

Gv4338 Gv Failure - Back Door to Success

by George Verwer

George Verwer emphasizes that failure is a necessary step towards success and encourages active participation in evangelism and personal growth.

Duration: 1:21:57

Scripture: Matthew 5:1-12, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 10:16, John 20:30, Acts 9:1-19, Romans 10:15, 2 Corinthians 12:7

Topics: "Failure"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of failure as a backdoor to success. He emphasizes that success cannot be achieved through magic or shortcuts, but rather through a combination of ability and agility. The speaker also highlights the importance of enthusiasm and trying, as many people never fail because they never even attempt to succeed. He references 2 Corinthians chapter 12 and shares personal experiences from the mission field to illustrate the need for perseverance and strength of mind. The sermon concludes with an invitation for individuals to commit themselves to God and for the speaker to pray for them.

Transcript

Amen. Thank you. Well, it's a challenge to sit here between Ted Rendell and Bert Kempis.

Bert and I labored together, as he said, for about 18 years in his early years when he worked in India. I used to think he was a bit of a pain in the neck. And I'm sure if you have any of that difficulty here... No.

You can just thank Jesus you're not a giraffe. But God certainly uses all kinds of people. And it's been a great privilege to be working with Bert in World Evangelism in India and Belgium.

The young man is director of the work of OM in Belgium. A Belgian was, I believe, I know he was converted to Christ in an open-air meeting in Oostend, Belgium, when Bert was our leader there. Were you in that meeting? Bert was actually in that meeting.

You know, there are not many Belgians that are going on the way this brother Leo Prout is going on. So even though Bert is now back here, the men that he has brought to Christ and helped disciple are literally all over the world. I was a little surprised when someone came to me and shared that quite a few of the young men here at Prairie haven't yet caught the vision for outreach evangelism and getting out into the streets and the doors.

And I, you know, bear with me, I'm an impatient character. But it is difficult for me to comprehend how any full-blooded lover of Jesus Christ, following Christ, doesn't want to get out in evangelism. I know when we were at Moody Bible Institute, we had to get out in the streets, all of us.

I got in a lot of trouble as we were only allowed two practical Christian work assignments, that's what they called this. I didn't know about this rule and I was only there a week and I had about seven different programs going. And I got called up to the dean for too much evangelistic activity.

They reminded me that I was supposed to be there to study. That didn't seem to be such a big deal because most of the courses seemed rather easy. But anyway, I did limit myself to two official practical Christian work assignments in the streets and all the other ones we just classified as unofficial.

But it does really amaze me that you now have someone like Bert here with so much experience and he hasn't asked me to say this, no one has asked me to say this. Well, I should take that back. One student was jabbing me a bit about this.

But it does seem strange that God has given you such a tremendous outreach program and there aren't more people that want to get involved in it. Because I will tell you, if you sit here week after week taking in all these messages and you don't get out in contact with people who don't know Christ on the doors or in the streets, you don't have to preach the first time if you're scared. Be honest.

Tell the leader, look, I'm not going to preach the first time out. I'll go, I'll watch, I'll give out tracts or I'll talk to people. A lot of my early witnessing, I just did an 80% listening to the people.

I used to go to the bus stations. I used to go to the train stations. Wherever there were people, I'd sit down next to them to strike up a conversation and listen to them, take an interest in them.

You don't have to knock them in the head with the gospel the first 15 seconds. And I learned so much through that. The first week at Moody Bible Institute, I went out into the open air with the open air campaigners and I met Dick Griffin.

We've been together now 27 years. He's the director, took the work in Mexico when I left it, got his residence papers and has been in Mexico for 25 years. We met because we went out on outreach together.

And I would just encourage all of you. God's word says he has not given us a spirit of fear but of love and power and a sound mind. And even many of you in the faculty, I know you have your priority ministry, teaching and preaching.

But if you could get some time out in the streets, maybe out with drunkards, maybe out with the up and outers, maybe down the back streets of Calgary, what a great city Calgary is. That's where I'd live if I came to Western Canada. I was there just the other day.

Lots of people from all over the world, Edmonton, similar. But you can travel there. It's not that far.

This fellow's cycling back and forth. And get out with people in the streets. It will refresh you.

Probably it'll do more for you in the early stages than you do for the people. You know, they may not all repent at your first open air meeting. Some may walk away.

That's always good for the humility. But I thank God for the outreach. You have here.

I chose Moody Bible Institute. I didn't know much about Bible schools. I was a young Christian.

I mainly chose it out of ignorance because it was in Chicago. And I wanted to get back in the city with the alcoholics and with the street people and somehow survive all of the studying while I was putting it into practice. And I take what I learn in the classroom and take it right out into the streets on the weekend.

You know what? It worked. I'm very seldom where we're not regularly seeing people come to Jesus Christ. So exciting to be involved in the work of God.

You know, C.S. Lewis said we have the tendency to think but not to act. Isn't that true? You go over to your bookshop. I'm so thrilled they've opened up this late night prairie bookshop.

This is one of my favorite bookshops here in Three Hills. And I'm thrilled. I'm so thrilled that they're opened up.

You go in there and get some books by C.S. Lewis. Get some books by Roy Eshin. Get some books by Michael Griffiths like Take My Life.

Get Born Crucified by dear old Saint. I had lunch. I had supper with his wife tonight.

That's enough to challenge me for several years. Born Crucified. We need that message in the body of Christ more than perhaps ever before.

It's a neglected message without a reality and the reality of crucified life. I don't believe we're going to go very far in our Christian faith. I have great fear, especially for some of our seminaries.

I speak in a lot of seminaries. I'm not against seminaries. But I find in a lot of the seminaries, the men are getting bigger and bigger heads.

Gigantic heads. I mean, it's always a weird sight, isn't it? You see a little skinny body in a huge head. And then the fellow comes into the classroom and he has to turn sideways to get his head in the door.

And you need a microscope to find the heart. And you just don't find the feet. But what does the Bible say? Blessed are the minds of those who preach the gospel.

That's the way they say it in England. No, the Bible says, blessed are the feet. I mean, that's a strange verse.

I've been trying to show my wife that verse for a long time in connection with my feet. And she is not convinced about my literal interpretation. And so the last years, as our marriage went through a few bumps, I've been putting my socks, always in plastic bags upon immediate removal.

The word of God is very, very clear. Praise the Lord for on fire intellect. Not against people studying, getting necessary academic preparation, but you need the balance.

A heart filled with compassion and love and brokenness. A life that knows the reality of the cross and an intellect that sharp to comprehend and to communicate and to carry on the work. I'd like to mention, especially this evening, the books of Erwin Lutzer.

We were together in Chicago, actually, where I made those cassette tapes that Bert mentioned. We were ministering in two different seminars. We just met each other for about half a minute.

There was immediate vibrations. You know, this is also rather small. And I've been reading his books and pushing his book, *Living With Your Passions* all over the world.

It's the best book on the subject of sexual purity that I know. Unfortunately, we don't have many copies. You'll have to order them from your bookshop.

We have a few on our little annex table here. I would make this required reading if I were the academic dean. Boy, that's a powerful term.

We should have one of those in O.M. Academic dean sounds like somebody that can really pack a punch. So if I was the academic dean, I would require you to get your brain into this book by Erwin Lutzer. I understand he came here and made quite an impact.

And his book is brilliant. Tonight, the title of my message is *Failure, the Back Door to Success*. Some of you want a title.

You're going to try to take some notes. Good luck. *Failure, the Back Door to Success*.

This book is dynamite. Just the title is enough to turn a character like me on. There's so much failure in my life.

So I just picked these up, actually, from Erwin Lutzer's brother, Harold Lutzer. He's with the Canadian Revival Fellowship. And I had the privilege of going to their little office and restocking on some of my books that I was out of.

Failure, the Back Door to Success. Another one of the most exciting books I'm pushing. I just wrote the forward to the British edition, which will be published in a few months, is *David Seaman's Healing for Damaged Emotion*.

Fifty percent of the young people who come on OM. We've had 37,000 men and women trained on OM in 25 years. Fifty percent have some kind of emotional difficulties.

Some big, some small. And I will tell you, if God hadn't taught us something about the psychology of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. I got it from Billy Graham's book, *Secret of Happiness*.

Then I got it from a book called *Jesus and Mental Health*. Another brilliant book on the Sermon on the Mount. Book said that if you took the straw out of a lot of the books on psychology, what you would have left is less than you find in the Sermon on the Mount.

That's the kind of psychology I believe in. And I recommend to you this kind of biblical, balanced psychology. Not from a psychologist, but from a pastor who went through revival in Asbury in 71.

Who was a pastor for 30 or 40 years. And who was speaking where the issues really are. And this book is written for prairie people.

He's got your number. Because Saul has very keen, dedicated, Bible-believing people. We get some of these difficulties in our lives.

So I commend it to you. We only have a few on our table. Then you'll have to order them from your bookshop.

Lastly, I want to commend to you the writings of A.W. Tozer. And this is a book to introduce his writings if you're not already aware of them. A number of his other books are there.

They're dynamite. They're laser beams of red-hot spiritual revelation from the Word of God to our hearts. And I am so indebted to this man.

We originally produced this book. And then exported it back to the Christian Publishing House in Harrisburg. We produced it originally in England.

Quotations from 20 of Tozer's books. Just to get you started. If you can read that and not have it minister to you.

Even the most phlegmatic among you. If this doesn't challenge you and stir you. You write to me.

I'll send you 25 free books and an apology for introducing you to A.W. Tozer. I love quotations. I want to commend.

I hope in the midst of all the things I share that I can give out a lot of practical things. That will help your students keep on keeping on. Because I am not, you know, my first burden really isn't what I shared last night.

That is a huge burden on my heart. And I'm glad I got it off my heart last night. You didn't hear it.

You can get the tape. But my first burden is spiritual health. My first burden is personal revival.

My first burden is just to see you going on 20, 30, 40 years from now. If I meet you 20 years from now and you say, look, I never made the unreached people. I never joined Operation Mobilization.

I never really got out of Alberta, but I love Jesus and I've been going on for 20 years. You know, I'm going to give you if you want a big, big hug and say, praise the Lord. Because really, I think some of us as Christians are hyper idealistic.

We got more one talent people in the evangelical church trying to behave like 10 talent people than any of our corporations. They're not that crazy. And you, dear sisters, you are not going to become a combination of Elizabeth Elliott, Billy Graham and E.T. or anybody else.

You are you. And if God has created you a woman, you better start accepting that. Stop trying to pole vault over the gymnasium and just start to accept yourself a little more.

And of course, we get so idealistic, especially when we're bombarded with heavy messages and some kind of wildcat spiritual tornado like Verwer blows through. And a lot of people get really nervous. And then you get some people trying to copy this.

And that is really pathetic. We are all originals. We're all originals.

You're not a giraffe. I can tell that by looking at you. And you're not George Verwer.

You can thank Jesus for that. You're not L.E. Maxwell. You're you.

One of the greatest struggles of my life was to accept George Verwer. A lot of things I didn't like about him. A lot of things.

Remember, even before I was a Christian. Maybe there's someone here tonight that's not a Christian. I had trouble really accepting the fact that after grammar school, where I was very much involved in sports, I was very much involved in also the social life.

Started rather young. New York City is a rather fast place. A little bigger than Three Hills.

That I didn't grow. And I saw this advert. My big thing in my life was money and women.

And I saw this advertisement in the newspaper. Probably told you this story five years ago when I was here. But this is dedicated to those of you who are new.

I saw this advertisement in the newspaper of a really beautiful girl, which was my main interest. And a skinny guy like me sitting with her on the beach. Some of you have seen this ad.

They're still using this crazy same ad. And along came a big, strong, good-looking character. And he just knocked this skinny guy away.

And he took the bird. I mean, he took the girl. And I thought, this is what is going to happen to me.

I'm a loser. And on the bottom of this little ad, it says, You can be a real man. Charles Atlas.

Muscle building, weight gaining, gain weight, etc. I wrote in. Now, I couldn't afford all these barbells and that stuff they were trying to sell me.

So I got some old-fashioned window weights. For six months, I was lifting weights. I was eating extra food.

I was reading all these instructions. I gained about half a kilo. And one of the greatest things that happened to me after I came to know Jesus Christ is I realized I was accepted.

Accepted in the beloved, Ephesians 1, 6. I could finally begin to look at myself in the mirror with a little more of a relaxed attitude. I could get on the scale. You know, I'm the kind of person when I stand on a scale, I have to hit it first to get it, you know, to get it to move.

And I finally, you know, could stand on a scale. And I learned to laugh at myself. That's so basic.

I'm sure you probably have, you know, I know prairies more than you. I know a lot of new areas and probably you now have a course on how to laugh at yourself. Great.

Probably just a half credit course. I remember once we had a Canadian come on Operation Mobilization. I think it was a Canadian, but let's not, you know, let's not prejudice anybody.

Let's say he was an American. He believed that laughing was not from God. He just believed, you know, this, how could we laugh? And then, you know, I don't know all of his reasons.

And he lasted but a few months and he was off. I don't know what happened. I don't know what happened.

You know, God has given a gift of laughter, of humor. We're all different. If you think I make any plans to try to get you to laugh at my meetings, you don't know me.

I have no plan to make people laugh. I'm not some kind of a stand-up comedian. There's some of my messages that I've given that isn't a laugh in the whole message.

I don't understand the different ways that God works. But I'll tell you, out on the mission field, you either learn to laugh or you're going to do a lot of crying. Because you're going to see God's people behave in bizarre ways.

You're going to see these strong-minded missionaries and you have to be strong-minded to get to the mission field in the first place. I talked last night about the fight. You've got to somehow battle.

You've got to persevere with your prayer partners, with the church, with yourself, maybe with your wife, your husband. So you've got to be strong-minded to get out there. And what happens when all these strong-minded missionaries from all different Bible colleges and backgrounds get out there? And they have to work together.

I'll tell you, they don't work together. Often, there are very disheartening things. Praise God, there are beautiful exceptions as well.

And I just think it's basic to develop a little bit of a sense of humor. I was sharing with you that I wanted to throw out some practical things that will help you persevere, help you keep on keeping on, because that's my bottom line is that expression out of date. Just about the time I get an expression, I'm out on the mission field.

I come back here and the young people look at me. Oh, no, what a bore. All these expressions that we've left last year.

Bottom line, maybe it's not bottom line anymore. I don't know. For a while, girls were birds, then girls were chicks.

Now, I don't know, maybe they're geese. I don't know what you're calling. I don't know what you're calling your girls here.

And I was speaking in one seminary in the East Coast and I mentioned the word girl in the seminary course. The whole little troop of these sort of semi-evangelical feminists attacked me after the meeting. You know, not physically.

It would have been easier physically. They attacked me. We are women.

So, you know, if I slip and I call a woman a girl or a girl a goose, forgive me, huh? But I wanted to read. I'm just trying to read this quotation. I don't know how I got around to prepare the way because I'm trying to challenge you students to have a quotation book.

And when anybody gives you a good quotation, paste it in that book. I have a few pasted in my Bible. And, you know, I had a lot of maps here in the back of my Bible and I tried to travel through Europe with these maps and it's not very good.

So I pasted a lot of quotations on top of these maps. Let me read this quotation. I think this is good.

Opportunity not only knocks, but is playing an anvil chorus on every man's door. I think that's great. Now, a salesman said that, not a theologian.

But there are theologians that believe that, like Howard Henricks and some of those kind. The trouble is opportunity looks so much like hard work that often we fail to recognize it. That touch any chords? A professional is a man who can do his job when he doesn't feel like it.

An amateur can't do his job when he does feel like it. People can be placed into three classes. The few who make things happen, the many who watch things happen, and the overwhelming majority who have no idea of what has happened.

The man who is looking for magic or some mysterious shortcut to success will be disappointed because ability without agility doesn't win. And the worst bankrupt in the world is the one who doesn't win. The world is the man who has lost his enthusiasm, but many a man never fails because he never tries.

Forgive me if I've read that twice. I've been speaking at a number of schools. And if I read that when I first came, then even more, take it to heart.

I want you to turn with me now in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians chapter 12. Failure, the backdoor to success. Let me give you a subtitle if you don't like that title.

And I hope many of you will order the tape and send it around to people that may need this message more than you. I feel that for some of you, this is not the key message of this conference. I'm sure for many of you, I'm not the key speaker for this conference.

I'm just one of a team of speakers. And I feel that often my ministry is for some who just may be missed by other more dedicated, disciplined, phlegmatic stalwarts of the Christian faith. Perhaps we could call this confessions of a weak, struggling Christian.

This message is dedicated to all strugglers. If you are not a struggler, I'm not telling you to leave, but you may want to try to understand those of us who are strugglers. I have been criticized, I have been condemned often because of my honesty, not by many, but by a few, because people don't easily relate to people who are sometimes overly honest if they don't know much about honesty in their own life.

So I'm going to share it as it is. I have in mind some of you that may never have come to Jesus Christ because you're confused about the church, you're confused about some things in the Christian faith. Maybe you feel you're too weak.

Maybe you already tried it in some way or other, but failed. Maybe you feel there's too many hypocrites in the church. There are many, many reasons why people don't come to Christ.

It's not just that they're evil sinners who hate God. You know, let's understand that. I spend a lot of my time with unconverted people.

I have been for 31 years since my conversion. And I tell you, it's complex. And personal evangelism is complex.

It's not just going out with your four spiritual laws and getting them to make a decision for Christ. The high percentage of these people who make decisions do not go on for God. Nobody, I hope here, is naive enough to believe that.

Otherwise, almost everybody, you know, a very high percentage of all the people in the United States would be Christians. I'm not against getting decisions for Christ. I'm not against the four spiritual laws or

the ten spiritual laws.

I was converted through the ministry of Billy Graham when he gave an invitation to repent. So don't misunderstand. But I believe God wants to give us, as believers, greater understanding and sensitivity about where people are in 1985.

This is 1985. It will soon be 86. That's why I'm trying to get rid of these 85 calendars as fast as I possibly can.

Please come and collect yours after the meeting. You can throw a few away. But let's just read this.

Second Corinthians chapter 12. Paul speaks about a messenger of Satan, a thorn in the flesh. Verse seven, buffeted him that so he wouldn't be exalted above measure.

One of God's goals for all of us is humility, isn't it? Have you read Andrew Murray's book Humility? I was 10 years in my Christian life living in Bombay, India. I picked up that book. I thought it would be the end of me.

Talk about intimidation. Wow. These Andrew Murray books.

I read one and then I try Eugenia Price or Tim LaHaye spirit control temperament or or a comic or something. A thorn buffeted him should not be above measure. For this thing, I besought the Lord three times.

It would depart from me. A lot of different commentaries about what this is. And he said unto me, the Lord now is speaking to the apostle Paul.

He said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. When I am weak, then I am strong. I want to share with you my own testimony, but weave with it a message with this theme that failure is the backdoor often to success and that God uses weak people and that great faith does not necessarily come.

Get this. It's a quote from a great man of God with a little verb or paraphrase. Great faith does not come in the absence of doubt.

And I would add the absence of struggle and difficulty. But great faith learns how we battle through day by day in his name and in his power. So many young people seem to be defeated and discouraged in their Christian lives and many adults as well.

They seem to be overcome by their own failures. So many women have shared with my own wife who has a struggle in this area herself. They share with her.

They don't feel they have any ministry. They feel only the husband has a ministry. They feel they're home with the dishes and with the babies and the diapers or nappies, whatever you call them here in Canada.

I don't know. Forgive my lack of Canadian English. And it was interesting that a study was made recently and it showed that if a woman, a housewife with a couple of children, was giving the same time and

energy in a job within a corporation, she would be getting \$60,000 a year just for what she's doing at home.

And I just want to warn you husbands. Take it a little bit easy on your wife, especially if you're hyper like me. And you think that God has got a tremendous plan for your wife.

You've got a tremendous plan for your wife. Maybe she's got a plan. Maybe if you sat down and kept your mouth shut for a while, she would share that she also has a plan.

And I had so many burdens, so many visions, so many ideas for my wife, so many exhortations, so many challenges, so many Bible studies that she was intimidated and afraid to hardly speak to me in our early years of marriage. I had pushed Ephesians, you know the verse, so hard, the submission thing. And I had this belief that God was going to give me the perfect wife.

Have any of you got this kind of cockeyed stuff in your head? God was going to give me the perfect wife. And together we were going to take the world for Christ. She'd take all the women, I'd take all the men.

I was extreme. I believed all the money should be for God's work. I don't want to get into this.

I may have mentioned it last time, forgive me, but it helps you. Understand some of the problems and struggles, because I know whenever there's a Bible school, there are people out there just the way I was. Prayer, the Word, witnessing, all my money to missions.

I never once walked in this, I think in Moody we called it the sweet shop. I ran a secret protest against the sweet shop. The candy store, what do they call this? Coffee bar, where they sell things.

If we're getting three meals at the institute, how can we go in there and waste money on junk food when millions don't have Bibles? Boy, I tell you, we started a little revolution at Moody that really intimidated people. People would see some of us early O-Emmers coming down the hall. They'd go around the other way, over the roof, anywhere but have to see Verwer eye to eye with a chocolate bar stuck in your teeth.

And, you know, I was sort of for a couple of years very much against any involvement with women. I thought, you know, we got to lay off this because this was a big thing before I was converted. And I thought, you know, I got to have a social fast.

I went in for a couple of years of a social fasting, no women. I thought my very early idea for going to Mexico with O-Em, no women. They'll hinder what God wants to do.

Real macho chauvinist, we call them in England a twit. But God had his program. And I went up to rent a film.

I was just renting a Moody Science film. I used to love those films. They encouraged me in my faith.

I went up to rent a film and there was this woman sitting behind the desk. I can remember it almost like it were yesterday. I stepped out of the elevator.

I think it was a seventh or eighth floor. And I looked at this girl behind the desk and it just every circus smoke started to come out my ears. And I thought, oh, God, I'm in trouble again.

Of course, I was somewhat rude. And I said, you're not planning to be a missionary, are you? You know, she was very quiet, shy girl. She's been taken back.

She said, why did you say that? No good looking girls are going to the mission field. They're all ugly crows going to the mission field. Something like that.

And I can tell you she was not in love with me, but she was a bit, you know, a bit surprised. So we decided to have a meeting for negotiations. A real romantic.

And I thought I got to lay it on the line and find out if she's a disciple and if she really means business. So we went on a little meeting. We arranged it all just to talk.

And I said, you know, probably nothing's going to come of this. But just in case, I want you to know if you marry me, this is the first date. I said, if you marry me, it's going to be rough and we're not going to spend any money.

And you're probably going to be cooked up in a pot and eaten in New Guinea. She just, you know, this little quiet girl from Milwaukee just looked at me. The next thing I did about a week later is I gave her all my dirty laundry.

I figured that's a test for any woman. Anyway, I guess another great test came when we actually went out. We usually went out door to door or street evangelism.

I didn't believe in any kind of this dating. I just believed in evangelism. So I took her with me.

And but one day we did go on a more proper date. Things were getting more serious. And we sat along Lake Michigan.

It's about noontime and she was getting hungry. I was perhaps getting hungry. I don't remember.

But I knew one thing, I wasn't going to spend any money. And I was just seeking the Lord, praying, you know, Lord, I'm in a bit of trouble here. I don't want to force anything on her.

And this is because, you know, our meals were being served back in the institute. So I didn't believe in spending any extra. Anyway, I shot a few quick prayers up.

And some people came and sat behind us and started to eat their lunch. You ever get that funny feeling when people are eating nearby and you're hungry? The amazing thing, I was extreme about God providing. I wouldn't even, I never buy soap.

I go into the YMCA shower where I live in the name of Jesus. I believe soap will appear. Week after week, there was soap.

You know, sometimes I'd have to scrape it off the floor, but there was always some soap. So I thought, Lord, you can provide. And when those people threw their sandwich, whatever was left, they threw it into the rubbish basket.

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You're not believing the best.

But I just, in faith, went over to the rubbish basket and I got the bag out. And can you imagine this lovely little girl, woman? The amazing, the amazing thing is there were sandwiches that, you know how they are

in the States, sandwiches had not been unwrapped. Fruit that was untouched.

And I presented her with her lunch. Well, how we ever ended up getting married is quite a mystery. And I don't want to go into the details.

But needless to say, our marriage has been a lot of struggles. She finally began to share what she really sometimes felt. I didn't know how to handle it.

And we ended up in quite a few arguments at times. We were in Mexico. And I didn't want to spend any money on food.

I'd go to the market with Spanish books. And I'd say, amigo, yo tengo algunos libros aquí. Y yo quiero un poco de comida.

And they'd say, you know, get lost. Some of you know Spanish. And amazing things happen.

To make a long story short, God slowly began to bring me more into balance. To be sensitive to my wife. To be sensitive to other people.

The way they think. Why they think the way they think. One of my greatest burdens is the way we write off other Christians because they are not the same as us.

And some of you may write me off. Or maybe God will use me to just broaden your understanding a little bit that God works in different people in different ways. And we're from different backgrounds.

Now, let me tell you just a little bit about my background. My father was not a believer, though he was seeking God. I'm from a Dutch Reformed church.

My grandfather from the Netherlands was an atheist. My other grandfather from Glasgow, Scotland was a drunkard. That marriage blew in two pieces in a horrible way.

And my father immigrated from the Netherlands to New Jersey outside New York City. Many ways a good man. Many ways a good father.

But we didn't know Christ. And we didn't know God. And there were times when I saw things happen even in my own home.

New Year's Eve. Some of those things, you know, just blew circuits in my head as a young man. But I had been vaccinated with an infatuation with women from age four.

Now, this is a little hard to understand. Some of you can't relate to this. No problem.

But I can remember age four, before I went to primary school, standing outside the window of the primary school, waiting for this particular girl to come and sharpen her pencil. By the time I was 30, by the time I was 16, there were 30 some different women that had blown my circuits in various degrees. It was, people call it puppy love, but it was real to this old young hound.

And by 16, and I don't say this lightly, I was hooked on pornography. Because in my society, the things I wanted to do were not acceptable. And I was trying, you know, I was a phony.

In my community, I was in the YMCA. I had become a leader in a very liberal, modernistic church, president of the young people's group. I was in scouts, tried to get in the girl scouts, but had to settle for the boy scouts.

And my name was in the paper and other different community activities. And so I was living a double life. My mother didn't know I had this pornography.

She didn't know I was into some of these flicks on 42nd Street in New York City. The Bible says, he who commits sin becomes a slave to sin. And I will tell you, you as a Christian may be into pornography.

Don't think, let's not be naive, that Christians can't get hooked on some of these things. Some of you, of course, here may not be followers of Christ. You may not think there's anything wrong.

You may write it off all as art, some kind of art. But with me, it wasn't. And then I was hooked on money.

I had a passion to make money from earliest years. By 13, I had three businesses. I had about 100 different people working for me, selling fire extinguishers.

I was making 70% profit, give them 30% and go off with 40% and sleep on the beach while others worked. Don't want to go into detail about this. But just to say my world was probably quite different from some of you, but maybe similar to others who are here tonight.

And the thing I want to drive home the most, in the midst of all that I'm trying to say, is that God works through prayer. And I am here today, humanly speaking, because a dear elderly woman heard about me with all of my big mouth, my things that I was into, a little bit of trouble with the police, nothing big. She started to pray for me.

And really, I want to say this to many of you who I know are men and women of prayer, some of you older folk. I don't find so many young people that know much about prayer, that deeply disturbs me. And I'm sure there's some here.

I went to the student prayer meeting this morning. I was not impressed. I was impressed with the quality of prayer.

But I was not very impressed with the number of male students. Now maybe you're all married and you all went up to the other meeting. But I would have thought that it wouldn't be such a hard thing for single men to give a half, it's only half an hour, you're barely getting praying and go off for breakfast, and there's nothing wrong with that.

I went off at eight to try to get some time alone. And the word is, I didn't wake up as early as I had hoped. I made a better arrangement this morning, or tomorrow morning, to go jogging with someone at 6.30. That always gets you going in the morning.

I think I'll go see your three hills. Look like three pimples to me, but anyway, I'll go take a look tomorrow morning. But I pray that more of you single men and single women will find your way to that prayer meeting, because brothers and sisters, that's where the action is.

Now, if you feel that you want to pray privately during that time, fine. I've written a couple of articles about corporate prayer, and I don't believe we should put corporate prayer in competition with private prayer. But this is a special time of the year to have a conference, to have special speakers.

Your faculty and your leaders go out of the way to bring people here. Maybe it's a good time to have a little more corporate prayer. And I think that's tremendous.

You get up at 6.30, get some time in the word and prayer on your own, and get in there for a half an hour of corporate prayer. If you ever go to work in India, you're going to discover the Indian brothers get up at five, and they have family prayers. They get their drums out, and they get praying early in the morning, so it can be good preparation for India.

God works through prayer. And if you're not a believer, let me just tell you this. If God answers prayer, that's one of the proofs that God is alive.

And if God is alive, then you better get to know him. And if you're a bit of a skeptic, as I am, then I would love to correspond with you or meet with you. That's not so easy.

At least perhaps pray with you after this meeting. That woman not only prayed for me, but she sent me a gospel of John through the post. Now, I wonder how many of you regularly, even one tract a week, I become very broad-minded in these middle years.

Now, some of you look like you're in these mid-years. Some of the faculty, maybe, staff. These are tremendous years, aren't they? The mid-years.

They are just so exciting. So many times when I was young, people would just write me off. Oh, youthful zeal.

Tim mature, OM, fly-by-night movement. And so, it's so great to be back now in the mid-years. It proves the grace of God.

It shows that it's not just fly-by-night or youthful zeal. Shows that when you're saved, the Holy Spirit comes in you and he does the work. It's as simple as that.

I picked up a book some time ago, Midlife Crisis. Have you seen any of these books? This is heavy stuff. Midlife Crisis.

You know, I was feeling tremendous until I started to read this thing. All the things that are supposed to happen to us, you know, in the middle years. And, you know, as far as I'm concerned, of course, all of life is one big crisis.

It's all a crisis. Teenage crisis, 20s crisis, 30s crisis, single life crisis. Man, when I was single, oh, it was all a crisis.

I never thought any girl was going to marry me. Moody Bible Institute. I was, you know, I was in this phony, single man, bravo, macho trip.

And I was looking around, almost broke my neck. And I would hug my pillow. I don't know if any of you get into the hug your pillow syndrome.

And I hug my pillow. God, if you could ever supply a wife to me, that would be a miracle. I believe in miracles.

And I always dreamed of the day I'd get married and just hold my wife in my arms as I went to sleep at night. You know, one of the things we discovered in our marriage, when I go to sleep, I don't want to hold anybody or anything. This is unbelievable.

This has bothered my wife beyond all recognition. God is merciful. He saves weak, struggling people.

And that's what happened to me because one lady prayed. She prayed for me for three years. She sent me a Gospel of John.

I was about to ask you when I got sidetracked. I try to go down the freeway when I preach, but I keep going on the secondary roads. But there's some blessing there as well.

But let's come back. And I wanted to just ask how many regularly distribute Christian literature, even one tract a week. That's pretty broad-minded, right, Bert? I mean, that's not like the old days.

One tract a week. Raise your hand. Come on, encourage my heart.

You know, I mean, a lot of you don't... You'd feel like raising your hand, people would think you're spiritual. You know what the truth is? We don't give out Christian literature. That's the truth.

We don't even carry it. And it is a great burden to me. I've written a book on this.

It's the most slow-selling book in the world. You probably don't even have it in your bookshop, because you don't want to get stuck with slow-selling books. It's called Literature Evangelism.

Can you think of anything as dull as that for the average evangelical? Literature Evangelism. But I will tell you, I thank God for that dear old lady who didn't think literature evangelism was too old-fashioned. For the one who was destined to become the radical president of the high school across the road from her house.

The biggest loudmouth that had ever landed in Ramsey, New Jersey. And when I ran for the election for the student body president, believe me, there wasn't much opposition left. I wasn't a Christian when I started.

But before I got into that position, through that Lady's Gospel of John, through that Lady's prayers, I went to a Billy Graham meeting mainly out of curiosity. I didn't know what an evangelist was. I had never heard the gospel.

And I heard that Jesus Christ died for me. I heard that Jesus Christ shed His precious blood on the cross for me. I heard John 1, 12, as many as receive Him, to them He gives power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.

And when Billy Graham gave the invitation to come forward for counseling, I went forward. It was not an easy thing for me. I had never seen that kind of thing in a meeting in my life.

Total stranger to this kind of vocabulary that many of you are familiar with. I didn't know there was such a thing as a Bible school. I never heard of such a thing, a Bible school.

I barely, you know, knew the Bible a little bit. And I went forward in that meeting. And Jesus Christ forgave me and cleansed me and came into my heart.

And I just share this, though my life has been at times in much weakness and failure, that Jesus Christ has been real to me every single day for 31 years. And if Jesus Christ can be real to a character like me with all of my energy and all of my complexity and my struggles, then I know that Jesus Christ can be real to anybody here tonight. Your problem is not too hard for God.

Your doubts are not too great for God. Sometimes I speak, I remember speaking to some young men, and I think maybe a few women, but mainly young men, Muslims, there in the Afghan border. And I shared a message on why I am still a follower of Jesus Christ.

That may be a surprise to some of you. I've written the outline of that little message here. I don't necessarily need it because I don't have time to get into it.

But I just shared some of the reasons why, I guess it was 28 years at that time, whatever. Years later, I was still following Christ. Now, does that sound strange to you? It shouldn't, if you really know what's happening around the world.

Many, many people make decisions at a Billy Graham meeting, and Luis Palau, and other meetings. And after one or two or three years, some only in one or two or three days, they drop it, a lot. I went back to that high school.

We started prayer meetings in this ungodly high school. I found out later, by the way, this dear elderly lady had been praying for 15 years for that high school. An ungodly, semi-drunken high school.

I mean, this was a wild place. And she persevered in prayer. I want to ask you, do you know something about this kind of persevering prayer in your life? Will you take that high school in Red Deer and persevere in prayer until God breaks in? Will you take that high school in Calgary and persevere until God breaks in? Will you take that high school in Edmonton and persevere until God breaks in? She persevered.

And you know what she prayed? She prayed that people would be saved and sent. Not saved to sit. Not saved to sleep.

Saved to be sent. She had a tremendous missionary vision. Have you ever met these kind of dear elderly folk who have a missionary vision? They got a map of the world.

You try to get into the house and you slip on a prayer letter. You try to sit down at the table and there's pictures of missionaries surrounding you on every side. You feel intimidated.

Without the woman even saying something, you get the idea she feels you should be a missionary and that she's invited you there mainly for that purpose. This woman had this missionary vision. By the way, all of her own children grew up to be very godly.

One of them died on the mission field. A doctor. Another one became another doctor in the Philippines.

He's back in America now. And that high school, as we gathered for prayer meetings, God's spirit began to move. First, there were just one or two dozen.

Then I had a campaign to distribute Gospels of John. Can you imagine this character? One minute, this radical student, president, body, president, leader. The next minute, persuading the principal, we ought to get everybody to read the Gospel of John.

To our utter amazement, the principal said, go ahead. One thousand students, mainly unconverted, promised to read a Gospel of John. We had a read the Bible campaign.

Sort of a low profile, you know, not big heavy terminology. And God broke into that high school. One time when I shared my testimony, a hundred and twenty-five students came into the cafeteria to profess salvation and to trust Jesus Christ.

Now, they didn't all go on. And that's how I developed my emphasis on discipleship training, my emphasis on follow up, my conviction that young Christians need to get into the word of God and the word of God needs to get into them. That's what eventually led me out of a nice, soft university scene, liberal arts college scene, into an unknown Bible college, to the amazement of my friends and relatives.

Something I've never regretted. And I will tell you, I've got to shorten things now, but I'll tell you this, many, many times I had almost quit. Now, I want to narrow in on those of you who sometimes have felt like quitting.

Can that even happen at Bible college? Can you get weird, wild temptations at Bible college? One time when I was at Moody Bible Institute, all the old stuff started to come back. Desire for women, lust, different things. I was praying alone in my room.

I felt that there was a lot of unreality in this place. I was very disappointed, partly my own fault, because I didn't understand what Christians were, really. I had this perfectionist, false view of what Christians were supposed to be like.

And so, I was somewhat going through trauma. Is Christianity really true? That was a constant plague to me, because I'd studied other religions, I'd studied philosophy. And I said, you know, I don't know, I'm going to go out tonight and get some booze and just do something crazy.

You know, I couldn't get past the door. God hit me with His Word. The verse that hit me that night, when I almost threw it all in as a Bible school student, was, Be not deceived, God is not mocked.

Whatsoever a man sow, that he shall also reap. Many times over the past 31 years, I've wanted to throw in the towel. No need to go into detail.

Doubts. Can all these people be lost, all these Hindus? There are many dear people. I love the Hindu people.

I've lived among them, I've worked among them. I love the Muslim people. Are they all lost? Why am I saved? Why is Ted Rendell saved, and this Muslim man in Ankara has never heard the gospel, is lost.

And when you compare that with the flippancy of the average Christian, the lack of reality, the lack of zeal. We were talking about some of your Canadian sportsmen over supper today, some of these hockey players. They seem to throw far more into that game than the average Christian throws into his prayer life, throws into his study life, throws into his witnessing.

I will tell you, many times, I said, I'm through. I don't fit. Have you ever felt you don't fit into the church? You don't fit into all these Bible-punching fundamentalists, all these evangelical people with all their words and all their talk.

Yet they seem to be always fighting among themselves, seem to be always condemning one another. They seem to be straining at gnats and swallowing camels. They can't come to agreement on most issues, it seems, unless they all hustle around and join one particular camp.

And if you study those camps, they usually blow apart as well. And I thought, even on the mission field, even after being out there ten years, having won thousands and seen thousands come back to Christ, I thought, I can't go on. Let me just, in closing, give you some of the reasons why I am still going on despite all the struggles and failures and doubts that I've gone through.

Number one, quickly, this is God's Word. It doesn't matter to me if someone is playing around or fooling around or not keeping it or there's hypocrites in the church. I believe, after studying many books, reading things against the Bible and for the Bible, I'm intellectually persuaded this is God's Word.

That's the main thing, next to the grace of God, that has kept me going all these years. And I pray, you will not take it lightly. You will not think that you'll never have any doubts about the Word of God.

But you'll get to know the reasons for your faith. And you'll study this book. And you'll get that firm foundation.

Just as Billy Graham came into a whole revolutionary experience when he just realized in the deeper part of his soul, this is God's Word. It was after that that Los Angeles took place and Billy Graham's ministry started to become what it is today. Another reason is I have seen the Holy Spirit transform thousands of lives.

I know there are weak Christians. I know there are lukewarm Christians. I know there are hypocrites in the church.

They're not always hypocrites because you think they're hypocrites, by the way. They may just be human beings with damaged emotions and struggles and failures like me. I'm sure if some of you hyper idealists traveled and lived and worked with me, you'd write me off as a hypocrite as well.

Even after listening to my tapes. But I came to this conclusion that the church was not a fraternity for super saints. It was a clinic for sinners.

And I stopped expecting so much from God's people. I learned from the Word of God that this treasure is in an earthen vessel. I learned that we are like clay pots and I developed my theology of the human factor and it saved me from a hundred headaches.

We are human beings and we need to have a little less expectation for what the other brothers should be producing according to our particular theology and teaching. We need to be a little gentler on one another, a little more loving with one another. Let a little love cover some of those differences and peculiarities in what you may think is inconsistency.

We don't tolerate any inconsistency in our church. What a load of baloney. You are inconsistent.

You may be Mr. Hardliner of Prairie Bible Institute or Three Hills or Western Canada. You may be clobbering this group with one hand and this group with another hand. Anti this and anti that.

I've already had people write to me warning me not to go here, not to go there when I come to Canada. But I want to tell you, you let the Holy Spirit, you let the cross put a microscope on your ego and you will

come up a sinner because you're looking at one of the hardest liners Moody Bible Institute has ever graduated. And God, when He brought me to the cross, exposed false motivation.

He exposed pride. He exposed damaged emotions. He exposed resentment.

He exposed overreaction. He exposed jealousy. He exposed awful, ungodly things.

And I was a missionary leader introduced around the world as a founder, disciple maker, international whatever of Operation Mobilization. I will tell you when the cross comes in and zeroes in on the ego, none of us stand before God. We all must repent.

We all must weep. And as we humble ourselves and as we weep, we become more broken. And there comes more love and there comes more reality.

And love begins to cover. We learn how to compassionately disagree instead of disagreeing in a bitter or an upsetting way. I'm not asking people to sacrifice personal biblical convictions.

But I ask people to walk in humility and love and brokenness, esteeming the other better than yourself, getting a few more facts before you make your pronouncements or your denunciations. And I just believe God is changing people. God is doing a great work here at Prairie.

God is transforming lives in the high school, in the college. God is transforming lives across Western Canada. God is using different movements, different streams in the church.

And one of the reasons I'm still a committed believer is I have seen what Christ can do in people's lives. Despite all my doubts, skepticism, sarcasm, ability to take people apart. And in my more discouraged moments, I will tell you, I've gone for the church like a dinosaur for ducks.

And God has had to humble me because I've seen Christians are real. They are not phonies, my unconverted friend. They are real.

And I fellowship with them in 50 nations from every possible nationality, Russians, Chinese. God is changing lives. The Holy Spirit is a real person.

He enters into weak, struggling, failing, loud mouth, long nose, sinners like me. And He changes them. But it takes time.

It doesn't happen overnight. And when you're filled with the Holy Spirit, the color of your eyes doesn't change. Your voice doesn't change.

Now, I've been in prayer meetings where people try to put on a spiritual voice. So he's very funny. Some gruff old farmer comes into the meeting.

And when he prayed, the fullness of the Holy Spirit does not destroy the human factor. Do you know that? Doesn't change your personality. Doesn't take a one talent, one horsepower person and make him into a 10 talent, 10 horsepower person.

You are you. God's going to work through you. And I just feel, not only do we need a revolution in our acceptance of ourselves, but in accepting one another.

Not waiting till he changes and becomes exactly like us. Accepting of other brothers and sisters who don't believe the same as us, who don't sing the same music that we sing, who don't see every verse exactly the same way that we see it. But we love them.

We don't agree. And we can talk about our disagreements. And we may not want to go to the same church.

I probably wouldn't want to go to the same church as some of you. You may not want to worship the same church as me. God's unity comes in the midst of diversity.

How do you think you ever got in there? Or me? More love. More reality. And because I've seen this taking place around the world, I'm encouraged.

God is working in the world today. God is changing people. Christ is alive.

Christ is living in people's hearts. Sure, if I look at a person closely, he may, you know, lack love in some areas. He may be a little off balance in some areas.

He may say things I don't like. He may play some music that I don't feel maybe is acceptable or whatever. But he's a brother.

He's my brother. And Christ is in him. And if Christ is in him, that's very important for me.

And though he may have warts and he may have pimples, spiritually speaking, if Christ is in him, I'm going to try to understand him. I'm going to have dialogue. We may not agree.

We may not go to the same church, study in the same Bible school. I may even tell him, I've told many people, look, I don't think OM is your cup of tea. I don't think you ought to join Operation Mobilization.

I think you ought to go join YWAM or join Campus Crusade for Christ or join Luigi's Gospel Mountain Corps or somebody else's group. God's unity is in the midst of diversity. Brothers and sisters, with all of our desire to follow the narrow way, and the Bible says narrow is the way, let us be careful here in this unique part of Canada not to make the way narrower than Jesus has made it.

Huh? It is narrow enough. And not that many of us really on a worldwide basis, let's not make it any narrower. Believe me, one of my problems, I had so many convictions when I got out of Bible school, so many convictions, I couldn't even list them all.

I wrote a discipleship manual, a leadership manual, this memo, that memo, all of my convictions. And you know what I discovered? If my convictions are not rooted and grounded in love, my strongest convictions become bitterness in my soul. That's why the Bible says love underneath, love around, and love on the roof.

I'm still following Jesus 31 years later because the Bible is true. Christ is alive. He has saved me, and it is real.

Christianity is real. Christ is living in people, not destroying the human factor, not changing them, you know, in one week or one month. Continual growth, continual Christ-likeness.

And that's happening around the world. Let us, let us just unite our hearts in prayer for a moment. Oh, my Lord, just help us right now.

Help us to search our own hearts. Are we making excuses for not following You? Are we somehow running away from Your people because we think they're hypocrites or we think they're not consistent? Are we running away from ourselves because we think we're too weak, we can't live the life, we don't fit into the Christian community? Oh, God, speak to our hearts right now. I want to give this invitation.

It's going to be a twofold invitation. If you want to receive the Lord Jesus Christ and trust Him as your Lord and Savior, or if you want to take a step of faith, of recommitment of your life to Christ, to be more committed and more balanced and more loving, more realistic, then I'm going to ask you just to pray your own prayer. And as you pray your own prayer of commitment and surrender, just to stand up where you are.

On the second part is I'm going to ask you to remain behind after the meeting if you want, so some counselors can pray with you or I can pray with you. You may not want that. You may sense you just want to make this commitment.

Standing and then go home and pray. So that's the invitation I want to give. There may be few.

There may be many. But I learned from the Lord Jesus and from some other men that it's good to preach for a decision. You've been very patient listening to me.

I'm very grateful. But now is the chance for you to do something. And some of you know, you know in your heart, you're drifting in your Christian life or you know in your heart, you've never really been born again.

You don't have assurance of salvation. You're just going through church motions. There may be others caught up in bitterness, caught up in extremism.

There may be others that as I have gone through in periods of doubt and confusion. And tonight you want to trust God in a fresh way and just make a deeper recommitment of your life to Jesus. So whether you don't know Christ personally at all and you want to make a decision, make it in your heart now.

Pray, Lord Jesus, cleanse me, forgive me. I come to you tonight. You may not even know why you ever got to this meeting.

You may be here out of curiosity. But God has spoken to you. Then there are others.

You need to make a fresh step of faith to be a disciple, to deal with discouragement in your life. You may feel that you're weak, you're a struggler, you're a failure. And tonight we're opening the back door to success.

God uses weak people. His strength is made perfect in weakness. His grace is sufficient.

Do you believe that? Is it functioning in your life? A reality, a fire in your heart? If not, I pray. Take a step of faith tonight. Make it real by the grace of God.

Will you pray your own prayer right now? And then if you mean it with all your heart, I want to pray for you just instantly as I see you stand up here in this auditorium. God bless you there in the balcony, in the back, over there. I wish I could talk with each one for an hour, but the Holy Spirit will give you more time than

that.

And there'll be counselors here to talk if you want to talk. God bless you. You way over there, this couple down in the back.

It's hard to give an invitation. Those of us have been doing it for 30 years. Some of it can sound like a cliché.

The last thing I want is a cliché. But you know, some phrases are so good, like God loves you, that even if it sounds like a cliché, I'm going to use it. And let me tell you, my friends, you stand before God, He loves you.

He loves you as He loved me in all my lostness back there in that high school. And He wants to bring you back to Himself, or save you, or take you into a deeper commitment, or cleanse and heal damaged emotion, or bring you out of extremism into love and balance. In a meeting this big, God is doing many things simultaneously.

I don't think there's going to be any stampede in any meeting of people responding to this kind of call to discipleship and reality as I have given it tonight. But some of you, you need to right now. Yes, way up in that balcony.

God bless you, you and you. Downstairs in the back. The fear of man bringeth a snare.

I beg of you, don't hold back from a deeper commitment. Or a step of faith for the fear of what people will think. Don't do it.

It's a trick of the enemy. Sometimes the most committed spirit-filled people in some of the meetings I go to, God zeroes in on them, like He did on me through Oswald J. Smith that night. I told you about that yesterday.

And there's need for an absolute surrender. A deeper experience of the cross. If I did it all over again tonight, I'd bring perhaps a little more of a cross and a little less of sharing about myself.

Praise God. Paul Tournier, a brilliant Christian psychologist, helped liberate me to not be afraid to talk about myself. He said, if you can't talk about yourself, who can you talk about? I only expose myself for the sake of the message to get through to your heart.

And he uses all kinds of weak, struggling, doubting people. And therefore, he can use you. First of all, he can save you if you're not saved, as he saved me.

And then he can use you and cleanse you and take you through your doubts and your struggles, even as an instrument for world evangelism. A one-minute summary of what I've tried to say. Anyone else before I pray this prayer? I'm going to ask everybody to give me their name and address that I can pray for you again.

You don't have to do that. But I welcome you if you make this commitment, because this is a serious thing for me. I don't do this lightly.

I don't do this lightly. I will be praying over every single piece of paper given to me at this conference, if I have to take a whole day off to do it. So just the final chance, if God has spoken to you, the Spirit of God

has zeroed in on your heart, responds.

It's a step of faith. You may not understand it all, but God has zeroed in on you. You're saying yes to the Holy Spirit.

I'll go your way. Fill me afresh. Use me however, wherever, whatever the cost.

Or if you're not a believer, or an insecure, unsure believer, fall at the foot of the cross and say, Jesus, I receive you as my Savior. Forgive me, cleanse me, and make me anew. Anyone else? Yes, God bless you and you.

Praise the Lord. Some of the visitors perhaps. Hereby surprise.

But God is a God of surprises. He surprised you with salvation to your own heart tonight. Surprised you with a new joy that I have known personally, greatly varying degrees, every day for 31 years.

God bless you and you and you. I believe many are praying for this meeting. God has met many of you tonight.

Praise the Lord. Way in the back. Young man, dear woman.

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. This is an hour of power.

Don't be afraid of the word miracles. Some people misuse the word miracles. I overreacted against the misuse of the word miracle.

But let me tell you, the greatest miracle in the world is when new birth comes to a character like you and me. Another great miracle is when someone who's been drifting and hasn't known the reality of the cross, hasn't known the love, the love that should grip the believer, comes to Jesus into the foot of the cross and says as Paul, not I, but Christ. Will you say that? Not I, but Christ.

That's what it's about. And that can make all the difference in the world in the coming months. People keep standing up and I don't want to hinder anything that God is doing, but I do feel I should bring it to the close and pray a prayer of dedication for each one standing.

Is there anyone else? Please stand now. Praise the Lord. May he make it real.

Receive by faith the miracle of faith and love that God can give. He abide in him. He abides in you.

You'll bring forth much fruit. Praise the Lord. High school people, God has been speaking to you in the afternoon meetings.

Tonight's the night when maybe you can just make that firm. You're standing on the promises, not any longer just resting on the premises. Now, Lord, you see each one standing before you.

You know how bigger meetings are more difficult than small meetings. I'd love to speak personally to each one of these people. But Father, you know the needs.

And so we ask right now that Lord, if any who are standing before you do not know you personally, that this may be their hour of decision and that they may come to you and surrender to you and turn from sin and repentance and receive the gift of salvation through simple faith. And Lord, I believe there are many

others who are standing before you who have been drifting or have been caught up in their own ego trip or have been drifting away from the principles of love and faith. Maybe into extremism on one hand, maybe into lukewarmness and lethargy on the other hand.

Prayer life of shambles, relationships of shambles, bitterness in the spiritual battery. Oh, God, we come back to you tonight in brokenness. Fill us, cleanse us, that self may be crucified and that Jesus Christ may be lifted up above all else.

And God, God, we give you all the praise and all the glory. You'll share your glory with no man. And you have done a work in these hearts tonight.

We receive it by faith through Jesus Christ. Amen. Let's all stand now.

And I'd like to sing if our musicians can help us. He is Lord. Often when I give this invitation, I like to sing this little chorus.

He is Lord. He is Lord. He is risen from the dead.

But he is Lord. Every knee shall bow. Every tongue confess that he is Lord.

And make this a hymn of surrender in your heart. Let's continue in a sense of worship and praise and commitment. All of us recommitting our hearts to Christ as Lord of our time, our talent, our money, everything to go where he wants us to go, to do what he wants us to do.

Let's sing this very, very seriously, very prayerfully right now. He is Lord. He is Lord.

He is risen from the dead. But he is Lord. Every knee shall bow.

Every tongue confess that he is Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29874.mp3>

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