

Prayer Night Leadership Conf 2.9.1981

by George Verwer

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer and spiritual life in the life of a leader and the church, using the Book of Acts as a model.

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Topics: "Prayer Meeting"

Description

In this sermon, Daryl Brother Bakht Singh discusses the four pillars of the church that are essential in our lives. He emphasizes the importance of receiving God's word gladly and being baptized, as seen in Acts 2:41. He also highlights the role of the Lord in adding people to the church and the need for faithful prayer and witnessing. The sermon touches on the spectacular healings and miracles performed by Jesus, emphasizing their significance in his ministry. Singh also emphasizes the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ and the importance of proclaiming this message to the world.

Transcript

Some of the basic principles of leadership and spiritual life in the Book of Acts. We don't want to overemphasize leadership. That can be a danger, like anything else, because above all else, we are followers.

We are followers of the Lord, followers of the Lamb. Behold, the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world. And as we read the Book of Acts, we realize that many of the principles there are for all Christians, not just for people who are leaders.

But often one of the marks of a leader is that he's a little more hungry for God. He grasps something a little quicker, and therefore the Lord uses him to help others understand that same principle. He doesn't share these principles from a position of superiority, but he shares these principles from a position of grace, that he's experienced the grace of God and the reality of God.

You can turn with me now in your Bibles to Acts chapter 1. By the way, I started some time ago an excellent book on the prayer life of Jesus, and I haven't finished that book. I loaned out my copy, and last I saw it, it was only available in hardback, but I made a lot of notations in the back of my Bible from that book of the references. And in many ways, I would love to share with you on that subject even more, but I think that may be something for the main conference.

It's amazing to see the prayer life of Jesus Christ. You can trace it yourself in the Gospels. Prayer at his baptism, prayer in choosing the twelve, prayer before feeding the five thousand, prayer through the night, teaching the disciples to pray, prayer for the Holy Spirit, prayer on the road to Emmaus.

That's just a few of the references. Therefore, as we move into the book of Acts, we are following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. One of the leaders of our work shared with me in the form of a note that as he came to this conference, his one great desire, even though he has many responsibilities, I can say that his one great desire is just to be more Christlike, and to me that is very much a priority.

Let's pray and then look through the book of Acts together for a time which can be, I believe, a great preparation for our extended prayer time. Living God, we thank you for this living book. We thank you that it is your word, that it is authoritative.

We thank you that we can base our whole life on it. We sense very much your grace in these days. We praise you for answers to prayer for lives that are being touched.

Thank you for your protection, your glorious protection over us in many ways we don't even see. We just look to you for this time of prayer tonight and pray that our hearts may be quickened by your word. Lord, my own heart needs quickening.

We want to be stirred into action by your Holy Spirit. Deliver us from anything that is hindering us from really praying tonight. Maybe introspection, maybe self-pity.

Maybe we are hurt by somebody. Maybe we don't feel fulfilled in what we are doing. Maybe we don't feel at home.

Maybe we are lonely or homesick. Lord, by your grace, we want to take these things to the cross. We want to be able to say as the Apostle, I am crucified with Christ.

Oh God, make this real in our hearts. Some of us are tired. But Lord, you can renew our strength.

We know often your strength is made perfect in weakness. Sometimes we can pray better from a position of tiredness and weariness in which we sense we are almost at the end of ourselves. Unless you give us utterance and strength, we can't even enter into this prayer meeting.

We will merely sit here. You know all of our personal needs. We thank you.

We can cast them upon you. We look to you now in your word, in Jesus' name, amen. Book of Acts, chapter 1. I'm sure many times already, if you've had much contact with us, you've looked at Acts 1.8. So we're going to jump over that, because I easily get stuck in that verse.

That verse is very exciting, especially when we start talking about the uttermost parts. I once was going to give a great tour through the book of Acts. I didn't get past 1.8. So we're going to jump over Acts 1.8, because it'll come up later in the conference.

But whenever we think of Acts 1.8, we think of Matthew 9, which is so basic as we go into prayer tonight. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into the harvest. That is one of the most specific commands for prayer in the whole of the New Testament.

I believe every one of you is here, because someone has prayed on the basis of that verse, even if they didn't know the verse. This whole movement was born, you all know the story, because of one dear woman who believed God's word, who believed that promise, that command, and who prayed forth laborers. And I just happened to be one of them.

And many others followed. Twenty-two thousand have come forth and had some training in this fellowship of OM, and thousands of them are serving Christ in almost every nation in the world today, with almost every major mission society of any size. One woman took God at his word, and I tell you, it was seen in her home as well, because every single one of her children, I think she had three or four, were beautiful examples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was her one son. Together with that gospel she sent me through the post, her one son, who I watched when I was in my first year at secondary school, and he was a senior, and I saw a difference in his life. I want to make it very, very clear, beloved.

It's not literature that makes the big impact, it's life. It's life. Literature is used.

Literature is important, but the life is more important, Christ living through you. You know, it oftentimes amazes me that Christians run around looking for special blessings when Jesus Christ is dwelling in their own heart. I can't think of anything in one way more stupid.

It's like running around looking for gold when you've got, you know, a great ton of it right in your arms or in your front living room. That doesn't mean, of course, God can't give us special blessings. Of course he can.

But the greatest blessing of all, let us get it very clear, is Christ living in you. And if Christ is reigning and living and ruling in you, then you are filled with the Holy Spirit. I don't think there is competition between Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I don't think they're having great arguments in heaven. Well, no, no, this church is speaking more about me. Oh, but look at these two house groups.

They're definitely talking more about me. Well, wait a minute, Holy Spirit. We can't hardly think of anything more ridiculous.

I preach on the subject, be ye filled with the Spirit, more than almost any other subject. But I also love to speak about the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I believe, of course, God works in different people in different ways and God meets us through different avenues of truth at different stages in our life.

But basically, we're always talking about the same thing, God. God working in you. And you may see it from Ephesians.

You may see it from Colossians. And that's wonderful. We hope tonight you'll see it from the book of Acts.

Now, let's look at verse 14, one of the main principles. We're going to mention a number of principles as we go through. And the first one is prayer.

And my burden is that this message will give us some basic biblical principles about spiritual life, the life of a leader, but also prepare us for the prayer meeting, fill us with faith with the prayer meeting. Some of you have been around OM for a while. I'm always encouraged when longer term people, some of them who

have had to listen to my voice for years, can manage to put themselves together and come to a meeting.

Always encourages me. But you know, the great test of your prayer life will come when you leave OM. Now, praise God, it can be tested in OM, so we hope some of you won't leave.

But the bigger test for many is when you leave, there is no longer a movement organizing prayer meetings for you. There's no longer a group of people who basically have this habit in their life, and you can somehow link with them, even if you feel weak, and get down to more serious prayer. There's nothing wrong with that.

That's the way it should be in the church. Every church should be a praying church. Every church should be having, of course, extended nights of prayer.

That's a biblical principle you're going to see again tonight in the book of Acts. It's not an OM teaching. Don't go around promoting it as an OM teaching.

Get it into your life, into your heart. Practice it as a New Testament principle. This was one of the first prayer meetings recorded after Pentecost.

This one actually before Pentecost, verse 14. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. This was a prayer meeting.

This excites me, even 24 years after first reading it, approximately. Because we're living in a day when the prayer meeting is in question. And I go to churches, and they say, well, we no longer have a prayer meeting.

We now go and just meet in house groups. And I say, well, that's great. I'm all for house groups.

Always have been. Do they have intercessory prayer in the house group? And you'll find out many of them do not. They have some prayer.

They have fellowship. They have discussion. They may listen to a tape.

But intercessory prayer, the concept of waiting on God in prayer, is rapidly disappearing in many, many places. I've attended some of the biggest evangelical conferences and congresses in the world. I have always been stunned by the lack of prayer in these great meetings.

I remember the World Congress on Evangelism in Switzerland, and I think it was finally the Indians, some other third world people, that started to, you know, there was a rumbling. Why don't we do some more praying around here? I remember all the red tape I had to cut through to organize a night of prayer, even though we had Bakht Singh with us. He believes in nights of prayer.

You can be sure of that. Days of prayer, nights of prayer, weeks of prayer, prayer and fasting, prayer with food, without food. I've never known such a man of prayer in my own sort of feeble contacts.

We had Bakht Singh, we had a night of prayer, here we were in Switzerland, you'd think we could get permission to tarry into the night, forget it. It's just not done. If you're a young person, you get high on drugs, stay out all night, get drunk, stay out all night, go to parties.

I used to go to parties every week, come home four in the morning, five in the morning, not even come home, go swimming six in the morning, wake the girl up, go back and carry on for the next day. I was considered quite normal. They elected me as president of the student body and called me Mr. Ramsey High School, that was the name of my school.

But ever since I got filled with the new wine and wanted to do a little nocturnal talking to the living God, I've been given about thirty-five different names over the years. And of course, in the early days, people said some very interesting things. For example, we had an accident in which someone, I think, was hurt, and some very clever person blamed it on the night of prayer.

They say this is dangerous for young people, staying up so late, and some of them have to drive the next day. Of course, some things are not wise, and we've made mistakes, but it isn't interesting how quickly you get pounced on when there's some problem that takes place after you do something that's spiritual, or it may seem, of course, in some people's minds, extreme. Prayer meetings are biblical.

Churches should be having prayer meetings. Our teams should be having prayer meetings. We have extended prayer meetings because there is so much to pray about.

It's a practical thing. We have extended prayer meetings just like when you go out with a girl that you first meet and you fall in love with. You don't usually go out for a ten-minute date.

Can you imagine a fellow meeting a girl in any society and saying, well, look, you know, we'd really like to get together, and the relationship is really roaring, and he says, well, you know, I've only got ten minutes tonight, but I'll meet you again next week, and maybe we'll have fifteen minutes. You may find that she chooses someone else who's got a little more time. Can you imagine if this girl, you're really pursuing her, boy, she's the one, and there's something going on in here about her, and as you're sitting with her after the first half an hour, you keep looking at your watch.

If we really love the Lord Jesus, number one, we'll keep his commandments, and that includes a lot about prayer, and number two, we'll want to be, by faith, in his presence. I think God understands that as human beings it's often easier for us to fellowship with one another, to love one another, especially the one we love in terms of the one we marry. I'm sure God doesn't want to put us in a guilt trip, because at times that seems to be a lot more real, that relationship, than our communion with him.

In fact, the one speaks of the other. They're not in competition. And I'm convinced this year is a year in which we must grow in our love for Jesus.

There's always a danger in leadership conferences, and in OM conferences in general, and in seminars and congresses on evangelism, that everything gets more complicated. Many a simple believer has gone to Bible college and seminary, I've seen it many, many times. A simple believer in love with Jesus, ready to go anywhere, ready to obey.

Four years in a little Greek and a little Hebrew, a little theology, a little Calvinism, a little Arminianism, a little eschatology, a little ideology all thrown together, and he's deader than a dodo when he gets his diploma. He doesn't know anything more about prayer than he does eating lightbulbs. My heart aches for our institutions.

I'll put the institutional aspect of OM into it. We're together. But my heart aches for more reality in prayer, more discipline in prayer, more Acts 1.14. Notice they all continued with one accord.

The women were there. Everybody was there. And, of course, this was in preparation for Pentecost.

Pentecost took place in chapter 2. The Holy Spirit came, like the blowing of a violent wind, the New International says. Came from heaven, filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. And it goes on to tell what God did at Pentecost. In the last part of that chapter, we have the results.

We have a description, which is very important. Daryl Brother Buck Singh calls this the four pillars of the Church. And we need, every one of us, these four pillars in our life.

Let's look at them in the last part, chapter 2, quickly because these things often get covered in other meetings. Verse 41, Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. Amazing.

I think it's so important to realize, as it says also in the last verse, the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved. We cannot force people into the Kingdom. The Lord has to add.

We must be faithful. We must pray. We must sow the seed.

We must speak forth. We are his witnesses. There is very little emphasis in the New Testament on soul winning.

You look for it. You can send me the references. There's far more emphasis on we are his witnesses.

I love to see church planting. We believe in church planting. But I want to tell you, if you try to plant a church where the Holy Spirit is not moving in power, you're going to become an ill man.

The Lord added to the Church such as should be saved. I believe it's important to keep that in perspective. We see these four pillars in the next verse.

And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine. That's the first pillar. I was reading a message on this by John Stott just the other day.

And he says that one of the keys to renewal is Bible reading and Bible study. That sounds typical John Stott. And it's typical God's Word.

Apostles' Doctrine. It's interesting that John Stott has taken six months off just to get alone with God, get in the Word, get away in his cottage in Wales and maybe one or two other places. Of course, he's one of those men that chose the single life.

Not too many of those today. They're looked down upon as some kind of weirdos who didn't quite find what life is all about. Well, I will tell you, if Pastor Lucas in St. Helens and John Stott and William MacDonald and a few other people like Buck Singh, he was, I believe, married before his conversion and lost his wife through that process.

If these people are strange, we sure could use a few more like them. God doesn't lead many that way, but he does lead some. They have a lot less entanglement.

And I'll tell you especially, because I'm in that category, if you're an extremist and you're never going to give enough time to family and you want to give out tracts all day and night, win souls day and night and do the work of God day and night, great. Just don't get married. The moment you get married, your life changes.

You have a new priority. The Word of God shows that in a number of places. Of course, a good way that I've already mentioned is if you give at least a few single years to the Lord, then maybe he'll lead later on.

We're all excited about Brother D'Vochram. We don't want to ever embarrass anybody. But Brother D'Vochram is reaching the 35 mark.

Only Graham Scott held out the 35 and a few others. And it does seem the Lord has found D'Vochram his life partner. I think that's a good thing to say anyway, because it saves a lot of other people investigations.

I believe it's just wonderful the way the Lord puts people together, especially in Operation Mobilization. The Apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, I think that also must refer to worship and in prayer. Will you get those four pillars in your life? Let me read that verse from the New International Translation, verse 42.

They devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Look at the results. Everyone was filled with awe.

Many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the Apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions, wow, extremism coming into the early church, and goods.

They gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together. Every day.

Tell me how often they meet together in the average church in the 20th century? Once a week. If you go to the prayer meeting, or an extra meeting, you're sort of considered among the super dedicated. And pastors will click their heels and jump for joy if they get even 20% into a prayer meeting.

Now it's come in a number of countries, especially the States, you can't even get people out on Sunday night. Anyway, why should you go to church on Sunday night? You can sit in your \$400 chair, push an electronic button, get vibration, and listen to any five different gospel preachers. The so-called best of the nation, the cream of the crop, just now with modern television you don't have to get out of the chair.

You sit back, one button's for Oral Roberts, next button for Rex Humbard, next button for Uzi Qudduzy, and who else? Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying God doesn't use those ministries. I especially am thrilled when unsaved people tune in to Rex Humbard and get saved, hallelujah.

But when God's people fail to gather for prayer, because you don't find many people weeping in front of their televisions. I'm sure there are some, especially those who can't get to church, who can't get to the prayer meeting. But none of this electronic church, none of this kind of thing, whether it's cassette tapes or whatever other paraphernalia, is a substitute for gathering together as a people of God, looking each other in the eye, loving one another, praying for one another, and engaging in intercession, breaking of bread.

No doubt they've tried breaking of bread through television. I can just imagine, all of you out there in television land, go into the kitchen and get some bread. We're going to have the breaking of bread.

There you sit, all alone in your little compartment, your little apartments that are getting like compartments, 16 security locks, hand grenades hanging ready for throwing. Not quite that bad yet. And you can break bread there in front of the television.

I don't know if that's happened yet. I'm not saying it necessarily again. People are bedridden and that's all they can do.

I'm sure the Lord could use that. I think you get the point. They gathered together every day.

They met together every day. They continued to meet. I'm not saying that in our society, in our situation, that is going to always be possible.

But can't God's people at least meet one other day in the week apart from Sunday? So, prayer was the heartbeat of the New Testament church. And we see their lives changing as they prayed together. Now they were living and they were thrown into somewhat of a community situation.

There's not enough scripture to sort of say, well, this is the only way you can live. So I don't have any argument with the preacher who comes along and says, well, look, they tried this, but they didn't. Some say they tried it and it didn't work.

I don't think there's enough proof of that. That one little verse they take out of chapter 6 to say this doesn't work, that's a bit of a stretch. But I think what I'm willing to accept is that in other situations, this exact thing, this exact thing was not necessary.

Expediency, reality, unselfishness, the spirit that we see here, and the results to varying degrees I believe is as biblical today as it was in the first century. And I believe until the church returns to at least to some degree to this kind of radical and unselfish discipleship, we are going to continue to be a sounding brass and a tingling symbol in many places of the world even if we tell the whole world about it through television. We need loving, caring, praising, worshiping, praying communities of believers.

That's what your OM team is supposed to be. You're not just an evangelistic team. You're a unit of praising, worshiping, caring, committed people.

And if you're a proper team leader, that's what you'll be leading, not just in evangelism, but you'll be leading in prayer, and in praise, and in commitment, and in caring, and all the rest. May the Lord have mercy on us in OM for our many failures. But he knows our hearts, and he knows this is the direction we want to go.

We spent two or three hours as leaders just talking about how we can be more faithful in caring for the people the Lord gives us in pastoral work, in counseling. And we felt terrible about our failures. I came out of that meeting feeling a little bit down, thinking of our many failures, though there was an emphasis on some of the victories as well.

And what an encouragement. I went back to my van, and the first letter I read was from a sister. I guess I wrote a letter to her after she made some kind of commitment, or after she spent a year on OM.

I can't remember. And she said, your letter was a blessing to me. It has proven to me that you're still concerned about us, even though we're no longer on Operation Mobilization.

Well we are. One of the things we talked about today is how we can be a help to all people who have been on OM for a while and are now in the transition. We're about to make a new proposition, something that we agree on, that in the future we're going to always make sure that we have contact with your local church or the people who initially prayed you out to be with us before you get back, to pray with them, to speak with them on the phone, and to make sure that when you're coming back somehow there's something there to come back to.

Because the transition from a movement like OM, especially if you've been out in India or on the ship or in the Middle East, back into your own hometown, your relatives, auntie and uncle, and 16 girls that have been waiting for you to come back so you can marry them, this can be a heavy experience, a difficult experience. For most, there's no girl waiting for them back there. Well we are concerned, and the pattern in the New Testament church was a pattern of concern.

So next to this basic principle of prayer, let us put the word concern. These people were concerned for one another. That's why they sold their possessions.

It wasn't some brand of political communism. It was compassion. It was concern.

Different situations make different demands. Are we ashamed in OM that one of the marks of our movement for many years was the continuous selling of possessions? Thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars of people's goods went up for sale. That was in the earliest days.

We never felt that we should boast about this, and to this day now, no one hardly knows what's happening. It still goes on. It's between individuals and God.

Can you imagine what would happen for world evangelism if people would be willing to sell even something? If they would start even somewhere? The evangelical church in America could have the greatest series of garage sales in the history of the United States. It could release tens of millions, hundreds, yep, hundreds of millions of dollars for world evangelism. Scripture.

When the Holy Spirit moves, practical things take place. If you think for a minute that when the Holy Spirit of God moves, the main result is noise, clapping, jumping up and down, or dancing, you're crazy. And that is no attack against those things.

But when the Holy Spirit moves in power, there may be some different kinds of motion, nothing wrong with a little clapping, hallelujah, but there'll be a lot more. Possessions will go up for sale, people will be cared for, souls will be saved, churches will be born, and the world will be evangelized. The Holy Ghost I read about in the book of Acts brings a holy go, and if you're not going somewhere for God, you barely know the Holy Ghost.

You know maybe some other spirit. Maybe you met him late in the night in a tree. You'd better ask him to depart.

Be filled with the Holy Spirit, a spirit of compassion, a spirit that gives the go to the gospel. How can we separate world evangelism from the fullness of the Holy Spirit? How can we put these things into two compartments? It's impossible if you read and study the book of Acts. Well, let's go on to chapter 3. Here in chapter 3, we find another little interesting principle when Peter says to this man who's asking for money, alms, his testimony in verse 6. I wonder how many of you have this testimony.

Peter is supposedly the first Pope. I think most of us don't exactly agree with that. But if he was the first Pope, he certainly has a different testimony than the present Pope.

The Vatican is one of the richest corporations in the entire world. I was sitting on a train. Some of you have heard this story, couldn't believe it.

A total atheist in charge of investments for the Vatican. They invest in everything. Arms for both sides of the war down in the Middle East.

Just unbelievable. Unbelievable. Peter's testimony was a little bit different.

Silver and gold have I none. But, such as I have, give I thee in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk. A lot of people would like that second ministry.

I've often wished and longed for a greater ministry in the area of healing. I've prayed for sick people. I've seen a few healed.

It's always discouraging when a few days later they get sick again. It's a subject that gets more mysterious as the years go by, but I don't give up praying for the sick. I was telling the Lord the other day, God, if it be your will, give me more grace to see people touched in healing.

Jesus heals. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. How in the world can you study the life of Jesus and not believe that he heals? But we overreact.

We get in our little groups and we hear about somebody that's extreme and so we overreact. And instead of finding a balanced healing ministry and avoiding the circus tactics and just doing as we can and as we see in the scriptures, we overreact and we don't have any prayer for the sick. It's ridiculous.

It's totally ridiculous. I had the joy of seeing part one, two, and three recently of Jesus of Nazareth on videotape. I just happened to have them with me.

I want to look at part four. And I must confess, of course, I'm emotional. The parts that excite me are, number one, John the Baptist, played by this very interesting actor whose name I've forgotten.

And the more interesting parts are when Jesus Christ heals the demoniac, the blind man. Let's face it, beloved, the most spectacular part of Jesus' ministry on this earth were the healings and the miracles. That's why some people try to do away with it all through some dispensational concoction.

I tell you, it's amazing what we will do with the Bible when there's something we don't understand or we don't like. Jesus heals! Now we're not Jesus. And our healing record, and all the people in the world that have ever prayed for sick people have never had a track record forgive the Americanism like Jesus.

And of course, we have a lot to learn, and I'm one of the strongest pushers of books like Affliction and books like Don't Waste Your Sorrow, and I believe very strongly in the other side of the story that there are times when we, as feeble human vessels, pray for people or they pray for themselves and they're not healed. We see in Hebrews chapter 11, some were delivered, some did not choose deliverance. So it's both.

But in this case, Peter had the testimony and he healed this man. A lot of people would like to do that, but how many people in the 20th century have that testimony? Silver and gold have I none. In fact, one of the

extremes of our generation in the affluent society is that people have twisted the concept of prayer so that now we can use prayer for our own prosperity.

One minute we're praying for someone to be healed, which is scriptural, and God does a miracle and God does something special. The next minute we're praying for God to give us a Cadillac and we're using the same phraseology and we consider it just as spiritual. And this extremism, prosperityism, heresy, has spread, especially across America, just like a cancer.

And people that don't have new cars and their business isn't making big money, they're almost feeling unspiritual, and many times supposedly they are. And we're told, why should you be some old dumb old Volkswagen Christian? You can be a Rolls-Royce Christian! Just speak a word! The name of the Lord! There it is! Comes in the door, Rolls-Royce. Peter made behind the wheel.

I am not saying, don't misunderstand, I am not saying God would never give a man a Rolls-Royce. I would have my doubts about it, but I wouldn't want to, you know. What I am saying is we can never turn that into a doctrine that all who are spiritual prosper financially.

That's what I'm saying. God has prospered America and Switzerland. God has prospered some German Christians and some Swedish Christians.

They will stand before God for what they do with what the Lord has given them. That's God's individual working in a nation and a life. And some of it's also the devil's working and it's very hard sometimes to figure out where it's coming from.

But it's not a doctrine. And praise God, just in case you think, some of you who don't understand some of these things, that I'm taking some type of hit at Charismatic Brothers and Sisters, because they have gone into this more than others. The largest Charismatic Publishing House in America has put out the strongest book against this.

And the Assembly of God, the biggest Pentecostal denomination in North America, has put out the strongest articles against this. I'd be happy to send you a reprint. So it has nothing to do necessarily with people being Pentecostal or Charismatic.

It's something beyond that. Peter said, silver and gold have I none. That which I have, I give.

Rise up and walk. Beloved, take the miraculous out of Christian living. Take the miraculous out of OM.

Take the miraculous out of the Word of God, New or Old Testament. And there is not much left. Ours is a supernatural faith.

Ours is a biblical faith. And for far too long, millions have been confused by dead orthodoxy that refuses to believe God for the miraculous, that refuses to believe that God can hear prayer for finance, that God can break into the Muslim world, and that God is the same God that fellowshiped with Moses on the mountain and that met Peter's heart cry when that man was raised up in Acts chapter 3. No, it's not going to all happen overnight. And in OM, especially as a movement committed to discipling people and to working with young Christians, and in the confusing age in which we live, there will always be things that may sound very good on paper and even may sound wonderful when we preach them, but it doesn't always work out that way living in Kabul, Afghanistan.

We'll be hearing some requests from Gordon about that later on. Well, let's move on. Let's move on to chapter 4 and just point out one of the other basic principles in the book of Acts in verse 12.

Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Isn't it amazing that in this early stage of the church there was this strong word concerning the lostness of men and the fact that there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ? What am I doing here? I used to struggle with that many times standing in the streets of India. I've had the joy of distributing hundreds and hundreds of thousands of tracts in India, and I would be standing there outside the station in Bombay.

Sometimes in an hour you could give out 2,000 tracts, and I thought, you know, is there something wrong with me? Can I be so narrow, so obnoxious to believe all these poor people, these beggars, and all these different people, the rich and the poor, they're all lost, and that this little leaf that I give out with the gospel and the message of Christ is their only hope? It's only normal as a human being to have struggles along that line. And this is where we must become deeply convinced that this is God's word, and there are times when, as it says in Proverbs, we should not lean to our own understanding. Don't be afraid of wrestling through this.

But there it is. That's one of many verses I would love to share. That's not my topic tonight.

Neither is there salvation in any other. I immediately hear John's gospel ringing in my ear. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No man cometh to the Father but by me. If that is not true, then Operation Mobilization is a mile off the track. We ought to all go into just finding fresh water and digging water wells in needy countries where there's drought, or feeding and starving, or join the cancer society, or anything, but attempt to give out a couple hundred million more pieces of Christian literature declaring this great message, attempting to preach this message to some of the most prejudiced people in the entire world.

This is a biblical principle. It's a principle that we find in the teachings of Jesus and that we find in the book of Acts. And I hope it's one of your principles.

Men are lost. We're soldiers. There's a real war.

And I hope that in these days, some will begin to live that way to a greater degree. I love to talk about Acts 431 because it's a great prayer meeting. When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

They spoke the word of God with boldness. Again, we find these people gathered in prayer. Many of these people must have been at Pentecost.

They experienced that baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And yet here we find them in Acts 431 being filled with the Holy Spirit. It indicates clearly that we need to be filled again and again with God's Holy Spirit.

And so they went forth, verse 33, with great power and gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. And here it comes again, those unpleasant verses. Neither was there any among them that lacked for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold

them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is being interpreted the son of consolation. We need such people. A Levite of the country of Cyprus.

Having lands, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. I hope that as we pray for finance tonight, we will pray specifically for that kind of thing to take place. I don't believe the world is going to be reached unless there are people willing to sacrifice in this way.

Why is it that the spirit of sacrifice is so often missing, not only from the church, but I feel often even in Operation Mobilization. The willingness to sacrifice, the willingness to go the extra mile, the willingness to do without, the willingness to discipline ourselves a little more for the sake of the gospel. Not for the sake of OM, not even for the sake of our financial crisis, but for the sake of the gospel.

My heart aches when I think of the Bible Society crying out for money to buy paper for the Word of God in Poland. There is a hunger for the Word of God in Poland like never before. And yet they don't have enough Bibles.

Why I would have thought these Christian millionaires and other wealthy people, upon receiving the first letter from the Bible Society asking for money, would just be broken and be sending more money in than they could ever use. They'd have to print Bibles for all the other countries as well. I happen to know that the Bible Society is constantly hindered from lack of funds.

Ken Taylor, the founder of Living Bible International, now also producing the Bible all over the world, constantly hindered from lack of funds. Scripture Gift Mission, constantly never have enough money. Pocket Testament League, never have enough money.

They set a goal in India, seven years ago, I don't think they got 10% of the goal yet. Where is the spirit of sacrifice in the 20th century? It concerns me, it concerns me. We see this in the book of Acts.

The other thing, however, I wanted to point out here, I think is more important, that part of the message of these men in the book of Acts was the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. I find that today we often preach the crucifixion and not the resurrection. We say, I preach Christ crucified, amen, no problem, but He is also risen.

Our Savior is risen. He's not on the cross. I don't like to see these pictures of Jesus Christ on the cross.

I'm not paranoid about it, it doesn't bother me in one sense. I know different people have different ideas. As long as they know He may be there on that picture, but He is not there.

In reality, He has risen. We serve a risen Savior. He's in the world today.

We need to preach the resurrection. Great power was upon the apostles. They gave witness of the resurrection.

The resurrection is also one of the strongest intellectual reasons for our faith. There was a man, I think his name was Morrison, went out to disprove the resurrection. He ended up writing a book proving the resurrection.

I hope that you will study the resurrection and realize that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Chapter 5, we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira, something I talk about in my little booklet, Pseudo-Discipleship, a message I gave at one of these conferences about 15 years ago. That book, Revolution of Love and Balance, if you don't have a copy, please take one free from the book table if you're willing to read it, at least until the copies run out.

I would like to get those messages out. We won't have time to always give them at every conference. We see something here in this chapter that's very, very important.

We see God's hatred for sin, especially the sin of hypocrisy. Their sin was not that they did not sell their lands. They had their choice whether to do that or not.

That's clearly brought out in the text. The sin was that they were giving a totally false impression. I don't believe God always judges even that same kind of sin in the exact same way in our day.

I believe there'd be a lot of people dead in the churches. I believe God just allowed this as a special event to somehow drive into our hearts and to give us an example that he hates sin, that sin will be judged, not always in the same way. Then mighty miracles were done at Jerusalem.

Their sin got dealt with in the camp of God, and there was another whole mighty move of the Spirit of God, and at the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were wrought among the people. Notice verse 14. And believers were the more added to the Lord.

That's good, isn't it? Change of vocabulary. One minute they're added to the church, the next minute they're added to the Lord. I'm sure it should be always both.

A multitude, both men and women. Then when there was a great persecution, they were thrown in a common prison, and that's another basic principle of the book of Acts and of spiritual leadership, a willingness to suffer for Christ. You don't have to figure out how you're going to do it, whether you're going to be able to endure it.

When I think about that, I just get very frightened. I think, Lord, I'm a coward, I'll never make it. But I'm willing.

And I believe that at the time, God will give grace. He will not give you grace tonight for being in prison. Tonight, he's going to give you grace simply to pray here.

You say, man, that's enough. I believe we must prepare for suffering. It may not come, we don't know.

There are some very strong verses, like all who live piously in Christ Jesus will suffer. There are a lot of illustrations, all of the book of Acts. People are suffering, people are being beaten, people are in jail.

Has this all gone? It hasn't gone in Russia, hasn't gone in China, hasn't gone in Afghanistan. The very fact that we're out of prison, the very fact that we have some means at our disposal, vehicles, literature, the very fact that we have our health and our freedom, I believe means that there is a greater responsibility on us to do something about the world situation. There may be a day when God puts you in prison and there's little you'll do but pray, that will be enough.

But we're not in that situation now. Let us take advantage of these great days in which we live. Let's take advantage of a fleet of three to four hundred vehicles that can move us from here across the world in a

month's time.

Let's take advantage of two miracle ships that can reach millions of souls with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why is O.M. limping in 1981? And we are limping. And I could show you a hundred letters to prove that we're limping.

And I could talk to you about a lot of sin in O.M. that will prove that we're limping. And a lot of murmuring and a lot of other things that are not right. We are limping as a movement.

Yes, God is using us. The Holy Spirit has not departed from us. But we are not nearly fulfilling what God would have us do.

I was reading a writer who said that the great sin of us in the western world is the sin of unpotentiality. And in O.M. we are failing to use the God-given potential that is upon us and in us by His Holy Spirit. And by all that He's given us in terms of vehicles and literature and money and headquarters and manpower.

Satan is so clever. He keeps people for 20 or 30 years from discovering their own spiritual gift. God has given you gifts.

Are you going to wait until it falls out of the roof, knocks you out at 60 years of age? Oh, well, I do have a gift to teach the Word of God after all. You think I can give my testimony? Two years later the guy's dead. Well, he discovered his spiritual gift.

Now when you're young, ask God to show you something of the gift and the potential He has given you. And by yielding to Him and by crucified living and by the fullness of the Holy Spirit, allow that gift to be used to touch the lives of those around you. To bring renewal to your church and blessing to this feeble movement that you're going to take part in this year.

You know one of the main reasons O.M.'s limping? Everybody comes in expecting to be ministered unto. This is the big thing. We hear it's a training work, so we think, well, we've just come and we're going to be trained.

And it's really, it almost gets to Malcolm Muggeridge's illustration of the liberals coming out of a pub at 11 o'clock at night, all leaning on each other. Nobody stands, they all fall over. Read that little leaflet, not to be ministered unto.

God has given most of you more already than many Christians have in years. And I believe, though we want to minister to you, that you're going to grow far more if you don't think in terms of what you can get, what you can give. Never from the age of 17 was I running around thinking of what I could get.

Do you know the main reason I went to Bible school? I wanted to witness for Christ in Chicago. I had a burden to turn Chicago upside down for Christ, and I found there was a Bible school there, and I figured I'd better get some Bible in the process. Admittedly, God doesn't lead everybody that way.

You know, I mean, when God sees someone who's half crazy, he uses a different strategy. But the reason I got so much out of those two years at Moody, that's when the work, in a sense, had any degree of birth. It just began before that, but most of the early growth took place then.

I believe one of the reasons is my heart was just wanting to give, wanting to minister, wanting to help you. I had so much yet to receive myself. I haven't got time to go down that road any longer.

I want us to just look over at chapter 6 very quickly, where we have this emphasis on disciples. Chapter 6, verse 1. In those days when the number of the disciples was multiplied. No matter how much I preach, shows the great influence I have.

No matter how much I preach against decisions, oh, Embers, run around all year getting decisions and writing about it. Well, at least we never give up. I don't believe that God has called us to run around gathering decisions for Christ.

We are to make disciples. And if we use the term decision, it should at least have clarification. We are not saying that we believe all these people are now converted because they made some little decision in some little meeting we had.

We don't find this. I don't believe in the New Testament. The number of disciples multiplied.

That doesn't mean we don't call on people to trust Christ, repent of sin, to stand or come forward. I'm not speaking against Billy Graham and the invitation. I think we need more invitations.

Maybe I'll give one tonight. Someone might get saved. Don't think it doesn't happen in OM leadership conferences.

But the decision is not enough. The fruit must come. The reality must come.

The revolution must come. And if it doesn't, nothing happened. Stillbirth.

Abortion. Call it whatever you want. Of course, when a person does make a decision or a profession of faith, we don't, you know, just lay some heavy negative thing on him.

We give him hope. We work with him. Pray with him.

And in time, it will be seen, hopefully, that he has been truly born again, become a true Christian, a believer, a disciple. I don't want people to go extreme on that. Some books do.

Condemning everybody who's using any kind of evangelism that they feel is superficial, I want to be the first one to acknowledge that some of the most glorious conversions I've ever seen were through superficial evangelism. And I just want to say to any of you who may be very strong against easy-believism, maybe you read the new leaflet we just published by William MacDonald, remember one thing. You may have your preferences to how the word should be preached, how people should be one to Christ, but no matter what, God is greater, and he can use some of the feeblest efforts.

God has used the four spiritual laws. God has used people who maybe had some wrong ideas, and I wouldn't agree with, but God has used them. If I didn't believe God could use us despite our mistakes and weaknesses and some of the wrong terminology and sometimes even the wrong theology, if I didn't believe God could still use us, I would really get depressed.

I don't think I could go on. God is greater. In verse 7, the word of God increased.

The number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem. Greatly and a great company of priests were obedient to the faith. And then there's Stephen out in the open air being martyred.

And I believe it is another basic New Testament and biblical principle that we ought to take the gospel out into the highways and the hedges and the streets. Some of you, this summer was the first time out into the streets. Great.

I love street evangelism. I love to stand outside Bromley South Station. And when you're older, people sometimes wonder even more what you're doing there and give out the word of God and talk to people about Christ.

And I get inspired when I read of Stephen being martyred, preaching in the open air. Some of you go to the ships and go to some of the other ministries are going to be able to get an open air ministry. That's exciting.

Many of the countries, unfortunately, we work in, that's not very positive. Low profile evangelism has many, many, many obstacles, but it also is effective. Philip is an example of that.

In chapter 8, notice how the believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. The Lord has his way of getting the missionaries out. Verse 4. Therefore, they were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word.

Preaching the word. We are not just called to distribute literature. I'm sure they would have done that if they had literature in that day.

They had a few manuscripts. But we are called to preach the word. It was in about the third year in O.M. of our birth that I became more and more convinced that preaching the word was, well, I believed at that time at least more important certainly than giving out literature.

Wesley said it was of equal importance. I won't argue that point. We need more preachers.

Would you be willing for the Spirit of God to give you a gift of ministering the word in public? Would you be willing to study the word of God more, to wait on God, to read, to be ready? There is a great need for men who can teach and preach the word of God. And one of the greatest needs today, and it's one of the greatest needs in O.M., are for people who can preach evangelistically. People who can preach the gospel to the lost.

And I want to testify as someone who preaches about 600 times a year that preaching to God's people is a Sunday school picnic next to preaching to the lost. I've preached to Muslims in Bombay. I've preached to atheists and agnostics.

I've preached, and still do, often to the lost. It's always more difficult than preaching to God's people. Preaching to God's people isn't always easy, don't get me wrong.

But I tell you, when you have people out there that are ready to spit on you, ready to cut you down, who can out-argue you, who have all kinds of prejudices, you're in something that is going to give you a few vibrations. You can ask Peter Maiden, he does some of this. You can ask Nigel Lee, he does some of this.

Mickey Walker has committed this. I am praying for 50 men in O.M. committed to preaching evangelism. We're never going to reach the world through just literature.

We're never going to reach the world through just personal work. We need anointed men who can stand in the university, or who can stand in the street and preach with power and see men saved. That's the way

God did it in the book of Acts, and He hasn't changed.

Some of you, as you wait upon God, as you experience the cross, as you let the Holy Spirit have greater preeminence in your life, you will find yourself preaching the gospel. You will find one of the most fulfilling, exciting, soul-stimulating ministries that any man or woman could ever be thrown into. Preaching Jesus Christ, calling men to repent, just as Stephen, just as Philip, just as these men who went out into the open air and all ended up in prison.

That can happen to you as well. You get the wonderful prison ministries. There is a neglect of evangelistic spirit anointed preaching in the church, and it is true in O.M. as well.

And even a number of our leaders, when we try to get them to preach an evangelistic message, they say, that's not my gift. I've been looking in my Bible to see, was this a special gift they had to have? It seems to me that most people who have a gift to speak to God's people have at least some gift, if not then grace, to also preach to the lost. And if we're not willing to do it, then a lot of people aren't going to hear the gospel.

Well, I could go on a long time, but I want to pray. That's what we've seen in the book of Acts. There are many other verses.

It would be here all night if we tried to get to them. Let's stand and sing together.

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