

The First Step in Getting

by Jack Hyles

Jack Hyles emphasizes the importance of spiritual thirst as the first step in receiving from God and effectively living the Christian life.

Duration: 58:48

Scripture: Psalm 1:1

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of stewardship and unselfishness in the Christian life. He reveals the secret to being a good Christian, which is learning how to receive from God and then giving away what has been received. The preacher emphasizes the need for repetition in preaching, as the average Christian needs to be reminded of basic principles such as prayer and soul-winning. He also highlights the importance of learning to give and be unselfish, but emphasizes that one must first learn how to receive from God in order to give abundantly.

Transcript

to Jack Hiles, and Bill Harvey said his willingness to be repetitious concerning the obvious. His willingness to be repetitious concerning the obvious. Young preachers, I only have twenty subjects on which I preach here at First Baptist Church.

Only twenty. I use different scriptures, and different thoughts, and different stories. But I only have twenty subjects, and the longer you stay here, the more you will find that what I preach is wrapped up in a few basics, and not something complicated.

The average Christian needs to have it repeated over and over again that he ought to pray. The average Christian needs to hear soul winning stressed again and again and again. Stewardship, unselfishness.

These and sixteen or seventeen other subjects engulf all of my preaching here at First Baptist Church. The obvious. The obvious.

The obvious. Tonight I want to talk to you about the first step in getting things from God. Many of our folks who have seen me, have seen me preach this sermon.

I'm going to do it again tonight, for those of you who have never seen it. I'm going to show you, without saying one word, in two little steps, I'm going to show you the great secret to the Christian life. Now, I've

done this here before, and I'll do it many times again.

I'm going to show you how to be a good Christian without saying one word. Now you watch carefully, and I'm going to show you what it really is to be a good Christian. Now you watch.

That's it. That's it. When you learn how to get things from God, and you learn to give them away when you get them, you're a good Christian.

That's what it's all about. Isn't that simple? Isn't that simple? Think all you learn just for a dollar tonight. I mean, that's the secret.

Now listen to me. I want to give. God knows that's true.

I want to give. But I can't give till I learn to get. And so, if I can give, if I'm able to give, I must learn to get.

And so if I am to give you what I want to give to you, and if I'm to serve others as I want to serve them, if I am to give to others and satisfy their needs, I must learn how to get from God. Now listen, as I've said so often, here's your trouble. Here's the way you do it.

You skinflip. You tightwad. No, that's not the purpose of the Christian life.

The purpose of the Christian life is in losing your own self in order to help somebody else. Now if you can learn to give. But a lot of folks learn to give.

You learn to be unselfish. And what you have, you share. But you never learn to get anything.

Good night. How can you give a lot if you don't get a lot? And so tonight I want to give you, talk to you about how to get. I'm glad.

Young preachers and students, when I went to college back in 1884, when I went to college, I didn't, I was not a great student. I worked hard. I made B's and occasionally an A and occasionally a C. But I was basically a B minus kind of a student.

I mean, I had to work to do that. My IQ is only 185 and I had a hard time. And so I, but I learned a couple of things.

And one thing I learned, I learned as a young preacher how to get things from God. Now that's the truth. And I've never had any great serious problem getting things from God.

Now, God has also taught me not to keep them. And literally, literally millions of dollars have gone through these hands. I said, gone through these hands.

I said, gone through, not stuck to these hands. I'm not, I guess I'm not worth any more than I was 25 years ago. But, uh, I have literally prayed down millions of dollars and other things.

And now how do you get it? How do you say, Hey preacher, I've come to the right place tonight. I want to find out how to get things. First thing you do is you give them away when you get them.

And then you got room for more. Don't you see? And so, but, but the first step to getting things from God is to get thirsty, to get thirsty. What am I saying? To want it, to want it.

I will pour water on him who's what? Thirsty. I'll pour floods upon the dry ground. Let him that is thirsty take to the water of life freely.

And the thirsty can be satisfied. Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it, saith the Lord. Now I'm saying that if you're going to get things from God, you've got to get to a place to where you more than anything else in this world, you want to get something from God.

That's the way you get salvation. Isaiah 55 and verse one, very, very familiar passage concerning salvation. And the prophet said, Oh, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.

And he that hath no money, come ye buy and eat. Come, ye come, buy wine and milk without money, without price. How do you get salvation? The first thing you get, you thirst for salvation.

Revelation 22, 17 says, If any man thirst, let him come. Any man thirst, let him come. Listen to me.

If you ever get thirsty to be saved, you're just about to get saved. The reason you don't want to get saved, you don't want to be saved. You enjoy your sins too much.

You will not come to God. If anybody gets thirsty for salvation, the Bible says you can be saved. Now don't misunderstand me.

There is a line across which you can go. There's a line by us unseen, a place I know not where, that marks the destiny of man between eternity and despair. There is a time when a person can cross a line after he's rejected Christ so long until he will never be able to be saved after he crosses that line.

Genesis, young people, Genesis 6, 3 says, My spirit will not always strive with man. Isaiah 53, 6 says, Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Romans chapter 1, 3 times says, God gave them up or God gave them over.

I'm saying that if you continue to reject Christ, you unsaved people, you folks who are not saved, you keep saying no to Christ, you keep hearing the gospel and saying no, I'm saying there will come a day, no doubt there will come a day when you will cross a line and you cannot be saved. I mean the Spirit of God won't strive anymore and you cannot be saved and you won't ever get thirsty. Don't forget this, ladies and gentlemen, that nobody can be saved unless the Spirit of God convicts, draws, and regenerates him.

And when the Holy Spirit of God decides he's through with you, he'll tiptoe on and the heavenly dove will take his flight and you will not have a chance to be saved. You will have crossed a line and you're going toward that line now. Oh, you say, well, I'm just young.

I've got 40 years to live. If you do live 40 years, you may come to the line of crossing the deadline before you die and you're marching toward that deadline and someday you'll cross over and you will never have a chance to be saved in this world or the world to come. Why? Because you've gone too far.

But, if you tonight have the slightest desire to be saved, if something, if your heart beats in your breast a little faster, when I say, you want to go to heaven, do you want to escape the fires of hell, do you want to know that your sins are forgiven, if there's the lightest little increase of your pulse, if there's the slightest desire in your soul, that means you're thirsty. That means you have a little thirst and you can be saved as long as you have thirst. I will pour water on him who is thirsty.

I'll pour floods upon the dry ground. A lady wrote me a letter. I was in Garland, Texas, preaching in a revival meeting at my own church.

On a Saturday night, I preached on the unpardonable sin. The fact that there's a place, a line, that you can cross, and once you cross that line, you can never be saved. A lady came down to see me.

She said, I had written you a letter. I want to talk to you. I said, alright.

She said, Pastor, how is your my favorite preacher? She said, I have my clock radio turned on to you. You come on at 6.05 every morning on KSKY in Dallas. I hear you every morning.

I would miss you for the world. Your voice is the first voice that I hear every morning at 6.05. I keep my clock radio turned. I wake up to your voice.

But she said, I have crossed the line. There was a day when I wanted to be saved. There was a day when I'd hear a preacher preach on hell and I'd be frightened.

And I'd say, oh my God, don't let me go to hell. There was a day when I would hear a preacher preach on heaven. And he'd talk about the glories of the city of God.

A city which hath foundations, whose builder and ruler is God, with gates of pearl and streets of gold. Where no sickness or darkness or pain or suffering or sin or sorrow ever enter. And I'd say, I want to go to heaven.

I'd like to go to heaven. A preacher would preach on forgiveness of sin. And I'd say, oh, what a wonderful thing it'd be to have my sins forgiven.

But she said, Pastor Hiles, I came to a place in my life where I said no for the last time. And all of a sudden, hell didn't bother me. And heaven didn't entice me.

Forgiveness didn't appeal to me. Oh, she said, I'd like to hear you preach. You're my favorite preacher.

But she said, Pastor Hiles, I couldn't be saved if I wanted to. There's no hunger. There's no thirst.

And let me warn you, my precious friend. When you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, a loving witness comes to tell you to be saved. Or a faithful gospel preacher warns you and begs you to come to Christ.

It's not a light thing for you to say no. For the day will come when you'll cross the line over which you cannot return. And if you want to be saved, you couldn't, but the hunger is gone.

The thirst is gone. The conviction is gone. The desire is gone.

And though you still live and breathe, you couldn't be saved if you wanted to. So tonight, if you're thirsty, I mean if there's a slight little touch in your heart that says, I'd like to be saved, while that little spirit of thirst is still there, you respond to the call of God and receive the Savior before you cross the line. Oh, everyone that thirsteth, let him come and take.

He that is a thirst, let him take of the water of life freely. But let's hasten on to the main part of the sermon tonight. There's a second thirsting, and that's thirsting for the power of God.

That's what the Bible's talking about when it mentions in Isaiah 44, 3, I will pour water on him who's thirsty. I'll pour floods upon the dry ground. Then over in John chapter 7, I read, In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, notice, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. You notice that? What does a river do? A river takes in, and a river gives out. If any man come, out of his belly shall flow what? A river! Not a lake, a river! What does it mean? It means the kind of Christian that has the Spirit of God is always receiving and always giving.

Did you ever want to move some furniture or a bunch of chairs or some sandbags to build a dam for a flood that's coming or something? And you form the line like that? And it's exactly what the Bible is saying. He that believeth on me and has the Spirit of God, out of his belly shall flow the kind of spirit that receives and gives. Receives! Gives! Receives! Gives! Now, it goes on to say, This spake he of the Spirit, of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.

For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. What's the Spirit called here? Water. And what are we to do? To thirst after the power of God.

Listen to me. People oftentimes ask this question, and I don't say it because I feel like I'm a big shot. I'm not a big shot.

And I know more than anybody else knows that I in no way am a big shot. But people oftentimes... Well, that's one reason why folks want to know what makes me tick. You know, you can hear Lee Robertson preach and know why he's a big preacher.

You can hear John Rhys preach and know he's smart enough to be a big preacher. You hear me and you wonder what in the world makes a guy like me tick. And so folks often ask, What's the secret that Jack has? I'll tell you what it is.

As a young preacher, I got thirsty. I got thirsty. I got so thirsty for the power of God, I thought I'd die.

And I was thirsting. I wanted God in my ministry. I wanted the power of God upon my preaching.

I wanted the Spirit of God to move when I preached, and men to tremble when I preached on hell, and men to come to God when I preached on salvation, and men to get right with God when I preached on sin. I hungered and thirsted for God to work when I preached. And I can recall as a kid preacher, I went to the library of the East Texas Baptist College, and I got all the books of the lives of great men that I could get.

I can recall getting a book out of the library, a book by Savonarola, about Savonarola, the great man who I think was ever bit as great as Martin Luther. And had he been born a few years different, I think he would have been the great leader of the Reformation. But I read about Savonarola, the great preacher of the 16th century, and I read how the Savonarola one day went in his pulpit to preach, and he wouldn't preach.

He refused to get up and preach. And somebody said, Pastor, why don't you preach? And Savonarola said, I'm not going to preach until the power of God comes on me. I'm not going to do it until the power of God comes on me.

And he sat there for one hour and two hours while the people waited anxiously in the audience. He sat there for the third hour and the fourth hour, and after five hours, the biographer said that the Spirit of God came on him, and with power and conviction, the man of God stood to speak. Maybe not as eloquent as somebody else, but power was there! And I read about Savonarola, and in my little heart, 21 years of age and 22 years of age, just a kid preacher, my soul began to thirst, Dr. Billings, for something like Savonarola had.

I'd go to my little pulpit, and I knew nothing was happening much, and I got thirsty. Oh, I wanted the power of Savonarola. I wanted what he had.

I went back to the library, and I read biographies. I think every young preacher ought to read the biography of every great man. Every great man he can get his hands on.

And I read the biography of John Wesley. And in the biography of Wesley, I began to read about one night, I think it was in March of 1838 it was, Wesley and 60 other preachers went to pray together, and they prayed all night. And Wesley said that after we had prayed until 3 o'clock in the morning, he said at 3 o'clock in the morning, something happened to me.

I didn't know what it was. But he said I was never the same after that. I believe I was filled for the first time with the Holy Spirit of God.

And oh, as a young preacher, my heart began to get thirsty. And I said, whatever Wesley had, I want that. I want that.

I want it. And I read the life of Moody. And Moody told his biography how that he was in New York City on Wall Street, walking down through that concrete jungle, that little tunnel of a street, that little narrow street there where the finances of our nation are determined.

And he was raising some money for his revival meetings. And all of a sudden, two little ladies in his church were praying for him. And they'd come by and say, Mr. Moody, we're praying that you'll get something you don't have now.

He said, I don't need anything else. I've got all I need. And they said, you'll know later.

And he said that day in New York City, oh, the power of God came on him. And he had to look up to God as God struck him on his face and said, oh God, withhold your power until I can get a loan. He went to a friend's home and borrowed his bedroom.

And there lay before God until the power of God came on him. And oh, I read about that as a kid preacher and I began to thirst. And I said, that's what I want.

I want it. I don't care if I get happy. I don't care if it makes me feel good.

I don't care if I talk in tongues or not. I don't care if the electricity coming out of my spine and hollering, Hey! or not. I don't care about that.

I just want men to be convicted while I preach. And I want the power of God on my ministry. And I began to thirst.

And I found myself, Dr. Billings, walking in the woods of East Texas out of the pine trees. I'd walk at night. And I'd say, dear God, do you have it for Jack Hiles? I'm just a country East Texas preacher.

But you gave Moody something and you gave Wesley something and you gave Savonarola something. And I began to thirst and hunger and thirst for what they had. And I read the lives of other great men.

George Whitfield said he was filled with the Spirit of God the night he was ordained to preach. And Christmas Evans said he was filled with the Spirit of God riding on his horse one day and he had to get off his horse and fall on his face. And God gave him the power of the Holy Spirit.

And oh, I began to say, I want it. I want it. And somebody gave me a record or a tape or let me hear it, of Uncle Bud Robinson.

He was in Nazarene. And Uncle Bud Robinson was talking about on that tape how he was filled with the Holy Spirit and he had a southern drawl and he was a great old preacher. And he said something like this.

He said, I was in Atlanta, Georgia. And I was down in the city of Atlanta in a hospital. And to some of you folks, this sounds like real good talking.

You folks down in Alabama and Kentucky. And I was in the hospital in Atlanta, Georgia and said the Holy Father walked in the hospital to visit. And the Holy Father came to me and the fellow on this side of me, the Holy Father said, Hey, you've got the sins.

You want to confess to me? Oh, he said, you've never heard such sins. The Holy Father doesn't confess to the Holy Father. Oh, the Holy Father could confess some to him too, by the way.

And he said the Holy Father went over to the fellow on the other side of me and said, Any sins you want to confess to me? Oh, the sins that man doesn't confess to the Holy Father. And then the Holy Father came to me and said, Mr. Robinson, any sins you want to confess to me? And I said, I'd like to confess one thing to you, Holy Father. And the Holy Father said, go ahead and confess.

And I said, I want to confess it right in your ear. And so he put his ear down close to my mouth. I said, the Holy Father, I want your ear right on my mouth so I can confess it to you real good.

And the Holy Father said, Okay, confess away. And he put his ear on my mouth. And I opened my mouth and said, Glory to God! I'm saved and sanctified and full of the Holy Ghost and on my way to glory! He said, last time I saw the Holy Father, he was running down the hall of a hospital.

And I began to read about that old saint of God, Uncle Bud Robinson. He didn't use very good English, but he knew God, and he walked with God. And I'd read about Uncle Bud Robinson and I began to thirst.

And I'd say, I want what he had. And I read that the life of Biddy Bray, the old carnage coal miner, oh, if there's anybody I admire, it's Biddy Bray. He wasn't an ordained preacher, but the Holy Ghost came on him.

What a powerful man of God he was. It is said that Biddy Bray shouted everywhere he went. And somebody said, Biddy, you shouldn't shout all the time.

Keep your mouth shut. He said, if I shut my mouth, my feet would shout. Every time my right foot hits the ground, it says, Amen! When my left foot hits the ground, it says, Glory to God! And somebody said,

Biddy, said, if you die, somebody said, Biddy, you're about to die.

You're going to die soon. He said, Glory to God! I'll be in heaven with Jesus. And somebody said, what if you don't go to heaven? He said, I'll just shout all the way to hell.

I'm saved and full of the Holy Spirit. And I'll just shout and I'll get down to hell and I'll just praise the Lord. I'll say, Praise the Lord! I'm in hell, but I'm still born again.

I'm still saved. And look at all the prospects I've got to work on. And the devil will come up to me and say, you can't shout like that down here.

And I'll say, well, if it's okay with you, I'll just soon get transferred to hell. And I'll just shout all the way to heaven. Glory to God! I read about Biddy Bray and the power of God that came on that man.

And I said, dear God, do you have that for Middle East Texas country preachers like you had for Biddy Bray, the Cornish coal miner? And like you had for Uncle Bud Robinson? And like you had for Moody and Wesley and Sunday and Finney and Cartwright and Savonarola and Martin Luther and John Calvin? Do you have the same thing you gave to Moody and Billy Sunday? Billy Sunday, Ma Sunday said that every sermon Biddy preached, his Bible was open to Isaiah 61.1. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel. It doesn't matter what the sermon was. His Bible was always open to Isaiah 61.1. And I can recall, Dr. Billings, I'd walk and I'd say, God, I'm thirsty.

Oh, I'm thirsty. I want that power. And I can recall we had a lady in our church named Mrs. Jim Ford.

And Mrs. Ford used to love to pray. She's a Nazarene lady, by the way. She joined our church because I happen to have more Nazarene blood than her Nazarene pastor had.

And so she joined our church and she used to pray all night and she used to shout and get happy. And I can recall on Saturday night walking up and down the little pine thicket trails of East Texas and I'd say, Dear God, I'm so thirsty. I want what Moody got.

I want what Biddy Sunday had. I want what Savonarola had. I want what John Wesley had.

I want what these men of God had. And one blessed day, I think I got it. You know why? Because I was thirsty.

I was thirsty. I will pour water on him who is thirsty. Again and again the Scripture says it.

For example, listen. As a heart panteth after the water roof, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God? Listen to this. O God, thou art my God. Early will I seek thee.

My soul thirsteth for thee. My flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. Listen to this.

I stretch forth my hands unto thee. My soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land, Selah. Again and again the psalmist said, My soul thirsteth.

I'm thirsty! Listen, the power of God is available for those who thirst for the power of God. Oh yes, I'd like to have a big church. I'd like to someday have a church that has 6,000 Sunday schools.

You missed the whole idea. The idea is not to have 6,000 Sunday schools. The idea is to get the power of God on your life.

The idea is to get the dear Lord working on your life so when you preach, something will happen time and time again, time and time again. I've seen folks walk in those doors back there with a smirk on their face and sit down in the service. And I've seen them.

And by the way, don't you smirk tonight while I preach or I'll take you right outside. You may think it's funny. Boy, what you need is a good old-fashioned dose of the Holy Ghost.

You little smart-aleck pipsqueak folks who think you know more than God does. God's liable to kid you for smirking at a man of God while He's preaching. You keep on, I may pray for them to do it and we'll find out whether God will do it or not.

Very idea of anybody coming where a man of God is preaching the Bible and smirking like a heathen or like an infidel. What kind of heathenism is that? Somebody ought to take you out and give you a good old-fashioned thrashing behind a smokehouse. You see me at the service, I may do it.

And alive. Whoever heard? Sometimes some students come here and they think they're smarter than the Word of God and the power of God. What we need is an old-fashioned baptism of Holy Ghost power in our country.

Some young preachers to go to our schools that have the breath of God upon them that will transform the lives of men. The Holy Ghost of God will use them to call this nation back to God. The power of God comes because people thirst for the power of God.

And I've seen it again and again. Somebody come in back in the back and they smirk a little bit and they don't want what we have and they come to sort of slum it, you know. They'll come out and see the old fundamentalists and slum it a little bit.

You know why you come? You come because your kind can't get a crowd. You want to see a lot of folks come to church. And your kind can't get a crowd unless you've got a soup and soap supper for them.

You can't get a crowd. And so you come to hear a man of God preach. And I've seen them as they come.

And all of a sudden, as the song service goes on, as the man of God begins to preach, I've seen them here in this building again and again, all of a sudden, begin to get sober, look on their faces, and the breath of God begins to breathe. And all of a sudden, there's the breath of heaven and conviction and they come down the aisle and say, I want to get born again. I want to get born again.

I'll pour water on him who is thirsty. But there's a third thing that thirsting brings, and that is just plain old success. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

How do you get filled? Hunger and thirst. How do you get filled? Hunger and thirst. How do you get filled with righteousness? The word righteousness here means the revealed will of God.

Young people, how do you find the revealed will of God? You thirst for it. Oh, only to be what He wants me to be every moment of every day, yielded completely to Jesus alone every step of this pilgrim way, just a bit play in the Father Potter's hands, ready to do what His word commands, only to be what He wants me to be every moment of every day. Oh, my Christian friend, if you want to do something for God, if you want

God to bless you thirst after it, make it the biggest thing in your life.

Let me give you an example. I was down in Indianapolis, Indiana. There's a wonderful young preacher there.

I say young, he was young when I was younger. Greg Dixon, what a tremendous man of God he is, and what a faithful servant of God. And Greg went down to Indianapolis and took a church.

Oh, how long? 16, 17 years ago, I guess. And it had about 120 people in Sunday school. And now the church is running 3,000 and over and having hundreds of people saved, thousands saved every year.

And one day I was talking to Dr. Dixon, and I said, Greg, he's younger than I, and I called him by his first name. And I said, Greg, you've done a wonderful work here. God has used you mightily.

Greg, what do you think the secret is? And Greg's lips began to tremble. And he said, Dr. Hiles, when I came here to Indianapolis and went out and saw that little building, and I saw that 120 people, he said, I wanted to build a big work for God here more than anything in all the world. That's what I wanted.

He said, I wanted to get people saved in Indianapolis and build a great, soul-winning church. He said, it's been my passion. It's been my desire.

It's been my goal. I've conquered. I've thirsted.

And that's why he has a great church in Indianapolis that's making all the theologues down there that said it couldn't be done. Watch somebody do it, because they're thirsting after it. Oh, thirsting.

I was in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Young folks, you listen to this. I was in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

By the way, I'll be there, God willing, tomorrow night. But I was preaching at the large Salem church there, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. And suddenly while I was preaching, I looked over on the right, and two handsome, very handsome young men came in.

The kind of young men that anybody would notice. The kind that Dr. Billings and I are. You know, handsome young men.

And though he is older than I, but they came in, and immediately I noticed them. And they were sharp. They were dressed properly.

They had good carriage. It was obvious that they were somebody. And they sat down.

And the minute they sat down, they got their pencils out, or pens, and they began to take notes on what I said. When I finished preaching, they came to the front. And one of them said, Dr. Jack Hiles? I said, yes. He said, I've always wanted to meet you.

My name is Jerry Falwell. I'm pastor of a church up here in Lynchburg, Virginia, running about 1,200 in Sunday school. And he said, I've come to pump your mind.

I want to know everything you can tell me. He said, this is my assistant pastor. Now he said, could we drive you to the airport? And we had about a 40-mile drive.

He said, could we drive you to the airport? And I said, yes, you can. And that young preacher, Jerry Falwell, he asked me, oh, he pumped me and pumped me and pumped me. And he said, Dr. Hiles, I want to know.

He said, I want to build a great work. He said, would you come to Lynchburg and spend a few days and help me organize my Sunday school? I flew to Lynchburg, Virginia. I met with Dr. Falwell, helped him organize his Sunday school, and taught him about Sunday division of departments and how you had not one big class, but a lot of little classes, and you organized and have a superintendent and delegation of authority and so forth.

And he pumped me. I'll tell you what. He woke me up in the morning, the phone ringing, before my normal getting up time.

And that's rather early. And he was asking questions on the telephone. And he wanted to eat breakfast with me.

And I don't hardly ever eat any breakfast. And he wanted to ask me questions. And about the time I'd want to rest just a few minutes, he'd ring again and say, I want to talk to you.

He'd want to take me somewhere. He'd ask me question after question after question after question. He was so thirsty to build a great work for God, he didn't know what to do.

And I was up in Ottawa, Canada, preaching up there for a national convention meeting. And my telephone rang. And I picked it up and said, hello.

That's a pretty good thing to say when the phone rings. And I said, hello. And so I picked the telephone up.

And this is Jerry Falwell. He said, I'm in my car. He has already telephoned his car.

And he said, would you come to Lynchburg again? I want to start a bus ministry. And Charles Hand and I flew out to Lynchburg and helped him start his bus ministry in Lynchburg and met with his people and preached on the bus ministry. And he pumped us and pumped us.

No wonder he has one of the biggest churches in the world. You know why? He was thirsty for it. No wonder he's got a work that's known around the world.

Why? He's thirsty for it. Oh, listen to me. If you want to build a great department, you can.

If you will say, I've got to do it. I've got to build a big department. I've got to build a big Sunday school class.

I've got to build a big bus route. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Don't you recall that story? Our folks have heard me tell about it in the Bible, about this fellow.

One night, one night he came to the, he was sitting in his house one night. Luke chapter 11. And all of a sudden, somebody knocked on the door.

He went to the door. He said, well, hello there, Dr. Billings. By the way, it was Billings Stein, because it was a Jewish fellow.

Dr. Billings Stein, this is Ohio Stein here. Frank Yen. But anyway, and by the way, hey, you hungry? Hungry.

He's hungry. And the fellow went to the cupboard and he opened the cupboard and there was no bread. Well, that was an insult in the Middle East and still is.

For someone not to have something to feed a guest is a sign of being a very improper host. And so the fellow, he realized, I don't have any bread, but I'll get some. I've got a friend down the road here.

I'll get some for you. And so he goes to his friend down the road and he says, hey, friend! Now, if you've been to the Middle East, you know that all the people on those little places in the Middle East, they sleep on one bed. You folks been to the Holy Land? They have one bed all across the side of the room.

One bed and everybody. I mean, Papa sleeps here and Mama sleeps here and Johnny sleeps here and Susie sleeps here and Grandpa sleeps here and Grandma sleeps here. And he woke them all up.

Hey, friend! And he woke up and his wife woke up and Johnny woke up and Susie woke up and Uncle George woke up and Aunt Sue woke up and Grandpa woke up and Grandma woke up all in the same bed. And their friend, hey, what do you want? He said, hey, Dr. Billings Stein has come to my house. A friend has come to me and I don't have any bread.

Could you, would you lend me three loaves, please? Three loaves? I want to borrow three loaves of bread. He said, I'm sorry, my wife and family, they're in bed with me and if you'll come back in the morning, you can have it. But the fellow wasn't going to quit that easily.

And I can see him as he walks back home. And he says to himself, Dr. Billings Stein is waiting for some bread. My friend came and I don't have any bread for him.

And I wish I did. But I don't want to go back there because he'll kill me if I wake him up again. And so he stops and he begins to think, I can't face my friend without any bread.

I'm going to go back and get it. He goes back. Hey, friend! And he wakes up and his wife wakes up and Uncle George wakes up and Aunt Sue wakes up and little Susie wakes up and Johnny wakes up and Grandma wakes up and Grandpa wakes up.

Hey, friend, what is it? He said, look, I've got to have some bread. My friend's back under. He came at midnight and I don't have any bread for him.

And I've got to have some bread. Let me be lost. He shuts the window and says, go back.

No, he says it before he shuts the window. Leave me alone and get out of here. Come back in the morning.

And the fellow says, OK. And he starts to go back home. And the closer he gets, the more he sees the hungry face of Dr. Billings Stein.

Look at that hungry, sad looking face. And he sees the hungry face. And the fellow says, I can't face my friend without any bread.

I'm going to go back and I'm going to get some bread. He goes back and he looks up. Oh, good night.

He'll kill me. I better not do that. I'm going to go back.

He goes back and he begins to picture facing his friend without any bread. And he says, I can't do it. I can't do it.

I don't care if it kills me. I'm going to go back and ask him for some bread. Hey, friend.

He wakes up. His wife wakes up and Uncle George wakes up and Aunt Sue wakes up and Johnny wakes up and Susie wakes up and Grandpa wakes up and Grandma wakes up. What do you want? He said, friend, you may as well make up your mind.

I'm going to bark all night long. Could you give me some bread? Now, if you hope to get any, this is all in the Greek, by the way, students, you won't get this in the English. It's all in the Greek.

And he says, if you expect to get any sleep at all tonight, you may as well give me some bread. Now, I'm just going to stay down here. I've got to have bread.

I've got to have bread. And the fellow says, okay, I'll give you a bakery if you'll shut up. He gives him the bread and the fellow goes back and feeds his friend.

The Bible says he didn't give him his bread because he was his friend. He gave him his bread because of his importunity. And the word importunity means because he begged and begged and begged and begged and begged.

Sometimes read over Luke chapter 18, verse 1, where it says, men ought always to pray and not to what? Faith! And it tells a story about a widow, a widow who went to a judge. And she walked in and she said to the judge, she said, Your Honor, a man has done me wrong. Would you avenge me of my adversary? Would you avenge me of my enemy? Would you take my case and treat me right and punish my enemy, my adversary? And the judge said, now, listen, lady, we have other cases before yours now, and you can't, you've got to get on the docket.

I mean, you just can't walk in here like that. But she says, my judge, she said, Your Honor, she said, my adversary, he did me wrong. Would you avenge me? And the judge says, now, I told you not to bother me.

But you said he did me wrong, and I, avenge me. And the judge said, now, throw her out. And so they threw her out of the courtroom.

And this is all in Greek, too. You won't get this in English, either. But here's about what I think she did.

She kept going, and she wore him out, and she kept on begging. And as Dr. Bill Rice says, she probably, when the judge got through for the evening, he was ready to go home. Guess who was waiting outside the door where he walked out? A little lady said, Your Honor? He said, yes.

Oh, good night. It's you again. Your Honor, avenge me, my adversary.

A man did me wrong. Would you avenge me? I told you to leave me alone. You're not even on the docket for a year.

Case doesn't come up. Now, leave me alone. And he takes off, and he goes down, and he waits for the bus to go home.

And guess who's waiting for the bus? The same stop. A little widow. And she says, Judge, he says, you again? Good night.

You're in my hair all the time. Judge, avenge me, my adversary. He gets on the bus and kicks her off, and she can't afford to pay anyway.

And so he gets home. Guess who's waiting at the bus stop where he gets off the bus? A little widow. She says, Judge, Your Honor.

Oh, good night. You should avenge me, my adversary. He says, leave me alone.

So he goes in his house and gets the newspaper, Chicago Tribune, and gets the newspaper. And he's sitting there reading the newspaper. And all of a sudden, the telephone rings.

And the judge answers it. And the voice says, Judge, Your Honor, this is a little widow. Help, man, did me wrong.

Avenge me, my adversary. He slams the phone down. And all of a sudden, he gets comfortable again.

And the doorbell rings. And he goes to the door. And it's a Western Union boy.

This has been recent in Israel. A Western Union boy. And so the judge opens the telegram, and it says, Dear Judge, stop.

I'm the widow. Stop. Avenge me, my adversary.

Start. I mean, stop. And do it.

And the judge tears up the telegram. And so he goes out and takes the dog for a walk that night before he goes to bed. And every dog is a Jewish dog.

It's called Roverstein. And so he takes the dog for a walk. And guess who's walking her dog? A little widow.

And the little widow says, Judge, avenge me, my adversary. And the judge says, You're about to wear me out. Let me have your adversary.

I'll kill him. You know why she got vengeance? She was thirsty. She was thirsty.

Out in Denver, Colorado, Dr. Ed Nelson's building, the largest church in the state of Colorado. I can recall when Dr. Nelson had a church running 175 in Sunday school. And I'd go out and preach for him.

And Dr. Nelson would come to my motel room, and big tears would roll down his cheek. And he'd say, Dr. Hiles, what am I doing wrong? Please help me. He said, what am I doing wrong? And I'd try to help him.

He'd come to our pastor's school and go back. And it seemed like it just didn't work too well. And I'd go back the next year.

He'd have a couple of hundred, or 225. And he'd sit outside my motel room. And he'd say, Tell me what it is.

Help me, Brother Hiles. And he'd pump everybody. He was thirsty.

He wanted to do a great work for God. Just an old country farm kid, farm boy. Nothing polished much about him.

Just an old raw bone kind of a hellfire and redstone preacher. But he was thirsty! I will pour water on him who is thirsty. Don't you recall Jacob, who went to Jabba? And he said, Lord, I'm not going to let you go.

Could you bless me? And he wrestled with the angel. And the angel wrestled. I don't think the angel really wanted to get away.

I think he wanted to know how thirsty Jacob was. And he wrestled. And he wrestled.

And the angel got ahold. The angel said, I've got to go back to heaven. And Jacob got ahold of the angel and said, I won't let you go.

And did you know that Jacob wrestled with the angel until his thigh got out of socket? Did you know that Jacob limped everywhere he went? Everywhere he went. And I expect when Jacob would walk to the pulpit to preach, if he ever preached, or whenever he served the Lord, I expect folks to say, Jacob, I'm sorry about your limp. And Jacob would say, I'm not sorry about it.

I got that limp when I got the power of God and the blessings of God upon me. I got that in a wrestling match. Who was it with? An angel? Oh, you're about to crack up.

That's what you're about to do. No, I got it. I got it.

I wonder how Jacob got it. Jacob said, I've got a meeting he saw tomorrow. My brother's threatened to kill me.

He's been wanting to kill me for 20 years or more. I've got a meeting tomorrow, and I'm not going to go alone. Bless me.

And the dear Lord said, I'm going to change your name from Jacob, which means it's a planner or a trickster or a heel grabber. I'm going to change your name to Israel, which means a prince. Ladies and gentlemen, you can be blessed of God if you get thirsty enough.

You can build a great Sunday school class if you get thirsty enough. You can have a great department if you get thirsty enough. You can have a great bus route if you get thirsty enough.

Young men, young preachers, you can be blessed of God if you get thirsty enough. I'll pour water on him who is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground. Look at me very carefully.

There's no reason humanly in this world why I ought to pastor a church as great as this. Not a one. But I got thirsty.

I can recall in Little Grange Hall Baptist Church of Marshall, Texas, opening my Bible every Saturday night and many nights to Psalm 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and his law that he may meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted with the rivers and waters that bring forth his fruit in the season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

I can recall as a kid preacher on my knees in that little old country church, I'd open my Bible to Psalm 1, and I'd get on my knees and put my hand on it, and I'd say, Dear God, you promised that whatsoever I do would prosper if I do these things. And I want to build a great work out here in the country. I want the blessing of God upon me in the country.

And oh, the blessing of God came. And that little country church was known from far and near for its soul winning. You know why? I went to Miller Road Baptist Church in Garland, Texas.

Forty-four people showed up the first Sunday. And I got on my knees in the altar of that little church. It didn't have an office.

We had a table. And we got second hand from a furniture store. It was about that wide.

And it was an old black table. It had marks all over it. And I'd get at that table on Saturday night.

And I'd write, by the way, everybody that visited our church, I'd write a letter longhand to them. I wrote a letter longhand thanking them for their visit, and telling them that we're glad to have had them, and inviting them back. Everybody that joined our church, I didn't have a typewriter.

I didn't have a mimeograph machine. I'd write a personal letter in longhand. I wrote about a hundred personal letters every week in longhand.

And I'd get down beside that little table, and I'd say, Dear God, I'm going to do the same thing I did in East Texas. I'd open my Bible to the first psalm. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, and so forth.

And I'd say, Lord, whatsoever I do ought to prosper in this church. And I saw that church grow from 44 people to over 4,000 members in six years and eight months. And then to Hammond 13 years ago.

And I can recall the first Saturday night I was here, I walked in that old auditorium over there, built in 1913. And I got on my face and the first psalm, on my knees over the first psalm. And I said, Dear God, whatsoever I do will prosper.

You said it here. You said it. And trouble came, and we had opposition, and we had a church split, you recall, and so forth.

And yet every Saturday night, every Saturday night, I'd open to the first psalm. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners. By the way, that's one reason why I don't run with the wrong crowd.

God won't let you prosper if you do. And that's one reason why I don't stand around sinners. God won't let you prosper if you do.

And that's one reason why I don't sit in the seat of the scornful. I don't criticize other men of God. You know why? Because God won't let you prosper if you do.

And I claimed it. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters that bring forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither.

And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. And I said, God, here it is. And I can recall going in that building over there every Saturday night.

And I can recall getting the first psalm and going up to the balcony. And I'd stand in the balcony up there way over in that building. And I'd get up, and I'd say, Oh God, tomorrow may the people in the balcony feel the presence of God.

Oh God. And I can recall going over to Chicago to preach for some preachers over there. They asked me to come and preach for a ministerial group on the 12th floor of the Conrad Hilton Hotel.

And I went up and preached on soul winning. And they made fun of me. And they laughed because I was a fool and a fanatic.

And those preachers up there in that ministerial conference, fundamental preachers, were laughing at me because I stressed soul winning. And I walked down on the corner of Michigan Avenue in front of the Conrad Hilton Hotel. And I saw the thousands of people walking by in Chicago.

And I remembered the days of Moody and Sunday and Rader and Torrey when Chicago had the greatest revivals of any city in the whole world. And I saw the people. And I fell on my face on the sidewalk in Chicago and began to cry like a baby.

And I said, somebody ought to do something in this area. It ought to be done. It ought to be done.

And my soul began to thirst. Somebody ought to shake Chicago. Somebody ought to show Chicago it can be done.

Somebody ought to knock on every door in Chicago. Somebody ought to have a great church in Chicago. And they said it couldn't be done.

You know why it's been done? Look at this crowd tonight. Look at that 6,000 in Sunday school this morning. You know why it's been done.

I will pour water on him who is thirsty. I'm not a great preacher, but I'm thirsty. I'm not a great theologian, but I can get thirsty.

I'm not a dynamic person, but I can get thirsty. I'm not very deep, but I can get thirsty. I'm not a handsome fellow, but I can get thirsty.

I'm not a muscle-bound Charles Adams, but I can get thirsty. I'll pour water on him who is thirsty. Oh, are you hungry and thirsting tonight for the breath of God? Are you hungry and thirsting after righteousness? Are you hungry and thirsting for success? Are you hungry and thirsting for the blessings of God? I'll pour water on him who is thirsty.

Thirsty. Thirsty. Thirsty.

Thirsty. I know the great preachers in America personally. I know intimately Dr. Beecham Vick.

I know intimately Dr. John Rawlings. Dr. Lee Roberson. I've eaten with them, preached for them, had them preach for me.

I know them well, stayed in hotels with them, shared conference programs with them. I know the great preachers in America. Believe me when I say this.

The greatest theologians aren't building the greatest churches. And in some cases, the greatest pulpiteers aren't building the greatest churches. You know who's building the greatest churches? The thirsty ones.

The thirsty ones. Oh, everyone that thirsts us. I'll pour water on him who is thirsty.

Have you been thirsty? Are you satisfied with that little handful of people in your Sunday school class, the same group, not to grow? Are you satisfied with that bus route not to reach dozens and dozens in scores for God? Are you satisfied with that Sunday school department to stay where it is and has been? Or is there a hunger and a thirsting in your soul? Oh, God. Oh, God. Oh, my God.

I've got to have it. Paul said my prayer to God in heart's desire for Israel is that they might be saved. Thirsty.

Thirsty. Thirsty. Thirsty.

Thirsty. That's the way you begin to get things from God. I'm thinking of a boy in this church.

He's here tonight. He's really ugly. He's a man now.

He's really ugly. You say, you're talking about me. Well, you qualify, but it happens not to be you.

He married one of the prettiest girls. You know why? Because he wouldn't say no. Or wouldn't take no for an answer.

He just kept on and kept on and kept on and kept on and kept on. She had to marry him so he'd leave her alone. I understand now he does.

But, you know, he's going to get her. He's just going to get her. He wasn't going to take no for an answer.

I happen to think of the old, old story the other day. I told it down in Kingsport, Tennessee. Monday night.

I hadn't thought of it in years. About this Negro boy down south. I was walking across the graveyard one night.

He fell into an empty grave. Just been dug. He tried to get out and he couldn't get out.

It was too high. He jumped and he jumped and he jumped. Finally he gave up and he said, I'll wait till morning.

It's midnight. I'll wait till morning. I'll just go ahead and lay down and go to sleep here.

And tomorrow morning I'll call for help when somebody comes out. He laid down and went to sleep. At the bottom of the grave.

Another Negro fellow walked through the graveyard. He didn't see very well and he fell into the open grave. There he was lying on the body of what he thought was a corpse.

And so the first fellow said, I'm just going to lie still here. And the fellow jumped. Tried to get out.

And he jumped. Second fellow jumped. Tried to get out.

First fellow never moved. Second fellow jumped and jumped and jumped. And tried to get out.

Finally the first fellow said, No need to try. You can't get out of here. But he did.

He did. He did. Huh? It's how bad do you want it, isn't it? Huh? It's how bad do you want it.

It's how bad do you want it. Huh? Preachers all across this country. Good men.

Smart men. Learned men. Educated men.

Trained men. Doing almost nothing for God. You know why? They don't want anything.

The way you start is to get thirsty. Like Greg Dixon. Like Jerry Falwell.

Like that poor widow. Like that fellow at midnight that had to have bread. And yes, in some sense.

Like this preacher. Thirsty. Do you feel a thirst a little bit tonight? Is there a thirst? Do you feel in your heart a hunger for something you don't have? I'm not talking about fanaticism.

I'm not talking about talking in tongues or getting sanctified. I'm talking about are you thirsty? Is there a thirst in your soul? Now listen. Don't tonight let the devil get you diverted off the track.

Before you know it, you're going to say I'm thirsting for an experience. That's not what I'm talking about. See, what you'd like to do is have the experience that Moody had in New York City.

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about having the converts he had when he got through with the experience. I'm not talking about thirsting for a feeling or thirsting for an experience.

I'm talking about thirsting for the blessings of God. So you can receive and give. Receive and give.

The opposite of thirsting is complacency. The opposite of thirsting is complacency. At ease and Zion.

I go to the greatest church in all the world and I'm just happy to come and enjoy it. That's the opposite of thirst. Status quo.

Long as I teach my class we don't worry about visiting. Long as I can teach my class and have a pretty good little crowd to come that's all I want. Okay, that's all you want, that's all you'll get.

But you get thirsty for something, you'll get something. You get thirsty for more, you'll get more. I will pour water on him who is thirsty.

Not talented, not smart, not dynamic, but thirsty. Thirsty! Thirsty! Thirsty. I will pour water on him who is thirsty.

I will pour floods upon the dry ground. I wonder who'd say tonight, Brother Hiles, I have committed the sin of being at ease in Zion. I have committed the sin of complacency.

I've committed the sin of getting around a Jerusalem like this, where a lot of good Christians are, and where there are good schools and a good atmosphere. I've committed the sin of complacency. I've not become thirsty.

Tonight I want to confess the sin of not having a thirst for more. Would you lift your hand please all over the building? Thirsty. Thirsty.

God bless you. You can lower your hands. Heavenly Father, it may be that hundreds of us need to have our thirst created.

Thirsty. Thirsty. Bless these dear ones.

Now our heads are bowed, eyes are closed. I'm not talking about something that may happen tonight. It may be ten years from now, but if you just stay thirsty.

Stay thirsty. Young preacher, God wants you to do something big for Him. That may take you four or five years of preparation.

Four or five years of laying the foundation. But if you'll keep thirsting, and thirsting, and thirsting! You may not pastor a church with a thousand in Sunday school by the time you're twenty-five. But if you'll keep thirsting.

Dr. Ed Nelson was in his thirties before he began to bloom. But if you'll keep thirsting, and say, I'm going to do it. And I'm going to keep thirsting.

And I want it. I want it. I want it! I want it! I want it! For God.

He'll pour water on him who is thirsty.

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