

Genesis 6 v 3

by J. Douglas Macmillan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the church's obedience and the consequences of disobedience, highlighting the need for repentance and revival.

Duration: 58:15

Scripture: Genesis 6:3, Genesis 6:8, Mark 6:20, John 1:11, Romans 1:24-28

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the state of western civilization and the need for revival or judgment from God. He emphasizes that God's spirit strives with mankind, seeking to vindicate righteousness and teach the consequences of sin. The speaker references the story of Cain and his descendants as an example of the ungodly line that shaped civilization. He concludes by expressing the anticipation and importance of the final meeting and the need for individuals to have certainty in their faith.

Transcript

Now I would like you to turn with me to God's word this evening, to the Old Testament scriptures and to the book of Genesis and to chapter 6 and let us read verse 3, from which I want to take the words of my text this evening. Genesis 6 and verse 3, And the Lord, the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

And especially we shall focus attention on these words, My spirit shall not always strive with man. Now we've come to the last meeting of this series. And the last meeting, I suppose for every one of us has come very quickly.

For some of us, it seemed to be hastening along very rapidly. That came home to me last night when our teacher mentioned that we were on the second last day of our conference. The last meeting, we arrived here, I suppose some of us, on Saturday, some of us on Monday.

We were looking forward, looking ahead to the whole week of gathering ourselves under the preached word of God. We knew that we were coming to a place that was kind of dangerous. And yet a place of great privilege.

The place where God could touch our lives and touch our lives again. And that we might, in his mercy, leave here with great certitude, whose we are and whom we serve. All of us, I suppose, had different

feelings.

And now the last meeting has come. You know, that's very like life. We anticipate, when we look ahead for a week of meetings like this, we anticipate all sorts of things.

And the final meeting seems a long way away. I came into Aberystwyth quite happily on Monday night. Friday night seemed a long way away.

And yet it has come about very quickly. And life is like that. We look forward and we anticipate the weeks and the months and the years drawing out.

And then, just like this conference, it will come to a close. That's why I feel this meeting is a very serious affair for every one of us. Just as life itself has a very solemn and serious aspect.

You see, if you've been under the preaching of God's word, as we have been in these days, then you're not leaving these meetings as you came to them. The preaching of God's word has done either of two things to you and to me. The preaching of God's word has been to you either a saver of life unto life or a saver of death unto death.

You will either have been blessed and touched and perhaps broken by God. You will have been hardened in your mind and in your heart. Hardened so that you're now more defiantly set in your ways against the speaking of God.

More hardened in your opposition to him. And more set and determined in your enmity than you have ever been before. You will not leave this place the same person you came to it.

The word either a saver of life or a saver of death. Only you can tell just now in this moment which it is. It's not enough, let me say this very clearly, it is not enough to have understood the preaching.

And we have had preaching here every morning and every evening of this week which has been very easy to understand. It is not enough to have understood the preaching. It's much.

But it is not enough. It is not enough to have enjoyed the preaching. And you have enjoyed the preaching.

Even those of you who are without God and without Christ and without hope and who are on the road to a lost detail, you have been enjoying the preaching of God's word this week. But let me say it is not enough to have enjoyed the preaching. It's not enough to have understood the teaching.

And it's not enough to have enjoyed the preaching. God help you if you're lost tonight and you've enjoyed the preaching of the gospel. Nor is it enough to have been moved by the preaching.

And many of you, as I was, many of you have been moved by the preaching. Some of you have even felt tears surge into your eyes. And you felt your heart say, oh yes God, that's it.

And you're still unsaved. It is not enough to have understood the preaching. It is not enough to have enjoyed it.

It is not enough to have been moved by it. It is not enough my friend, unless it has brought you again as a lost sinner into the pierced hands of Jesus Christ and taken every other hope away from you. Now all that I've been saying so far, all that is to say that what you've been doing this week, whether you have been

conscious of it or not, what you have been doing this week carries danger with it.

Danger of what? Danger of doing death's fight to the Holy Spirit of God. Danger of trampling underfoot the precious blood of Christ that was shed for the remission of the sins of many. Danger of taking God's word and casting it back in God's face.

That's why I want to say to you, be careful. God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

If he sow to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption. And if he sow to the Spirit, he shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. Be careful.

If you leave this conference, and if you leave Aberystwyth without Christ, after the preaching you have heard, you have absolutely no right to leave it with any peace of mind or peace of heart. Far less have you got any right to leave it happily and saying, what a lovely time we had. And among all the people of God there, and under that preaching, wasn't Mr. Hyam, wasn't he a nice preacher? Wasn't he a moving preacher? He's even got a sense of humor.

Yes, and the John Blanchard, it was great on Wednesday night. His sermon was so clear. He's got a sense of humor too.

I enjoyed the meetings. You have no right to be leaving this place having enjoyed the word of God if you're a lost soul. No right at all.

It will stay with you to torment you through the undying ages of eternity. And you'll remember not the things that made you smile, but the solemnities that made you feel after God, and yet left you unregenerate and unconverted and lost and going to a dark and godless eternity. You've had no right to enjoy the preaching that should have been the instrument of saving your soul.

Why is it dangerous? Because God says this, my spirit shall not always die as of men. That makes gospel hearing the most solemn thing that you will ever do. You may not be conscious of it tonight.

May God make me conscious of it as I preach to you. May God make you conscious as you listen that you will never do anything which reaches into eternity as the hearing of the gospel does. As you hear, my friend, so you will stand before God on the day of judgment.

Will you hear and live, or will you hear and die more desperately than the death, the spiritual death which is yours now? Eternal issues have been handled from this pulpit, and they've been handled in a solemn and a serious and a masterly way. More than that, not only have eternal issues been handled, but the voice of the eternal has been speaking and has been heard, and the urges now obey. Why? Because my spirit shall not always die with man.

I want to come closer to your text. I want to take just a few moments to put it into its context. It's early in Genesis, and it's the early generation of humanity, but you know, for that generation, it is late.

It is toward evening. The judgment of God as a cloud hangs over them and is moving towards them because God is determining in His mind, I will destroy man from the earth. It's very like another generation.

It's very like our generation that we have been hearing about from Mr. Haim this week. What did he say this morning? We're here, and we're nice, and we're cozy, and there are so many of us, and Abel Isvith probably does not even know that we're here. Genesis chapter 6 tells us the generations that are spoken of in Genesis 4 and 5 is a generation writing for the judgment of God.

Let me just remind you that Genesis chapter 4 introduces us to the beginnings of civilization. It introduces us to a man called Cain. You know who he was, the slayer of his brother.

It tells us of the descendants who came from Cain, the line of Cain. Genesis chapter 4 speaks out on that, and it tells us how civilization in very great economy of words, but absolutely expressive, tells us how they became a civilized people. They were musical.

They could sing. They were artificers. They could make things with their hands.

Genesis chapter 4 tells us something else about the line that descended from Cain, the man who was thrust out from God to be a wanderer on the earth, and the land of Nod just means the place, the earth of wandering. Genesis 4 tells us that the line of Cain is really the seed of the serpent. It is the ungodly line.

It's interesting that they are the ones who should shape and mold civilization. When they put it like this, they had nothing else to live for. Materialistic in their outlook, they had to make the best of the life they now had.

And let me say this, my friend. If you're without God, then make the best of this life, because it's the only time you'll ever have. In Genesis 5, in fact, before Genesis 5, we're introduced to a second line.

Adam knew his wife again, verse 25, and she bared a son and called his name Seth. Here's the introduction of another line in the human race. And it is after Seth is named and his birth is placed, it is given to us that we read this, then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.

That tells us what kind of race we're going to be reading about in chapter 5. The translation could be a little better. Then men began to worship the name of Jehovah. He was known as Jehovah from the very beginning.

He wasn't introduced as Jehovah only to Moses. Moses knew him as Jehovah, and he tells us that in the days of Seth and his line. Then we go on through chapter 5, and chapter 5 is a history of our line that is different.

Not this time the line of Cain, but the line of Seth. The world split into two definite streams from the very outset. The godly and the ungodly.

It hasn't changed much. And I think that the godly were the way the godly always have been. They had a lot to learn from the ungodly when it comes to the materialistic things of this world.

But among them are great names. We don't have time to stop just now and deal with them. And then chapter 6 comes in.

Do you see what happens in chapter 6? Let's read at the beginning. It came to pass when men began to multiply in the face of the earth. And daughters were born unto them.

This wasn't the first birth of daughters because they couldn't have been multiplying had there not been daughters before that. But there's something special that's been drawn to our attention here. That the sons of God.

Now these are not angels. This is not angels coming down and marrying the daughters of men. The angels of God said Jesus.

What did he say about them? They neither marry nor are given in marriage. Nor are they the ancient pantheon of gods. These are the godly line of Seth.

I want to put this very quickly. What do we have here? We have simply this. We have a church in disobedience.

And he uses I think a very powerful thing to illustrate the heart of the disobedience. Men will marry ungodly women and bring ungodliness into their home. And men will still do that.

The sons of God. The children of God. The redeemed of Christ.

And they'll cut across his covenant. For he says his covenant is from generation to generation unto his children's children. He'll bless them.

And he gives them obligations. One of the obligations is be ye not unequally yoked together. How can you expect an ungodly woman to bring up a godly child for you? You can't.

What are godly men doing here? What is the church of Christ in the Old Testament here doing? They are choosing their women because of pretty faces and shapely forms. I'll say one commentator could say. Young men.

Godliness in your girlfriend that she's converted and regenerate and walks with God is far more important than a pretty face or a nice figure. If you get that good and well, God's throwing the extras in for you. And all you have to do is look at a Christian congregation and you see that God's very generous with his extras, isn't he? I sometimes thought as I, this is just a by the way, as I minister to the Lord's people at the Lord's table, I sometimes have to feel like this.

My, how beautiful godly women are. Film stars on the patron. When their faces shine with Christ.

The beauty of holiness. Look for that, young men. Well, this is what happened.

They disobeyed. What did our disobedient church lead to? Do you know what it led to? Do you know what a disobedient church always leads to? It led to this. A church, disobedient, civilization in decay.

You are the salt of the earth. And if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? It won't. It won't be salted at all.

It will become corrupt and decay. And as the church of God in Western civilization has become over the last 100 years disobedient, so Western civilization is now under tremendous threat. There are those, and they are not Christians, I'm not talking about Christians, but there are those, there are those men, scientists and philosophers and thinkers and historians who believe that Western civilization has gone beyond the point of no return.

And humanly speaking it has. Go on, I can't do it all. Go on when you go home and read this chapter.

Read of the things that made God turn his face away from those that he had made in his own likeness and image. And you'll be reading, you'll be reading a very fair blueprint of the present state of Western civilization. Church disobedience, civilization in decay, society crumbling, anarchism, lawlessness, violence, wickedness, ungodliness.

You can write that over it all. And our legislators are beginning to be afraid that we will not for very much longer be able to impose law in the way that we've been able to do for the last thousand years almost. And through all this, through this, God was still speaking, but he was warning.

And he was saying, my spirit shall not always thine with mine. Look at verses four and five, just let's read them. There were giants, and this is a moral rather than a physical connotation.

There were giants in the earth in those days and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men and they bared children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. It's a pity that the authorized version really obscures rather than brings out the meaning of the Hebrew. They were notorious.

They were monsters of iniquity. They were tyrants. That's how Martin Luther translated it.

The children that were born of unhallowed unions became monsters of iniquity. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination, the purposes and desires really, every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only, listen to it, evil continually. You watch television? Do you read your newspapers? Do you listen to the world around you? Do you walk along the streets at half past ten at night? Do you not feel this throbbing into your mind? The thoughts of men are only evil continually.

Six, he repented God. He grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man.

I'm going to drown him, he said. Do you wonder? Do you know this? Just over a year ago, for the first time, on a Sunday afternoon, going to a big preach and evening service in our church in Govan on the south side of Glasgow, for the first time in almost thirty years of Christian experience, I prayed as I went to church, Oh God, visit them with judgment. There had been a football match in Ibrox, which was just beside the church, on a Sunday afternoon.

And the sights I saw as I drove down the street made me say, Oh God, the only thing that will ever bring them and me to our senses is a visitation of judgment. I said to myself, when I went round one roundabout, I said, Dear me, there was, there was bad as the beasts. And then I realized the defamation of what I was saying and thinking.

I had worked with animals all my life, and animals would not stoop to what these men and women were doing in the streets of one of our cities on a Sabbath afternoon. Remember, the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Just one sight, two men dragging a woman who was so drunk she couldn't stand, and dragging her as if she meant absolutely nothing at all to them.

You see, what on earth can we do with a generation like this? How can we turn them? And I felt we can't. God must deal with western civilization. God must deal with you and with me in either of only two ways.

My friend, you must visit us with the revival we've been hearing about all week, the power of the Holy Ghost that would fill our lips to hear the gospel. Or he must visit us with the kind of visitation that this generation was to come to know. If revival doesn't come, then the only remedy left to God is judgment.

My spirit shall always strive with man. Let's look very quickly at the words now in a more close way. First of all, look at the text and see the fact that it embraces, and it's a very simple fact.

It is this that the Spirit of God does strive with men. You say, how? How did he strive with these men? Well, he strove with them through other men. Here's one of them, Adam.

Adam was alive when Noah's father was born. Lamech would have known Adam. The generation in which Noah was born still had the witness and the testimony they had all Adam wished to convey to them of God's dealing with the children of men.

You know this, I didn't realize that. Adam lived for 912 years. He was very close to the generation that God deluged with judgment in 1656.

They are the witness of an age dominated by the spirit and influence of Adam. God didn't leave them at that. They had also the living testimony of a man who walked so closely with God that at last he wasn't seen a man at all, Enoch.

Enoch walked with God, and he was not the way Paul did, only Moshe. I live yet, not I. Enoch could have said that too, but Christ lives in me. Enoch, they had not only the testimony of his godly life and his godly walk, but Jude tells us they had the testimony of his preaching and his prophesying.

If you want to listen to a preacher, listen to him. Here's Enoch preaching to a generation writing for judgment. Listen to him.

He says, behold, he's like John the Baptist, behold, he says, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his saints. The Lord is coming with ten thousands of his saints. Ah, but he didn't stop there.

Is he coming to bless? Is he coming to revive? Is he coming to quicken into life? And I'm sure if ever there was a man that prayed for revival, Enoch was that man. Listen to him. Behold, he says, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment.

On who? To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. Here's a preacher for you. A man who didn't fear their faces, and he told them what was coming, and at last God took him away.

Just about halfway between creation and the ultimate judgment of the flood, God removed Enoch from the scene. But there was Methuselah. And Methuselah was the longest living of them all.

Nine hundred and sixty-nine. Is that right? Nine hundred and sixty. He was an old man.

Do you know when God took away Methuselah? He may well have been the last of the godly line of Seth. Do you know when God took him away? In the year that the flood came. He might well have lived to be over a thousand had God not ripened the place for judgment.

Now I'm not saying that he was taken away in the judgment. I don't believe for a minute that he was. He was taken away before because the saints will be caught up.

The saints will not come under the judgment of God. Now it's all there before us. How was God speaking? He was speaking through Adam.

He was speaking through Enoch. He was speaking through Noah. Noah was just a joiner I think.

But he was something else. He was a preacher of righteousness according to Peter. The New Testament tells us that.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness. Whenever there was a generation that had witnesses, what godliness was, what preaching was, it was this generation that the flood came on. Let me say this, if ever there was a thousand, two hundred people who had the privilege of preaching, it's this one thousand, two hundred among us tonight.

If ever you've had the opportunity of closing with Christ, walking into full, free, eternal salvation, you've had it this weekend, this week. I love to forget I'm not preaching on a Sabbath. You've had the opportunity.

But opportunity breeds responsibility, obligation, duty. God commandeth all men everywhere to repent. God commands you to repent tonight.

Perhaps you're saying, can I? Am I allowed to? That's not the question at all. Will you obey God? For God commands you. Doesn't matter whether you're young or old.

God commands you to repent and to believe the gospel and to be saved. Doesn't matter whether you're young or old. God commands you to repent and to believe the gospel and to be saved.

How long was Noah preaching? He was preaching through the days that God determined they should hear the voice of his spirit. Come back to the text for a minute. It was just the day before yesterday that I suddenly asked myself, why on earth is the term 120 years mentioned here? Does it mean, and I'd always thought in my simplicity, I'd always thought that it meant that after the flood, man's age would be adjusted downwards.

He would live to 120 years. I can even remember looking for the time when it was readjusted to three score years and ten. Never found it.

No wonder it's not there. Because that's not what it's about, this 120 years. Listen to the text again.

The Lord said, my spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh. The NIV says mortal. It's not really a good translation.

That he also is flesh, a moral connotation. He is the failure, the sense of flesh in the New Testament, the way Paul uses it. The spirit, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

And with the commingling of the godly and the ungodly, God said, even those on whom I pour my grace are none better than the children of Cain. Ah, but then do you see what he says? Yet, he says, yet his days. What does he mean his days? Go on to verse four.

There were giants in the earth in those days. He is talking of a specific time. Yet his days shall be 120 years.

Isn't God gracious? He was determining to wipe them out. He was speaking to them by his spirit. And yet he says, I'll give them 120 years longer.

My spirit will not always strive with man, but he will for another 120 years. He will strive with these men as long as Noah is building the ark. Do you know this? If you are in here tonight and unconverted in Christmas, if you are in the annex and you are not converted, if you are in the gallery or down on the floor, if you are nine or ten or twenty or eighteen or eighty.

If you are unconverted tonight, let me say this to you, there is not one of you to whom God will give so long a time for repentance. None of us will get 120 years. And that was what he gave this godless generation.

120 years. Why? Just because he is what he is. What does the Bible say? God is longsuffering and slow to wrath and plenteous in mercy.

That's why he left Adam and Enoch and Noah among this generation for so long. And of course we can paint the picture, can't we? Did you read Verses? Oh, look at Verses. I once heard the doctor, Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, preaching from Ephesians on the word but.

Well, here it is here. I was very tempted this morning, but I suddenly realized I am not a Martyn Lloyd-Jones. God says, you see Verse 7, I will destroy.

It repents me. But, but what? But Noah, here is one of the great butts of the grace of God. It's maybe the first one, I haven't checked.

But Noah, but Noah what? But Noah was good? No. But Noah read his Bible, I suppose he did, but that's not what it says. Noah found grace in the eyes of God out of a whole generation and then he got the instructions to build the ark.

Now if the preacher of righteousness, you and I can imagine the 120 years poor Noah had. And he did, second period, tells us that Noah preached to his generation. But you know what it says? Says that he preached.

God, although he preached, his preaching was not unto the salvation of any but his own family. You know why? They understood not. They had no ear for God.

And they had no heart for God. They mocked the preacher of righteousness. Imagine, old Noah, what's he doing? Oh, he's building a boat.

Boat? Where's he going to get a sea for him? How's he going to float it? What size is it? And they tell him, some boat. Who's he taking with him? Oh, who would go with him? The man's you know. Wasn't today that they started saying, oh yes, he's a bit screwy, you know, poor soul.

They should be locked up. They started with Noah. Through 120 years, there was nothing there to float Noah's boat.

We understand that there wasn't even rain. There was nothing but the gentle dew of heaven. And then of course it happened.

It began to rain. Bible says the rain came down and the fountains of the deep were broken up. What was happening? God was coming at last.

He was vindicating 120 years of faithful righteous preaching. He was vindicating his own character. He was safeguarding the inviolability of his own eternal throne.

He was teaching mankind for every age to come that sin will meet with judgment and righteous judgment. What happened? God gave them up. Let me read to you just some quotations from the epistle to the Romans.

Romans chapter 1. Just the other day, a little phrase began to beat in on my mind. Let me just remind you of the context. Romans 1, verse 18.

He's been talking about the gospel. He's not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of God unto salvation. And then he says, The just shall live by faith for the wrath of God is revealed.

It's not that the wrath of God will be revealed or is going to be revealed. The wrath of God has been revealed. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

And on he goes through a terrible list till you see verse 24. Wherefore God also gave them up. Go on to verse 26.

For this cause, God gave them up. Go on to verse 28. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over.

He let them have their own way. That's it. Very simply.

My friend, God may well let you have your own way. And if God lets you have your own way, it will be a godless and a Christless way all through life and all through eternity. Yes, all through eternity as well.

If God just leaves you to yourself, my spirit shall not always strive with man. But there's something else too, you see. It's not only the fact that it does strive with man.

That's the fact that the text embraces. There's something else. There's this truth that it exposes to us very bluntly.

That God's spirit will not always strive with man. God will cease. Let me just quote some text to verify that.

There's the one that was in the readings of Mr. Hyle here. Nicaea. Do you remember it? But they vexed his holy spirit, wherefore he was turned to be their enemy.

God help you when he becomes your enemy. You're his enemy if you're unconverted. And your only hope is that he is not yet yours.

But they vexed his holy spirit and he was turned to be their enemy. That's one of them. There's also this, Acts 7.51. Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.

That's what this generation did. They resisted the striving of God. You know you should be converted.

Are you here tonight, a minister's son, minister's daughter? You're living an ungodly and unconverted life. You're sometimes afraid that your father or your mother might find out. You're even afraid that neighbors or the church will find out how you're living.

In case you bring shame on them. You're afraid. But God is here.

And you should be far more afraid of God than you are of a father or a mother. Are you here and you're brought up under a praying father or a mother? Are you here and you've got a converted husband? Or a converted wife? Or a converted father? Converted daughter? And you're unconverted yourself. God has given you a witness and a testimony.

And you're abusing it. Misusing the privileges of God. What can you expect but judgment? Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.

Stop resisting the Holy Ghost. There's another text here. First Thessalonians 3, 19.

Quench not the Holy Spirit. You know what the word quench means? Pour water on a fire. You'll go out of this church perhaps this evening unconverted.

And you'll begin to pour water on everything that you've heard and everything God has said to you. And you'll quench it and dampen it down. God may cease to strive with you tonight forevermore.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Ephesians 4. Jesus said this. Therefore I say unto you that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto you, unto men for my name's sake.

But the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven. What is Jesus saying? He is saying that there is a sin for which there is no forgiveness in this life or in the life to come. That that sin has something to do with the Holy Spirit and his work on God's behalf in your soul.

Be not deceived. God is not mocked. I could illustrate this in many ways.

I could tell you of how from between the years 1966 and 74 I saw many young people converted. And I saw many young people moved unto the preaching of the gospel. God speaking to them.

And I was hopeful that they would be among the numbers who were being converted. And today the best that I can see of many of them, of these, that particular group is this. That they are far away from God.

That leads me on to this. The danger that our text emphasizes. What is our danger? It is very simply this.

That God will cease striving with us. Professor Finlayson, our professor of systematic theology in our college when I was a student used to say this to us. He used to say, gentlemen, the worst thing that can ever happen to any man or woman under heaven is this.

That God should never speak to them. Perhaps you have gone through your life happy and easy. That you have been untroubled about eternal and spiritual things.

Perhaps you have been congratulating yourselves that while others wept under the gospel and prayed and sought a savior. You could stay calm through it all. Perhaps you even thought you were more balanced and equitable and rational than they were.

Do you know what it is? It is not you, my friend. It is God. And the man to whom God is silent is doomed and damned.

Let me say that again. If God is not speaking to you, it is not a sign for comfort. It is a sign for the very opposite.

It is a sign that you may well be doomed and damned for eternity. There was one man to whom Jesus had nothing to say. Herod.

Herod, the man who had heard the Baptist and chopped his preacher down to death. And he had heard all that he was ever to hear of the mercy and the grace and the love of God in Christ from John the Baptist. And then he had the Son of God in human nature himself before him.

And he had desired, it said, he had desired for a long time to see Jesus. He may even have said to himself sometimes when he was sobering up from his bout, he may have said, oh, if I could only hear the Nazarene himself, he might achieve what John never achieved for my soul. And John had achieved something with Herod.

Do you know what it says in Mark chapter 6 about Herod under the preaching of John? It says this, that he heard him gladly. That he did many things. Perhaps he wept.

Perhaps he prayed. Perhaps he read the scriptures as you have never done. Then his long-standing wish was realized.

And he had the Nazarene in front of him. And he asked him many questions. Who is God? What is God? We can imagine them.

What am I? What's my life really all about? What is the balance between time and eternity? Is there such a place as hell? And he answered him, never a word. Why? Because God had said all that he had to say through the preacher he had sent to him. John had committed spiritual suicide.

He had cleaved not only the Baptist's head from his body, he had cleaved his soul from the living God forever. You be careful what you are doing with the gospel and the preaching of the gospel. My spirit shall not always... Let me speak to Christians here tonight.

Let me speak to those of you who are living as if you could live with the world in one hand and the Christ of God in the other. You can't. Let the man take up his cross and follow me.

Listen, he cannot be my disciple. Are you here and you believe you know what conversion is? You believe you're a Christian and you're living in known sin? Then let me warn you, you have absolutely no ground for comfort. There is only one token for any one of us that we are in Christ and that is that tonight we are cleaving to God with purpose of heart and that we have forsaken all manner of iniquity and sin.

That's God's standard. Without holiness no man shall see God. A backslider should be very careful because there's not one backslider under heaven that can prove he is a backslider rather than an apostate until he's graciously brought back to the feet of the master.

You're living in permitted sin and Christians do. Immorality, adultery, filthy language, dirty thoughts, living for this world. Do you know what I was reading this morning? Do you know what I was reading this morning? That the friendship of the world is enmity to God.

The world you're holding on to is the world that crucified you, Christ. Let me say again that if you're a backslider, if you're not walking with God, don't leave this conference until you are because you'll not know whether you're leaving it as a backslider or as an apostate who will be lost forevermore. It wasn't without very good reason that David the psalmist prayed, Oh God, take not thy Holy Spirit from me and restore me the joy of thy salvation.

He couldn't have the joy of his salvation until he was back in the place of God's blessing. Let me say to somebody in here tonight, I don't know who you are. You're miserable in your Christian life and the only way to have your Christian life restored to one of joy and peace and assurance in the Holy Ghost is this.

Take your sin to Christ. Ask him to restore the Holy Spirit to you. My spirit shall not always join with mine.

You know what God said? Some of his people of Israel, Ephraim is joined to his idols. Let him alone. The warning, this text extends.

Ours is a limited opportunity. As Mr. Haim was driving home to us again and again, we do not know just how limited that opportunity may be. A preacher last night said, we don't know how many who were here last year in the closing service when Vernon Haim was preaching on the great judgment day.

We don't know how many who were listening that night, young, perhaps as young as you boys in the gallery there. We don't know how many of them are now in eternity. And we do not know how many of this great congregation tonight will be in eternity before the conference begins next year.

Ours is a limited opportunity. We have only one life in which to get a soul saved from a lost hell. And if we don't use it, we will be without excuse.

One life. As the tree falleth, so shall it lie. Ours is a limited opportunity, then ours should be an honest attempt.

Don't play about with God. For God hasn't and doesn't play about with you. Ours is a privilege, but it's a fleeting privilege.

Let me sum it up like this. Tonight holds your destiny, my destiny. It holds it in God's mercy and grace very near and close to us.

This may be the moment, I don't know. You don't know either. This may be God's moment of total decision for you.

Let's not be afraid of the word decision because Billy Graham uses it. It's not his alone. It's a biblical word.

Choose ye this day whom you will serve. And if you don't decide for Christ. Let me use Billy Graham's phraseology.

It's not his anyway, it's mine too. If you don't decide for Christ. If you don't allow God.

If you quench your spirit. God may never speak to you again. You may never be in such a gathering as this.

You may never hear a sermon like this. Maybe you're saying, I hope I never will. You may never come so close to God's only savior.

And yet be lost. There comes a time. We know not when.

A place we know not where. That seals the destiny of men. For glory or despair.

And that time could be tonight. And that place could be this church. In Aberystwyth this evening.

God is very near us. And God is very gracious. Jesus is saying.

By His Holy Spirit striving within us. All these thoughts and tumults and turmoils. The thinking.

Through it all the Spirit's striving with us. Jesus is saying this. Come unto me.

And I will give you rest. And you'll find rest nowhere else. And remember that He is saying to.

My spirit. Shall not always strive with man.

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