

Founders Week at Moody Church 1986

by George Verwer

George Verwer's sermon emphasizes the importance of total commitment to God, the power of prayer, and the influence of key figures in shaping one's faith journey.

Duration: 42:07

Scripture: 1 Kings 18:21, Matthew 6:33, 2 Corinthians 4:7, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Moody Church"

Description

The video is a sermon transcript about the preaching of the word of God. The speaker shares personal experiences and influences in his life, including his atheist grandfather and his struggles with lust. He emphasizes the importance of passion, determination, and devotion in one's relationship with God. The speaker also mentions the impact of films, particularly the Moody Institute of Science films, in strengthening his faith. The sermon is based on the text of 1 Kings 18 and 1 Kings 19, but the speaker admits to getting sidetracked and promises to delve deeper into the text in the next session.

Transcript

I'm sure some people who know me are probably worried that I'll be a little shaken and intimidated by that award and therefore missed what I want to say, but thanks to a lot of different reasons I don't get so easily intimidated. I was completely intimidated at my son's wedding and broke down and wept at the reception and couldn't even get three syllables out of my mouth. His name is Benjamin.

One of the greatest joys in the Christian life is to have children grow and come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. Benjamin born in Spain. Daniel and Krista born in England.

There is a little problem about the history of O.M. and George Verwer. This leaflet says I graduated in 60. Dr. Sweeting said 61.

This confusion comes because I did a three-year course in two years. Actually, I went to Mexico in 57, but I didn't arrive here until January of 58. I only make that correction because an awful lot of people around the country have received this information by the very challenging tool of Christian radio.

I'd love to speak about Christian radio. Tremendous impact upon India right now by Christian radio. I was in the Soviet Union not so long ago.

One of the young men in the meeting saved through Christian radio. And we need to be praying more for the radio and television ministry that God's people have around the world. It's an enormous encouragement to be here.

I didn't know anything about this that we just went through. You know, if I had my way, I'd make photocopies of this and give it to a thousand or two thousand people that have helped me along the way. It's an emotional thing for me to come back to Moody Church.

I will try to control myself. I'm one of these unstable characters that's, uh, you know, one minute a little high and the next minute a little low. None of you have that problem, of course.

But it was here in Moody Church 26 years ago that Oswald J. Smith spoke in this very place. I was with O.J. Smith just a couple of months ago at his bedside. One of the greatest single influences in my life.

And that great man of God and I met together. And he prayed he wanted to go to heaven. He was 96 that week.

And last week, God took that great servant to the glory. Billy Graham had been booked to speak at the funeral for a long time. And the funeral took place the end of last week.

That great people's church, probably one of the most dynamic missionary churches in the history of all of Christianity, that committed again \$1,000,000, \$1,300,000 in Canadian dollars to the great work of world missions. I'm indebted to him. I'm indebted to his book, *The Challenge of Missions*, one of the first books that got into my hands as a young student in college before I came to Moody.

My life was never the same. This past week, another man who influenced my life when I was a student at Moody, Harold Shaw, suddenly went to be with a living God. His funeral was yesterday.

He was the director of the tremendous Moody Bible Institute correspondence course when I was a student. When I came, I went up that great building to find out what all those ministries are about. And those men had a great influence on my life.

Peter Gunther of Moody Press, Ken Taylor of Moody Press, Harold Shaw of the correspondence course. And I don't think those who don't really understand how the Institute works and the way the Holy Spirit is working through so many different ministries can just grasp what God has done a hundred years through this place. I don't think we can grasp that with our feeble minds.

Let us pray together. Our God and Father, we are thankful for what you have done through this Institute the past hundred years. We know you'll share your glory with no man.

We do not mention men to give them glory, but only to bring balance to what we already believe. Yet this treasure is in earthen vessels, and we have our part to do. We have our decision to make, to follow you or to follow the devil.

We believe this institution has gone on controlled by your spirit because there are men who follow you and who believe your word. Lord, we need strength. I need strength even to share weak, feeble vessel with great, great needs.

So Lord, help us in this meeting tonight. We thank you for what you've done through so many men and women. We don't have time to mention more names, but we believe, O God, that those names are written

in heaven.

And we believe, O God, that the humblest, most unknown servant, that unsung hero in the packing room or in the post room has an equal reward with those that may be known to multitudes as they crisscross the world and preach the gospel to millions of people. We thank you, God, that we are one body. When one suffers, we all suffer.

When one is honored, we are all honored. And we lift up your glorious name tonight through Jesus Christ. Amen.

I was saved because an elderly lady prayed for me. Most of you know the story. Prayed for me for three years.

Every year I got worse. I wasn't from a home of committed Christians. My parents were sort of very traditional American nominal Christians, good parents.

My father came to Christ shortly after I did. In fact, that meeting that was referred to in the manuscript, one of the 125 who stood was my own dear father who's 80 years of age and pressing on for Jesus Christ. My mother came to Christ and ran the, used to be called Send the Light Incorporated when it was exploding here at Moody in those early days.

All those days my mother ran that little office there near Patterson, New Jersey. And I was saved, actually, after reading a gospel of John that that lady sent me through the mail, I was saved in a Billy Graham meeting in Madison Square Garden. And I have watched this man.

I am, I'm a cynic. I have a lot of struggles in my Christian life. Many times I've almost fallen by the wayside.

I'm, I'm, I'm literally held up by my prayer partners. And men like Dean Broman, who took me under his arm when I was a wildcat student, instead of punching me in the nose, he said, why don't you come along to one of our prayer meetings? He knew my weak spot. I went to prayer meetings every single day, almost during my entire time at Moody Bible Institute.

And I thank God that you have Billy Graham coming here on Sunday. You know, Billy Graham has been viciously attacked and misunderstood. I wondered about this as a young Christian.

You know, I discovered in the word of God, the human factor, this treasure is in earth and vessels. All of us fail. All of us make mistakes.

And if we don't have more compassionate ability to disagree and press on as one body in Christ, I believe we are eventually going to scandalize the church of Jesus Christ in the United States. I thank God that Jack Van Emphy, after many years of criticizing Moody, criticizing Billy Graham, had a deep experience of the love of God. I was with Jack a couple of years ago, and he wrote this book, Heart Disease in the Body of Christ, that anybody who dares call himself a fundamentalist, and in the biblical sense of the word, we are.

They need to read that amazing book. He wrote an apology, I believe, to Moody. I know he did to Billy Graham.

And this book contains facts that I tell you we need to know. And it's a great triumph for the message of love. A similar book is Love Covers.

A man 80 years of age, Paul Bilheimer, showed how different kinds of Christians can disagree, like Whitefield and Wesley, and yet still love and respect one another. I thank God that Billy Graham has been an example of this, that George Sweeting has been an example of this, and that Moody Bible Institute, in all the years I have watched it, is continuing to grow and be an example of this kind of 1 Corinthians 13 reality. Praise God.

It's exciting to be back here in 1986. This compartment must have been built by an amazing man. It has a place for books.

Where did this pulpit? I've never seen this pulpit before. Moody's. I should have known it.

Books. Who knows what else is in here? I'd like you to turn with me now in your Bible. The other thing about George Sweeting that I so love, and he's from New Jersey, is that he gives me time to speak.

And when we go off the air, you just relax, because we're just going to press right on. Most of you know my favorite story. I'll tell it for the newcomers, because I love the students, and I'm here especially to speak to the students, and the others can listen in.

But I was in Germany, and the work of O.M. in Germany has grown beyond all expectation. They are the strongest nation behind the ship Dulaus. An amazing story.

It's a German company that owns that ship. O.M. is divided into many countries. But I was in Germany preaching mainly to young people.

It was an O.M. meeting, so I felt quite free. I was going about an hour and a half, and the young people, as usual, were just absorbing it like sponges that had been in the desert. But somehow there was one man way in the back.

I think he wanted to go home and get the news or watch the TV. And he held his watch up, trying to catch my attention. And I was preaching on world evangelism and discipleship and forsaking all for Christ.

And I saw that watch, and I said, folks, praise the Lord. Look at this. Here's a man donating his watch for world missionary work.

Let's turn in our Bibles. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Kings. 1 Kings chapter 18.

I owe much to this church. Not only was I shaken to the core by Oswald J. Smith when he preached that night. I think I was the only one.

He gave an invitation, and I ran forward into that back room, rededicated my life to Christ, though I had won many to Christ. I was thought of as a student leader. I'd been to Mexico.

The work had already been born. God zeroed in on needy areas in my life. And the choir went into that room.

There was no counseling. I ran down the basement, weeping, and got under a table and went my way back to Calvary. And you know, it's encounters with God when we're students like that.

We're not all of the same emotion. And I've discovered that to get missionary work done in the Muslim world, which is our main target, you don't want to look for characters like me. No.

You want to look for slow, pragmatic, steady types. We got some of them out of Wheaton College. One of them is sitting here.

We got some of them out of Oxford, and we got them out of Cambridge, and we got a few out of Moody, you know, years later when they got more mature than my class. But God works in different people in different ways. One of the men that influenced my life the most as a student was Alan Redpath, who Sunday after Sunday preached right here.

My own wife came to Chicago Keswick and had her life completely turned around. We would have never been married if it wasn't for Chicago Keswick. She had to leave her home.

She came here to Chicago. She worked in the Moody Institute of Science where I met her, going up to rent a film. Boy, what a bargain, I tell you.

But she had a lot of psychosomatic problems in her life, a lot of struggles. Her real father had been killed in the war, and it was here during Chicago Keswick, some of those men like George Duncan, now dear close friends of mine, ministered. Her life was turned around.

It's amazing what God does in answer to prayer. But let's get into the text of 1 Kings 18 and 1 Kings 19. We're going to have to shorten things because we're going to have a film.

Every time I say something, I think of ten other things to say. It's an enormous problem. But I got to say this.

One of the other great influences in my life as a doubter, my grandfather was an atheist from the Netherlands. My other grandfather was a drunkard from Glasgow. I've got, you know, skeptic's blood in the brain.

And as a young student, even here as a student, I almost overthrew the Christian faith. I lived in the YMCA. They had no room for me in the inn.

They put me in the YMCA. And I mean, that was a wild place. There were hardly any Christians in the whole place, so they made me the chaplain.

But I had some wild temptations. And one of the things that strengthened my faith the most, I do not in any way exaggerate, was the Moody Institute of Science Films. And we've had the privilege of showing them all over the world, even in many other languages.

And films have become an almost important part in OM as literature. And of course, video cassettes and audio cassettes. I tell you what God has given us.

Talk more about it tomorrow afternoon. Tonight I really can only get started. Tomorrow afternoon we'll get into orbit.

But let's look at the text. Let's try again to get to the text. First Kings 18, verse 21, And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? I remember Peter Marshall speaking on this text.

That dates me. But I heard a record when he spoke on this text. How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him.

But if you fail, then follow him. And the people answered, Not a word. That's a challenge to us throughout our life.

That's not a once and for all thing. I've had to make many recommitments of my life. I'm a natural backslider.

I don't know about you. Maybe you just go on automatically to higher plateaus in the things of the spirit. But if God doesn't meet me every day, my heart begins to grow cold.

My eyes begin to wander. I thank God that as far as I know, since the day of my conversion, he's met me every day, and especially those days when I lived here in Chicago. How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him.

But if fail, then follow him. And the people answered, Not a word. Notice verse 24, And call ye on the name of your gods.

He was challenging these false prophets. Sometimes we have to do that. And on the name of the Lord and the God, capital G, who answereth by fire, let him be God.

And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. I've had the privilege, as we have had teams working in Israel for many years, one of the many, many target areas of this work. Keep in mind the many, many beautiful Arab people that live within Israel, who need the message of Jesus Christ, who live side by side with Jewish people.

And I've walked by the mountain where this is taking place, to visit one of our teams who is going door to door with the word of God. Often forgotten, neglected teams. And you know that's true of many missionary workers today.

Because let's be honest, it's not my message for tonight, but let's be honest, a lot of missionary activity and a lot of talk and a lot of what happens in some of our churches, you and I know, it's just tokenism. It's just token commitment. And I believe God is wanting to say, especially through the missionary student movement that's taking place.

I just spoke in Mandate 86 out in DeKalb, 700 university students, 400 of them on the final day stood to make a deeper commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. And I believe it is God's will that what in many places and many churches today is token commitment will, by the grace of God, become total commitment. And you and I can make the difference through prayer and love and obedience to the word of God, the God who answers by fire.

It's interesting that in the book of Hebrews, it also says that our God is a consuming fire. Interesting verse, isn't it? The word fire is used quite often in scripture. Then we find, of course, Elijah building the altar, putting water on the altar, strange way to build a fire.

We find the false prophets are crying aloud, beating their bodies, nothing happens. And then Elijah praise look at verse 37. Hear me, O Lord, hear me that this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou has turned their hearts back again.

Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and

they said, the Lord, he is God. The Lord, he is God.

We're going to go back to Hebrews 19, but if you could look for a moment at, we're going to go back to first Kings 19. If you could look for a moment at Hebrews chapter 12, a great chapter. I wonder how many of you young people and adults regularly memorize scripture, even one a week, raise your hand that depresses me, but I'll, I'll make it now.

Moody students used to have to memorize scripture. I hope you still do. I remember old Mr. Gardner in my Christian ed class make, and, and, um, I think it was Mr. Pearson or someone made me memorize scripture for personal evangelism class.

You know, those kinds of practical courses, you don't get them at Harvard business school. And I pray that you Bible college students will never be intimidated by the so-called intellectuals of this world. We can't all have all of life's experiences.

I've been traveling around the world and across the world for 31 years. I've seen a lot, but I feel I only have a small experience of all there is, and who can imagine eternity. And God led me to graduate from here.

I never went to any further education. I'm not boasting about it. It just wasn't God's way for me.

And I found the enemy tries to intimidate some of us who don't have a lot of degrees in a degree conscious world. And there's nothing wrong with Moody now giving a degree, but beware of a subtle intimidation. If you feel somehow you're less than other people, because it's one of the most subtle methods Satan uses to intimidate Bible college students.

I personally believe that most Bible college students before further education need a couple years out on the field, putting into practice what they know in their hearts. A lot of it is only in the head. And we have seen many, many Moody students come on OM.

Some of them then have gone for further education and got other degrees. But when they got to that further education, I will tell you, there was reality in their lives. There was reality in prayer, reality in relationship, reality in witness, not perfection, reality.

And they became student leaders almost overnight in their campuses. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that so many young men from Cambridge and Oxford and leading universities across Europe, I've just been preaching in Oxford again, have become the backbone of Operation Mobilization, a movement that had its second birth right here in this little old Bible school. I tell you, when my relatives heard I was going to Moody Bible School Institute, you know, there were some interesting looks, you know, what's that? The most important decision of my life next to coming to Christ and meeting my wife was when God led me out of university.

I was getting good grades. I was relatively happy. A lot of it was a waste of time, but God led me out of university to come to this institute.

God works in different people in different ways. We certainly see that in the spectrum of people in OM. I got into that because I want to encourage you to memorize scripture.

It was one of the most important factors in helping me grow with all of my struggles and all of my problems. And I'm amazed today that people aren't memorizing the scriptures more. So you may want to

start right there in Hebrews 11 and Hebrews 12.

You can memorize the chapter in the coming weeks. You know, when I went to college, a little college in the South, a little school 10 years before I got there, it was Christian. When I got there, it more or less had gone largely apostate, but it was God's will for me to be there.

I heard about a guy who was supposedly a fanatic. Some of you know Dale Roton. His books are there on the book table.

I was warned about Dale Roton. They said he's a fanatic, avoid him at any cost. He's baptizing people in the showers.

You can be sure he was one of the first persons that I sought out. And probably one of the greatest single influences on my life among my peers. He later baptized me in a little chapel in Wheaton.

He went to Wheaton after we went to Mexico together. The other brother who went with us to Mexico on that first trip is here tonight. And I came to Moody, but I'll tell you, when I met this man there at that college, I knew, I knew I was fellowshipping.

I was a baby Christian with someone who had reality. I've watched him 29 years now. And he's been an example.

He's not perfect, but he's been an example. You know, before he finished Wheaton College, I think he had a third of the New Testament memorized. And he had a lot of other things, including outreach among the beautiful black people of this great city.

Memorize scripture. Memorize Hebrews 11, Hebrews 12. And I just want to look at that verse 29.

For our God is a consuming fire. Do you believe that? You know, we used to have a phrase when I was a student. And you know, you've had the privilege of one of the greatest communicators in America here this week, Charles Swindoll.

I've listened to him, has read his books. I read his page on and thought I should give up the ministry. Really just overwhelming.

But you know, God can use a cliché, especially outside center and evangelists. A lot of the people we're talking to have never heard any of our clichés. A lot of the people I preach to have never heard John three 16, because we're not in this country where there are 1,000,000 full-time Christian workers.

We're out in unreached nations where there are no churches, no witnesses, many times, no literature, no Bible, no nothing. Forgive me. I jumped in tomorrow afternoon again.

A little excited about that. People always warned me when I was a teenager on fire for Christ. Oh, that was the cliché on fire for Christ.

Do they still say that? That's finished. You can still say that. I tell you, you know, uh, Billy Graham's old expression.

When you're preaching in a place like this, you feel like a lion in a den of Daniels. But, uh, I believe, I really believe it is a beautiful cliché to be able to say, here's a brother, here's a sister. She or he, she's on fire for

Christ.

Doesn't mean she's some weirdo climbing the wall. You know, there's a great danger among us who are a bit conservative like me. Good faithful to the moody tradition.

There's a danger. There's a danger that we don't want extremism. And one of the most powerful messages God has given me all these years is against extremism.

I've written books on it. My book on balance is there on the table. My daughter came to me some years ago and she says, dad, now you're getting extreme in the whole area of balance.

How can this be? And I believe extremism. I think I learned this when I was a student. Satan has two strategies.

Keep you from real commitment. When you get to know something of commitment, which is an ongoing process, then Satan will counterattack, change the strategy and try to get you into extremism, judgmentalism, phariseism. And I'll tell you some of us early OMers at this college, we got into it and we're not proud of it, but God was patient with us.

And he put into our hands books like Calvary Road. He put in front of us men like Alan Redpath, Dr. Culverson, old Dean Browman, Ms. Donson. She's also a longstanding friend.

Don't forget her. What a ministry, her whole life teaching the word of God, different parts of the world. There's a danger that when we overreact to some of the things that are extreme, we overreact into the deep freeze of dead orthodoxy.

And let us be reminded that the man who's going to preach here this Sunday is the man who has again and again all over the world preach. Be he filled with the Holy Spirit. And that's the privilege of every believer.

It happens in different people in different ways. Some seem to have crises. Torrey believed in that.

Some seem to be more of a process. I say the crisis without the process becomes an abscess. Billy Graham and speaking about the things of the spirit and the life and the spirit said, I don't care how you get it.

Just get it. I want to ask you, brothers and sisters, do you have it? I'm not speaking about something you had 10 years ago, five years ago. Hallelujah for any blessing.

I don't want to despise people's special blessing. I want to know, are you on fire for Christ tonight? Is there a burning in your heart? Is there a burning? Please don't rob me of my time. Is there a burning in your heart tonight? You say, oh, this is, this is extreme spiritual balance.

And now people are attacking balance in America. People attack everything. And what, what wisdom A. W. Tozer, who ministered in this city when I was a student, who later became my favorite author in God's mercy.

I never knew his ministry when I was a student, I was already so getting so hyper and so intense and sometimes a bit critical. If I had got too much of Tozer at that time, I would have got OD and probably freaked out. So God gave me more of Culberson and, uh, balance Moody Bible Institute balance.

And this school does stand for that, but balance is not compromise. If any of you are triple B fighting, triple Decker fighting fundies, don't don't, don't you just relax a few more minutes. You can read that empty book after, but relax.

Now we're not talking about compromise and Moody Bible Institute is not compromising the truth and neither is operation mobilization, but we believe that balance is one extreme from the word of God, bringing another extreme from the word of God into the proper perspective. And so it's commitment with balance. It's being filled with a spirit and controlled by the spirit, which means the fruit of the spirit is going to be the priority.

The Holy spirit gives gifts, but if you get gifts without fruit, you get circus and we're promoting many circuses in various parts of the world today. The balance is what the Bible speaks of, but if you're not on fire for Christ, if you've never committed your life, if you've never fallen at the foot of the cross, a broken man that Jesus might invade your life, that self might be crucified. Galatians 2 20, then your big problem isn't the need for balance.

There ain't nothing to balance. Is too much enthusiasm the big problem in your church? Send me a photo, praise God. People too excited about winning souls for Christ, people crowding into the prayer meeting and now you're going to have to change rooms again.

The prayer meeting is getting too full. People just too loving with each other, sweeping people off their feet with love and service. Is this the big problem in your church? You know what Tozer said and read his books.

They're there on the table. You don't think I'd come here without Tozer. I'd rather be here without my belt, but really, I really believe this man has something to say to our nation and we didn't want to hear it.

And one thing he said to think that too much enthusiasm was the greatest problem in the average church was like sending a squadron of policemen to the nearby cemetery to guard against the demonstration by the residents. You know, it's good to laugh, but some of us laugh because we feel like crying because we know how true it is. I want to ask you, are you filled with the Holy Spirit, whether it's a quiet way or a noisy way, whether it happened in a meeting or in the quietness of your room? There's a lot of confusion about this and I wish I had more time, maybe some other occasion.

I share about this on some of my cassette tapes. That's right. I'm not only a bookworm.

You can be assured of that, but I want to read this definition of fire. I may have read it at Founders Week some years ago, but I want to read it again. It's by Samuel Logan Bringle from Resurrection Life and Power.

What is fire? Because we're talking about spiritual fire, right? It is love. It is faith. It is hope.

It is passion and purpose and determination. It is utter devotion. It is divine discontent with formality, ceremonialism, lukewarmness, indifference, shams, noise, parade, spiritual death.

It's singleness of eye and a consecration unto death. It's God the Holy Ghost burning in and through a humble, holy, faithful man or woman. And I say, oh God, that's what I want.

And I have not arrived. Some of you have heard my message, the confessions of a weak, struggling missionary. It's now going all over Europe.

Mission societies are using it for orientation. My failures, my lifelong struggle with lust. And some of you students, you're going to be wiped out because you think while you're a student, you're going to learn how to get total, absolute, final, once and for all victory over all forms of lust.

Cockeyed ideas about sanctification have intimidated and destroyed more students in Bible College than anything we'll ever know. Listen, my dear student, it's going to take you 10 and 20 and 30 years to become the man, the woman of God He wants you to become. You be patient with God's spiritual growth rate in your own life.

And some of you are going to battle lust for a long time, like many of my missionary friends. Get that book by Erwin Lutzer, have a systematic program to grow in grace. God kept me here in Chicago when I almost fell into deep sin and God has kept me ever since, but it's not been without failure in my mind and failure with those horrific magazines that pop out everywhere we go.

Once in England, I was walking through the woods, praising God, singing to Jesus in worship. And there was a magazine at 16. I was a pornoholic just like an alcoholic.

I have to stay completely away from it. But there was hanging in a tree in the woods in England, a \$10 magazine. Now I'd love to be able to stand up, especially since I've been given the alumnus of the year award.

Maybe they want to take it back. But anyway, I'd love to be able to stand up and say my what they taught me at Moody and what I had spiritual power, just a laser beam of hot Holy Ghost power, the magazine disintegrated. What a testimony.

Here he is, a miracle man in a nation that is infatuated with a spectacular that has led us oftentimes into deception. And in one church, because of that kind of deception, 60 people are dead. I wish I could talk to you about that.

But I have to confess that day, that little magazine made a complete fool out of this soldier of Jesus Christ. But I learned way back as a student, first John chapter two and verse one, number one, sin not that's been the goal of my life every day. And I'm still growing in holiness to be like him a long journey for a character like me.

But the second part of the verse says, if you confess your sin, he's faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. There's not time tonight, but on your own, you look at first Kings 19. You'll find this great man who stood on the mountain.

When the fire came down this man, we idolize it's such a great spiritual figure in the old Testament. We find that same man under the Jennifer tree. You read it.

He was depressed and you know what he said, God, I've had enough. And I made the mistake as a young student of emphasizing the fire, but not emphasizing enough the next chapter. I call it the human factor.

First Kings 18, the divine factor, first Kings 19, the human factor. And I hope someday I might be able to share with some of you the burden God has given me from his word about the human factor. This

treasures in earthen vessels.

We're going to struggle. We're going to fail. Being filled with the spirit doesn't destroy your personality.

Being filled with the spirit doesn't mean you're not going to make mistakes. We just made a mistake two days ago in Poland. We haven't got the facts, but I had the phone call waking me up a couple of mornings ago, another fatal accident in operation mobilization.

And one of our young men just recruited from Scotland is with the Lord. Pray for his parents who I don't think, no Jesus, another Swedish associate worker with the Lord, another man in the car in front of them, a Polish man with the Lord. Some of you know, Jonathan McCrosty.

He was the student leader. When I arrived here as a freshman, he met me and carried my bags. Never did I dream that we would be together in the work for 25 years, but in an accident three years ago, he became a paraplegic.

I pray that he may come here because he is surely, he is surely more worthy of this alumnus award than I am. Though, praise God, we know such award is always representing all people who work together on God's team. Brothers and sisters, it's already been shared here in this great Founders Week that the Christian life is rough and tough, that we've got to bounce back.

We can't allow discouragement to corrode our spiritual batteries. And I think some of you will be encouraged and caused to recommit your life to Christ through 1 Kings 18. May the fire fall upon you.

But I think many of us here need the encouragement of 1 Kings 19. I do. I failed him many times.

I haven't been the husband I should have been. I haven't been the father I shouldn't have been. My tongue has always often gone a little faster than my brain.

Many times I've said, even as Elijah under the tree, I've had enough. Yet God at that moment ministered to me. And you notice he didn't send a revival meeting.

He didn't send a big, heavy exhortation. He didn't send some kind of spiritual atomic bomb. He sent a very, very quiet, low-profile angel and gave him some food and gave him some sleep.

And often our problems are not spiritual, they're physical, they're emotional, or they're more complicated than the average sanctification book wants to admit. And I want to tell you as I close, God wants to bless you at this Founders Week. Satan is trying to intimidate you that you'll never accomplish great things for him, or that you're not spiritual enough.

I seldom feel spiritual. How does a character like me feel spiritual? Do I look spiritual? I tell you, my wife and I are tremendous balance, tremendous balance. She's just been operated on again.

She looked at me the other day and said, just looking at you makes me feel tired. And I, we make a tremendous balance. So my wife looks so beautiful and she feels miserable.

I look miserable, but I feel great, I'll tell you. And I just, I just close by saying that there's a lot of truth, a lot of truth in this great book. Don't expect to have all the answers when you graduate from here.

Go from here in humility as a learner to follow Christ all your life. Don't be intimidated by your mistakes and your failures, your prayerlessness, your lack of evangelistic zeal. You're still a human being and it's going to take time to make the likes of you and the likes of me like our glorious Savior, Jesus Christ.

Let's get 1 Kings 18, the fire of God, be filled with the Holy Spirit. I'm not going to give an invitation tonight because that's coming later in the week. And I want you to think about it.

I want you to seek God in your prayer closet. But when you get that fire in your soul, and many of you I know already do, and it's an ongoing thing, you get into 1 Kings 19 and you accept your humanity. And you accept the human factor and discover in that chapter, when the earthquake came, God wasn't in it.

The fire came, God wasn't in it. The wind came, God wasn't in it. Elijah went away and the still small voice spoke to him.

Some of you will be spoken to me, spoken to by God tonight, my somewhat loud voice. But others are going to be spoken to in a more powerful way, quietly in the Word of God in your own room or through some soft-spoken, Spirit-filled speaker. God is on the move.

Let's have absolute commitment, filled with the Spirit, the fire of God. I've known it to varying degrees every day since my conversion, but let's make sure it's with balance. And it's got the, the, where the rubber hits the road and the willingness to accept not just the divine factor, but the mess factor that all of us make and which so easily intimidates us if we're not biblical and balanced and committed to run the race, Hebrews 12, right to the end.

Let us pray. Father, we thank you for your Word. Lord, you know that we just desire to go on for you with all of our hearts, to be your men, to be your women, wherever you lead, whatever the cost.

Fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit during these days, be it in the auditorium or in the prayer closet. May we put our hands on the plow and not turn back. And may we find biblical balance in the many different areas we're wrestling within our own lives.

Lord, bring a revolution of honesty to our homes and our hearts, that we may not pretend. We may take off the mask and be real and unafraid of the way you will deal with us at that moment of brokenness at the foot of the cross. For we pray in the powerful name of Jesus Christ.

Amen. Only one life so filled with problems and its troubles. One life so very short, so much the same, just empty bubbles.

My life so dark and void without my Lord, my friend and Savior. I choose to take his hand to guide me his way. When all is dark and cold, the waves are high, the storms are beating.

I tell my Jesus all. He knows the problems I am meeting. If I should walk alone, that would be wrong and bring me failure.

So I choose to take his hand to guide me his way. What is this life? Just a few years, a crooked way with all its fears. Jesus draws near right on my road.

He is my all. He takes my load. Now I can walk in peace each day.

I'm going his way. At last when life is done and I go home with him forever, my song will be the same. He takes my hand.

He changes never. I bow my knee to him, join in the chorus of redemption and forever praise his name that I went God's way. What is this life? Just a few years, a crooked way with all its fears.

Jesus draws near right on my road. He is my all. He takes my load.

Now I can walk in peace each day. I'm going God's way.

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