

God's Way Is Better

by Harold Luff

God's way is a three-part drama of creation, the fall, and redemption, and Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Duration: 53:29

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 1:1-2

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by addressing a conversation they had with someone who expressed their dislike for sermons that go on for an hour. The preacher humorously mentions that they won't be speaking for an hour. They then share a personal experience at a grocery store and use it as an analogy to introduce the idea of God's way being better. The preacher invites the audience to imagine being a child in a war-torn orphanage and receiving the good news of being adopted into a loving family. They explain that God's way unfolds in a three-part drama: creation, the fall, and redemption. The preacher briefly mentions the Bible as containing this drama and refers to Hebrews 1:1-2 as a starting point.

Transcript

Now, before I proceed tonight with the message, God's Way is Better, and I'll support this statement with excerpts from the book of Hebrews. But first of all, I want you to use your imagination. I'm going to invite you tonight to imagine that you are a boy or a girl back at the age of probably four or five, and you're living in an orphanage in a faraway land that is war-torn, and there's a famine.

And it's a very hard and difficult place to be. And then you're the recipient of good news. A worker comes along to you and says, I have good news for you.

There is a family from a faraway country that wants you to become a part of their family, that wants to adopt you into their family. And then she proceeds to give the pictures to show this family and all the good things that are in this land that is far away. Now, it would be a good thing if that little girl or that little boy took those pictures and began to look at this family and to begin to look at this nice house and to begin to look at all of these nice things in this nice place that seems so good that's far away.

And to just dream. To dream about it, of how it's going to be and what it's going to be like. But how sad it would be if that day came and that family showed up and they said to this little boy or this little girl, this orphan in this place that is war-torn and filled with famine and so many other wretched things, we are here

to take you to this place that's prepared for you.

We want you to come with us and to be a part of our family. And to enjoy and to experience and to enjoy all of these things that are provided for you. How sad it would be for that little boy or that little girl to say, no, I'm not going.

I prefer to stay here in my present conditions and just look at the pictures and dream. Just think of it for a moment tonight, then put it on the back burner, and I'll come back to it a little later in the message. God's Way.

God's Way unfolds in a three-part drama. I like to use the letters CFR. C for creation, F for the fall, and R for redemption.

This drama is contained in the Bible. And you can take the Bible, the complete Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you can find out God's story under these three headings. These three letters, CFR, creation, the fall, and redemption.

A three-part drama that unfolds on the stage of life that gives us the complete story that God wanted to communicate to us. And I'm just going to give you the trailer version tonight. I'm not going to give you the whole movie.

I'm not going to play the whole movie before you. The three scenes in this drama would take too long. I was in a boat with somebody just a little while ago, and in the course of conversation they teach along to me that they don't like preaching that goes into an hour.

And they tried to drown my cat, Poise. And so I took the hint, because the next time they might try to drown me. So I won't be an hour tonight.

Went to the grocery store, and the little girl that checked out our groceries this week, the fastest time I've ever seen groceries go through a checkout. She was just amazing. I couldn't keep up with her trying to put it in the bag.

I was glad it was only a few items. She would have had me just, you know, totally overwhelmed. So I'm going to take her lead tonight, and I'm going to sort of speed it up and get going.

Okay? But what I want you to see tonight is God's drama. The three-part drama of the creation, the fall, and the redemption. And for the sake of simplicity and expedience, let's look at Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 and the first part of verse 2, which we've already looked at tonight and I've read to you.

You can know it by memory by now. God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by the Son. Now you know that the Bible contains two parts.

The Old Testament and the New Testament. It talks about the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. About the written word in the Old Testament and the living word in the New Testament.

And then together they reveal to us God's way. Well, here in a very succinct statement, these words, the writer of the book of Hebrews, we have a picture of the Old Testament and of the New Testament. The Old Testament, God in sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.

That's what we see in the Old Testament. God speaking in many different ways through the prophets. But then as we come to the next statement, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.

That's the New Testament. In the Old Testament through the prophets and in many different ways, God spoke to the people. Giving His message for time and eternity.

Concerning His plan of redemption. And His entire plan that He has for creation. In the New Testament, He speaks to us through His Son.

Not so much the written word now, but now the living word. The focus is on the living word. On Jesus.

Augustine said the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed. And the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. And so together they give us the complete, the final message of God.

So C stands for creation. Now when it comes to creation, we can see in the Bible, in the word of God, the story of creation is found in the book of Genesis. And so also we can see in the word of God, in the Psalms, a picture of the way that it's supposed to be.

And the way that God intended for it to be. We go back to the book of Hebrews and what I shared from verse number 2. It makes reference to Jesus as being appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And in Genesis, we have the story of creation.

In Psalm number 8, let me share it with you. The psalmist records, Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth. You see, there was a time when everything was in harmony in the universe.

Until sin entered in. And broke that harmony and brought in discord. And you know how bad that sounds? When there's beautiful harmony and then somebody like me would tune in.

And there's nothing but discord. Well that's like sin. There was perfect harmony in the universe.

The angels sang together. All creation sang the praises of God. And then Satan stepped in and sin showed up.

And there was discord. Disharmony. And that's the way it's been since that time.

And will be until the time when once again, these words of the psalmist will become very real. How excellent is thy name, oh Lord, in all the earth. You see, God who made everything by His Son and for His Son, is going to restore everything to His Son.

And harmony will be restored again. And His name shall be excellent in all of the earth. That's God's plan.

That's what He's bringing to pass. And He says, Who set Your glory above the heavens? Out of the mouth of babes and infants, You have ordained strength because of Your enemies, that You may silence the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Your heavens and the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the Son of Man that You visit him? For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor.

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands. You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, even the beast of the field, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea that pass

through the paths of the sea. Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth.

I just noticed something that I never noticed before in this psalm. It begins with, Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth. And it ends with, Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth.

My friend, it began. Creation was a part of the excellency of the Lord, and of His name, and of His power. And it's going to end up the same way.

Oh Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth. And it must have been just amazing back there in the Garden of Eden. Everything to perfection.

And man was put in the Garden to rule, to have dominion. He was God's vice-regent. He was under God.

God was the supreme authority, and under Him He placed man, delegated the authority over this earth. To name the animals, and to name the creatures of the earth, and to care for the Garden. And there was no curse.

There was no pain. There was no sickness. And God was even as kind to make a helpmate for him, because He seen that man was alone, and it wasn't good.

Even though there were animals, even though there were trees, even though there were all kinds of things that existed, yet there was something that was missing. Man needed a helpmate. Man needed someone to be in relationship with, and to be in relationship with God.

You see, God is a relational God from the beginning. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then they made man in their own image, and then they decided a helpmate for man, which is woman, so that man could be in a right relationship with a woman, and they both could be in a right relationship with God.

And that's God's design. God wants us to be in relationship with the Trinity. He wants us as husbands and wives to be in relationship with each other, and in relationship with the Trinity.

And when the husband and the wife is in relationship with each other, and in a right relationship with God, the family is going to experience right relationships, and they're going to experience the blessing of God. Because that's what God intended from the very beginning. But we all know the story of the fall.

Genesis chapter 3, instead of God's way, they chose Satan's way. The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Now let's see how it got disrupted.

You see, it's not about women's lib or being sexist. It's about the authority of the Word of God. God put man in his place to be the spiritual head of the home.

God put man in a place of spiritual authority and leadership to be a covering for his wife and for his family. Now that's God's plan. It has nothing to do with one being better than the other, or one being greater than the other.

It has to do with God's plan. God's divine plan. God's way, which is better.

Okay? And in the garden we discover that Eve is in conversation with the serpent. Uh-huh. Where's Adam? Apparently, somehow he was able to isolate Eve from her covering.

From the spiritual authority. And so when Satan, through the serpent, began to speak, she made the mistake of listening to what he had to say. And what he had to say was, first of all, to cast doubt upon the Word of God.

Then he moved on to contradict the Word of God. And then he moved on to accuse God of ulterior motives. In other words, he's holding back on you.

There's something better that you can have for yourself, if you do it your way by listening to me. Because God is hiding it from you. And so, just like me over in the section where the chocolate was, she began to look at it.

And it looked good to the eye. And she saw that it was good for food. To the flesh.

And it was good to the pride of life. It will make me wise. And so now it's only here.

First mistake is to start listening to Satan. Get that tonight. Number one, when Satan begins to talk, don't listen.

Number two, her second mistake was, she began to look. And the third step, she reached out and she began to partake. Disobeyed the one thing that God insisted they obey, but gave them choice.

And immediately, she knew she had sinned. And she shared it with her husband. Now Harry had a chance.

He could have told her, you've done a terrible thing. You've stepped out under your covering. You've listened to Satan.

You have sinned. And now this wicked thing has come to pass, but I'm going to obey the word of God. Uh-uh.

He wasn't about to give her up. He wasn't about to give her up. He was ready to go down with her.

And so, because he couldn't give leadership, he couldn't stand up and fill the role that he was supposed to fill, he partook with her and they both sinned. And guess what happened? The fall. The fall.

Now you see, God will call us into accountability. Everything that He entrusts to us is to be used, managed for His kingdom, for His glory. To Adam He gave creation, the keeping of the garden.

Now something had gone awry. So He comes. When normally in the cool of the day they would walk with God and they'd talk with God and they'd have fellowship with God and they'd have fellowship with one another and everything was beautiful in its own way.

But now this wasn't the case. Guess what? God hadn't changed. God was still God.

The faithful God. He doesn't change. He's the unchangeable God.

But something has changed in all of nature. Something has changed in creation. Soon the animals would no longer be docile, would no longer be peaceful.

They'd be killing one another. Soon the beautiful plants would decay. Something tragic had happened.

God cried out, Adam, where art thou? Finally, Adam responded to the voice of God. He said, we hid ourselves. You see, that's how sin works.

When we commit sin, there is guilt. There is guilt. And when there is guilt, there is shame.

And when there is guilt and shame, we hide. And we try to find a covering. And that's what they did.

They tried to find a covering. And so God now is calling them to accountability. And they denied the responsibility that they had.

They would not take the responsibility for what they had done. And Adam took it up on himself to blame Eve. And Eve took it up on herself to blame the devil.

The devil made me do it. We still use that one today, even if Geraldine Jones is not around. The devil made me do it.

Or someone else made me do it. But I'm not taking the responsibility or the blame. And so man found himself separated from God.

Now, there is the need for redemption. And the Bible tells us the very purpose for which Jesus came. And every part of the Old Testament points forward to redemption.

It unfolds God's plan of redemption over such a long period of time. And in so many ways, you cannot miss it. And as the pastor said this morning, the pictures of the Old Testament, and the tabernacle, and then the temple, and then the furnishings of the temple, and the sacrifices, and you go from Genesis onward, you'll see pictures.

You'll see foreshadowing. You'll see types. As God is beginning to unfold over the ages, His plan of redemption.

And over and over and over again, He's speaking in sun-dried times, and in divers manners, unto our fathers by the prophets. His message, His Word. And they continue.

They continue. For a while they'll obey. They'll get on track.

And then they'll go back again. The vicious cycle continues. But it's all about redemption.

It's about God redeeming. And God's redeeming love to a people that were stiff-necked and would harden their hearts against God. But once they repented, God was forgiving.

We see it all throughout the Old Testament. And so, it comes to the point that God sends a second Adam. In His plan of redemption, God's agent for redemption is the second Adam.

In Genesis chapter 1, it tells us that in the beginning, God created. And then we see the picture of what happened to what God had created through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then when we come over to the New Testament and we get into the book of John, John chapter 1, it tells us, in the beginning was the Word.

And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And we beheld His glory as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. So now we see that in these last days, God has spoken unto us by His Son, the Lord Jesus, who is heir of all things, who made the world, who is the expressed image of the Father. Jesus.

He speaks to us through Jesus. You see, the New Testament records to us the coming into this world of God in the flesh. God the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Try to phantom that if you can tonight. Try to imagine that if you can tonight. God came into this world as a human being to complete redemption.

And His aim, His goal, His mission, if you would, is contained in Luke 19 and 10 where it says, He came to seek and to save that which was lost. Now the original rendering will interpret it this way. He came unto His own things.

When it says He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to seek and to save what had now been lost to Satan because the vice-regent who was to have dominion caved and legally Satan took it over.

God lost it. But now He's coming to redeem it. He's coming to redemption.

He came unto His own and His own received Him not but as many as received Him. To them gave He the power to become the sons of God. What I want you to see is here, He came unto His own things.

You see, not only did He come for us and to save us, but He came for His own things. He created the earth. The earth is His.

And He came to reclaim it. He came unto His own things. And notice, as far as creation is concerned, there are things in creation that recognized Him.

When Jesus spoke, nature responded in submission to Him. When He said, Peace be still, the storms ceased, the waves became calm, and the wind ceased. When He spoke, turned the water into wine, nature responded.

And what would take years to accomplish happened in an instant of time. They recognized the One who had made them. The One who had created all things by the word of His power.

And now when He spoke, He spoke with the same power and authority. And nature recognized who Jesus was. Not only nature, but in creation, as far as creatures is concerned, the animal kingdom had more wisdom and discernment than humankind.

And Jesus, when He was going to ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, sent His disciples out to get a colt, a foal of a donkey. And the scripture tells us that no man ever rode on it. No one had ever ridden.

This one wasn't broken in. This donkey was fresh. Jesus sat on it and it calmly trotted into Jerusalem because the animal recognized it was the creator of all things and did not rebel or resist Him, the Son of God.

But then when it came to man, it was a different story. And we hear it echoing out in the scriptures, Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! And the Jews said, Let His blood be upon us and upon our children. Wow! What a statement.

What a situation we're in in the world ever since. Man rejected God in the flesh. Man rejected God speaking in these last days by His Son, the Lord Jesus, by whom He had created all things and upheld all things by the word of His power.

But here's the good news tonight, people. But as many as received Him, to them gave He the power. To them gave He the authority to be called the sons of God.

If you've received Him tonight, if you've accepted Him tonight, you're a child of God. You're a son of God. You're sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise until the day of redemption.

You're stamped. And there's no way that the devil can make a claim upon you. You belong to him.

You have that authority to let him know that you're a child of God. That you are a son of God tonight. And so, we still struggle.

Even those of us that have accepted Him for who He is, the Son of God. Even those of us that have accepted God's plan of redemption up to this point where Jesus died, that we might be saved. Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.

After He had purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty. What was the joy that was before Him that He bring many sons to glory? And so even though we believe it's a good thing that God remains faithful, because it's so easy for us to become unfaithful. As we look at it tonight, we have this problem, this struggle.

We want to have our own way. We want to have our own way. We become like little children.

You can see the DNA of sin in a small child. I talked about a little earlier about when you do something wrong, then they hide. They shift the blame.

I got grandchildren now and the same thing was in my children when they were small. If they did something wrong, I didn't have to tell them. Their mother didn't have to tell them.

They knew they did something wrong and you knew too because they were hiding. Nobody had to tell them to hide. It was part of their instinct.

I've done wrong. Guilty. Shame.

Hide. And that's what they did. Until finally you catch them and say, okay, so what's this all about? Well, Mike made me do it.

Steve made me do it. Oh, so you are not responsible. Blaming.

Then there is always this thing about wanting our own way. And a child will always want their own way. Always kick and scream for their own way.

We are so much like children in the family of God. We want our own way. And seriously tonight, as I come to the conclusion of this message, I want you to get this.

In my opinion, one of the worst things a human being is capable of doing once they become a son of God and he reveals his will for his or her life is to reject it. Is to reject it. When you accept Jesus as your Savior and you begin to discover your gifts that God has given to you and you begin to discover what His will is

for your life and His plan and His purpose, one of the worst things instead of accepting God's way which is better is to choose to go your own way.

I was talking about this with a friend just a little while ago. And the way that they put it was like this. It's almost like being under a curse when you get to know God and you know what God wants from you and what God's will is for your life and you don't do it.

It's almost like a curse because you never can be happy. You never can be satisfied. And then on the other side of it is if you accept you have to become the object of reproach.

Satan will be out to destroy you on every turn, on every corner. And so, if you don't do it you're not satisfied and if you do it in obedience to God you're in a constant battle and you've got to live above the attacks of the enemy and so it's hard. No one said it was being easy.

It says God's way is better. It didn't say it was easier. And this is the predicament that the children of the Hebrew Christians had gotten themselves into.

There's no escape when we reject the new and accept the old. That's made clear in the book of Hebrews. From reading Hebrews we learned the audience were ethnically Jewish people who had professed Jesus as their promised Messiah but they were under strong temptation to abandon Jesus and return to Judaism.

You see, they had come out to the sound of the Gospel and to the voice of God who had spoken in these last days by His Son, the Lord Jesus. They accepted Him as their Passover Lamb and the sacrifice for their sins. They had moved into the experience of the Spirit of God, into the fullness of a new covenant and they were enjoying the blessings of God.

But then it began to get hard. It began to become difficult. And now they wanted to abandon Jesus.

I'm not saying religion. And I'm not saying all of Christianity. I'm saying they wanted to abandon Jesus.

Judaism was recognized by Rome as a legitimate religion. And in the early years of the Christian movement mainly Jewish Christians enjoyed the protection because Rome viewed them as a sect of Judaism. So here it was.

In the earlier part of their experience as Christians there was an element of protection for the Jewish Christians because Rome recognized Judaism as a legitimate religion by now and so that Christianity that the Jews had embraced they sort of looked at as being a sect of Judaism so they just let it go. But now at this point in time the writing of Hebrews the Christian movement was viewed as a religion of its own. Therefore both Rome and Judaism persecuted them for different reasons.

They no longer came under the protection of Rome and they were being persecuted by their own people, Judaism the religion and the religious people of the day. And so the temptation was to go back to Judaism. If they could drop Jesus and stop following Jesus they would find legal protection.

If they just leave Jesus out of the picture and go back to the pictures that they had received and continue with Judaism then they wouldn't be persecuted by the Jewish religious people. So they had a strong temptation to go back and to bolster, to strengthen or let me say reason or rationalize because that's what we do when we want to give up the standard that's what we do when we want to obey what Jesus says we

begin to rationalize and we begin to support our temptation strengthened by the fact that the Old Testament Judaism had biblical warrant. It was Paul who inspired the Old Testament and who instituted the Old Testament system of worship with the temple and the priest and the sacrifices that we had heard about this morning.

So I mean after all God brought in the system God brought in the sacrifices God brought in the temple God brought in the altar God brought in the ark God did all this He instituted all this In times past He spoke unto our fathers by the prophets in many diverse ways and He instituted all of this so what's the big deal? What's the big deal about going back and practicing a little bit of that to get legal protection and not be persecuted for following Jesus? How could it be wrong to return to a way of worshiping God that was biblical and that would make their lives easier? And that's the operative word, friend. To make their lives easier. You see, what's the reason tonight why many Christians will not totally sell out to Jesus? What's the reason tonight that they won't give all to Him? All to Him in surrender.

I surrender all. What's the reason? Because they want their lives to be easier. They want not to be pointed out.

Not to become an object of ridicule or scorn. And so they say well it's okay that we don't have to but when we feel like it we can go to church. Well the Bible doesn't mean the same today.

This is the 21st century. We can be cool and do what we like. But we still go to church when we feel like it.

And we'll go through some motions in the worship. But I mean, you know, this God thing, Jesus, is not going to be everything. He's going to be Sunday, some Sundays when the weather's not good.

Whatever's left over we'll just offer to Him. Well it's a form of religion. This religion, that religion.

What's the big deal? What was the big deal? To go back to Judaism was to reject God's Messiah. And the new phase of God's kingdom that He inaugurated through the death and resurrection. Instead of reverting to Judaism they must go forward with Jesus and be willing to be persecuted just as Jesus was to go outside the camp and bear the reproach.

You see, there's no going back once you encounter Jesus. There is no going back once you step into the new covenant. There is no going back when you hear the voice of God in this last days who has spoken unto us by His Son, the Lord Jesus who came in the flesh and went to the cross and died for our sins and rose again for our justification and is coming again for our glorification and in the meantime has given the Holy Spirit for our sanctification.

A lot of people want to hold on to the justification and say I'm justified by faith so therefore the grace of God covers me and I can do what I like as long as I believe that there's going to be a glorification. Let's get past the sanctification set apart to be holy. That's old fashioned.

That's old time. That's not the way it is anymore. But that's the way it is my friend.

Because that's God's way. And God's way is better. So tonight my admonition to you is don't give up.

Don't give up. Die. Don't give up but rather die.

Jesus set the example in the Garden of Gethsemane. The human nature. He cries out in agony as He's crushed.

It's interesting. He's in the Garden of Gethsemane. He's in the place where the olives are crushed to bring out the oil.

Here the Son of God is being crushed under the burden the weight of what's before Him. The sins of the whole world. And He says, if it be possible take this cup from Me.

Nevertheless, not My will but your will be done. That's the crushing experience. When we get to that point that we want to give up that we want to quit that we can't go on and we cry out take it from Me.

And then we said, but not My will. My will is to quit, to give up but your will be done which is to bring me through this in your supernatural strength as I die. There's no way out.

Only death. And so Jesus left the Garden, went through His trial then went to the cross and He died. But thank God He rose again.

He rose again. You see death is the bridge that brings you over to resurrection territory. You cannot get there without death.

You can be over here and you'll be so much wanting to do God's will and listen to His voice and walk in obedience but your will will resist it. And it's only when you say not My will but your will be done that He'll show you the way of death. And the only way to get over there to victory is to travel the bridge of death.

You must die so that the resurrection power of the living Christ can take control and give you the victory. You can't do it in your own strength. There's no self-help.

There is no other solution. It's death. And tonight the cross is the instrument of death.

We're taking the blood out of our hymn books. We're taking the message of the cross out of our Bibles. We're going back to just a form of religion that makes our life easier.

That's the way of the religious world today but it's not the way of the church. It's not the way of the bride of Christ. It's not the way of the sons of God.

Jesus in Matthew 16 24 said to His disciples, if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. The cross is the instrument of death. Jesus left the garden in obedience to the will of the Father.

He went to the cross and He died before He could rise again in mighty power to reclaim, to redeem all that had been lost. To redeem creation and creation groans tonight. Groans for the day of the redemption that God had designed and even our hearts cry out tonight.

Even so, Lord Jesus let us come because we know, we know tonight that the end is in sight. He's about to reclaim all things unto Himself. He won the victory on the cross.

He rose triumphant from the grave. It's a done deal. It's just working itself out in the third part of the drama which is coming towards its conclusion.

You're soon going to hear this mighty applause. The church is going to be raptured and the world is going to go through the tribulation. Then King Jesus will come back to earth again.

He shall reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. There will be a thousand years of peace upon this earth. Satan will rise up in rebellion and some will rise with him.

But then he'll be taken and he will be cast out and we will discover that the whole of Adam's race that has been redeemed and accepted the blood of Jesus and Jesus as Lord will reign forever and ever with Him. And His name shall be excellent in all the earth. The time will come again when all of creation and all of the universe will be in harmony and Jesus will be upon the throne.

That's the way that it's going to be. The women on that Easter morning got up before it was even daylight to begin the winding trail up to the tomb. What were they expecting? A dead body.

But what devotion. What faithfulness to Jesus that even when in their hearts they thought that all that they were going to was a tomb where there was a dead body and they were going to give Him the spices and the things that were appropriate for His burial. Not even the men wanted to go to the graveyard in the dark.

They didn't want to be walking the trail to the tomb in the dark. They let the women do it. The women went.

But when they got there they got a surprise. Because when the sun came up, the sun was already up. He was resurrected.

Imagine if they had to quit. Imagine if they got discouraged and had to given up altogether and say it's too hard. Why are we even going? He's been in the grave.

His body is there. Why should we walk that trail and go to a grave and give the burial that Jesus should have? But because of their devotion, because of their faithfulness, they went and they became the first ones to be able to spread the message of the resurrection. He is not here, but He is risen as He had said.

What a blessed privilege to take the words of Jesus and to begin to proclaim them. He's alive! He's alive! He's alive! Is He alive tonight, saints? Is He alive in your heart tonight? Is Jesus really alive in your life tonight? Well, if He's alive, you need to take the cross, the instrument of death, and follow Him. Don't quit.

Take up the cross. Let's go back. Let's go back to that faraway land tonight.

That orphanage, that orphan. Let's go back. War torn.

There's famine. There's so many dark things. Such a hopeless state.

Such a helpless state. You and I are that orphan tonight. You and I are that orphan tonight.

The good news. The good news has come to us from a faraway place. God, in these last days, has spoken unto us by His Son, the Lord Jesus, by whom He made all things.

And there's good news from that three-part drama of creation to fall and redemption. The good news is that we can be adopted into a family. And we can be a part of another culture.

And we can be a part of another land where there is freedom. We can enjoy wonderful things that we can only imagine. But we've got to accept what was provided for us by no goodness of ourselves or no merit of our own.

But we have been called. We have been chosen. All we need to do is accept it.

How sad to say I'd rather stay with the pictures and just dream of how it could be. And so many Christians are like that. They renege at the cross and they say, I'll stay with the pictures and dream of how it could be.

But I'm not taking up that cross. It's too hard. I want an easier life.

Religion. Give a little bit of semblance of what we were used to. And we'll just get by.

And we'll dream of how it could be. How sad. But for the boy or the girl that accepts the invitation, they become a part of a brand new family with new privileges.

They begin to experience new gifts and blessings that they could only imagine before, but now they are reality. But it's still not going to be easy. You've got to adapt to a new culture.

There's got to be changes in the language. There's got to be changes in the lifestyle. There's got to be changes in adaptation to the weather.

It gets cold in Fort McMurray. Really cold. We're not in the tropics.

There's all kinds of things that present challenges. But the thing is, we can overcome and have a better life. Are you prepared to take up the cross as the worship team comes back tonight? I'll close with this poem.

Worship team, please. My admonition in closing tonight is don't quit. Die.

Take up the instrument of death and follow Jesus. And death will become the bridge to victory. You can stand on resurrection territory in victory tonight.

If you take up the cross and follow Him. When things go wrong and they sometimes will. When the road you're trudging seems all uphill.

When the funds are low and the debts are high and you want to smile but you have to sigh. When care is pressing you down a bit rest if you must but don't you quit. Life is square with its twists and turns as every one of us sometimes learns.

Many a failure turns about. When we might have won if we stuck it out. Don't give up though the pace seems slow.

You may succeed with another blow. Success is failure. Turn inside out.

The silver tint of the clouds of doubt. You never can tell how close you are. It may be near when it seems so far.

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