeah, we understand, you're just distraught.

And suddenly, Jesus appears in the midst. And there, full of fear, he says, it is I. Do not be afraid. And he showed him his hands and his feet, and he said, it is I. He showed him his side.

Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. What had happened? Somebody said, there's a miracle. He came through a locked door.

That's child's play. That's not the miracle. The wonderful miracle is that here is Jesus manifest, proven to the disciples and to you that the Father had accepted the sacrifice.

In the Old Testament, the high priest brought sacrifice in, and it was not accepted. They would have been slain on the spot. That's why they had a rope tied around their ankles, so that they would be dragged back out of the Holy of Holies.

But when your king, when your lamb, when your lion entered into the Holy of Holies, taking his own blood, the Father accepted that blood for all eternity, for your sins and my sins. Doesn't that give you something to be thrilled about? Isn't he worthy of our praise? Men and women have been willing to die at the stake and in the flames because he is worthy. He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Who said that? Jim Elliot in the banks of the Kawerari River in Ecuador. The next day he died. And the nation's paper said of him and the four others who died were a waste of young lives, not a waste at all.

They sowed a seed that broke a breach in the wall around the Oukar Indians that years later, tens of thousands of them went out to the gospel to other tribes because he is worthy. And I long for revival so that men and women out of the streets here in Sydney, in Canada, I long for the day when my grandchildren will all know him and come to know him. Not so that I'll have the blessing of seeing all my children come to the Lord, but because he will receive the worship and the praise from people for whom

he died.

He died on the cross for people in Sydney and they're not worshiping him, they're not thanking him. They need to know the presence of God so that they will focus their attention upon the one that God focuses his attention upon, the one who is the lamb before the throne of whom all heaven cries out worthy, worthy, worthy of our Lord. I long, I long for that to be true of my family, my grandchildren, my nation, that he might receive the praise that he is worthy of.

I close with a story. By the way, I mentioned Sermon Index. If any of you go on the net, I would encourage you strongly to go on that net to see the webpage.

I think it's the finest webpage there is. Young Greg Gordon, who sponsors these conferences, is supported now by Canadian Revival Fellowship. He has had the acclaim of many, many leading men throughout the world.

Men come to our conferences, we do not pay them any honoraria, they pay their own way to come to speak. They're going to be coming here in June next year, and I know Charles Price from People's Church is coming to speak, paying his own way to come just for the privilege of speaking at this conference. God, he has a burden to see men and women acknowledge again that he is worthy.

And on that webpage, you will find the number one download sermon over the last 15 years. It's one by a man called Paris Reedhead, who was a very close associate of A.W. Tozer. And Paris Reedhead preaches a message called Ten Shackles in the Shirt, which I personally think is the finest message I've probably ever heard.

It's been downloaded over 150,000 times by people all over the world, and has a five star rating from all these people because it's an outstanding message. But he ends the message by this story. There was a tea planter in one of the West Indian islands.

He had a thousand slaves on his island, his tea plantation. And he went public and said that he would not allow any vicars or church men on his island to evangelize among the slaves. He was a non-believer.

He would not have any religious leaders at all. Two young Moravian men from Germany, from Holland and Germany, that area, heard about this, and so they sold themselves through the slave market to be slaves on this tea plantation. And with the money they received from selling themselves as slaves, they purchased tickets to go out to the tea plantation, knowing that this was to be for a lifetime.

This was not a short holiday trip. This wasn't an outreach. This wasn't a mission trip to Mexico City.

There are Hamburg ducks on the ship, and their family and friends are gathered to say farewell, and mothers are weeping. And the two boys link arms on the back end of the ship, and as the ship sails out of Hamburg, one of them shouts out, may the land that was slain receive the reward of his suffering. And that became the motto of the Moravian church, the great mission church that influenced John Wesley and many, many others to Christ.

Because those two young men knew that he is worthy. I want to live a life that shows he's worthy by the way I live, the choices I make. I want to see my church become a church that honors above all things else that he is worthy.

For I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me. Thank you for allowing me to come and speak to you about the passion of my heart. I just pray that the spirit of God will plant in some of you a passion also for God to be manifest in your life, in this church, in our wonderful country, that he might receive the praise, the worship, the adoration of those for whom he died.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19384.mp3>
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