

Revival, Breaking Up Your Fallow Ground

by John Musser

To experience spiritual awakening and revival, we must deal with all known sin in our lives, break up fallow ground in our hearts, and cultivate a spirit of praise and thanksgiving.

Duration: 55:28

Topics: "Revival"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by announcing that he will be sharing his testimony of how God saved him from drugs and alcohol. He emphasizes the power of God to transform lives and mentions another person who also experienced a similar transformation. The speaker then discusses the importance of giving and how it will be returned to us in abundance. He also highlights the significance of our witness and the need to be careful and consistent in our testimony. The sermon concludes with a call to recognize our need for God's truth and to seek a closer relationship with Him.

Transcript

Would you turn with me to Jeremiah chapter 4 and verse 3? And as we're turning there, I just want to make a short announcement. Friday night, we're going to be sharing my testimony how God miraculously saved my life and spared me from drugs and alcohol and the powers of darkness and how God set me free, how God changed my life completely. If you could see a picture of me tonight, you'd be amazed at the wonderful work of Christ and the power of the blood of Jesus, how God can change a life.

This is our brother Joe gave his testimony. We came out of similar backgrounds, but how we praise God for how God can deliver and set free. We want to invite you to ask as many people to those meetings as you can.

Now in revival, as I've already mentioned, before we can have a spiritual awakening, the spiritual awakening has to deal with the unsaved. Revival has to do with God's people. If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land.

And so we see that God deals with this people. And we looked Wednesday night about all the times where God's Spirit was drawing His people unto Himself, unto revival. But first things are first in revival.

Before we can have revival, we need to deal with all known sin in our lives. That's one of the grand conditions to real revival. Every known sin has to be put under the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says if we confess our sins, He's just, righteous to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But if we don't confess our sins, then we're not covered, as far as fellowship is concerned, with the blood of Jesus Christ. And so we see the blood brings us restoration of fellowship with Christ.

And tonight I'm going to speak on breaking up the fallow ground. And when we're preaching revival truths, first of all, you need to start with the simple things. And what we're going to do tonight is we're going to look at a number of sins that grieve the Spirit of God.

Will you ask God to search your heart like David and see if there be any wicked way in you? Whenever I see God move in my life, I know that I need to search my heart and see if there's anything that may be quenching the Spirit of God. Before I come to these revival meetings, I ask God, Lord, you search my heart. Is there self? Is there wrong motive? Is there anything, pride or station or whatever it may be, that could hinder the power of God? And if you're going to know the power of God, you need to be ultra sensitive to sin, because the Spirit of God is ultra sensitive to sin.

And he will not put up with lightness or indifference and coldness. And as we learn this, you'll find that Christians who are really walking with God, that little sins bother them. That little things grieve them because it's the little foxes that spoil the vines.

Now I'm going to read from another scripture, but in Jeremiah chapter 4 and verse 3, as you're turned there already, I want to read a parallel passage in Hosea. You need not turn there. Hosea chapter 10 and verse 12.

Here God is speaking through the prophet Hosea, and he says, so do yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground. I want you to hear that tonight because we're going to see that twice. He says, break up your fallow ground.

You break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and reign righteousness upon you. You have plowed wickedness, you have reaped iniquity, you have eaten the fruit of your lies, because thou distrust in thy ways and the multitude of thy mighty men. And God talks about this pronouncement of judgment that's coming upon the children of Israel, unless they would break up their fallow ground.

Now in Jeremiah chapter 4 and verse 3 and 4, God says again through the prophet, for thus saith the Lord to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Do you know something that we cannot understand the deeper things of Jesus Christ until you have confessed all known sin? You remember Paul said to the Corinthians, he said, there are many things that I want to teach you, but he says, you're carnal. He says, you cannot receive them and you cannot understand them.

There are two kinds of people that cannot understand the word of God. First of all, the natural man, the unsaved man. The Bible says that the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God for their foolishness unto him.

Neither can he know them because he's spiritually discerned. He does not have the spirit of God living within him to interpret the word of God to his heart and mind. That's the first class of people that cannot

understand the word of God.

It is foolishness to them because they have no divine illumination. Now, the second class of individuals that cannot understand the things of Christ are those who are carnal, those who are backslidden, those who have fallen away from God. And God says here, don't sow among thorns.

Don't sow my word among thorns. Now, what is the prophet speaking of when he says break up the fallow ground? The children of Israel were a nation of farmers and they knew just exactly what the prophet was talking about. When you break up fallow ground, you are plowing or you're disking ground that has been left idle or it's been allowed to be fallow.

Where the briars and nettles and thorns and weeds grow in that ground and the snow and the rain causes that ground to be matted down. And if you were to take seeds and try to plant it and ground like that, you would have no fruit. Because there would be briars and thorns and everything mingled along with it.

And so the prophet of God is speaking to the children of Israel and he says, you need to break up your hearts because our hearts are likened unto a field. Our minds are likened unto a field that are cluttered with all the things of this world. As Jesus said, don't be overcharged with the cares of this world and surfeiting and all these other things.

He said, get your eyes elevated to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we find in scripture that our minds are likened unto fields and some of our hearts are filled with briars and nettles and thorns and thistles. And God cannot bring forth fruit in our hearts and our lives.

And so God says to us tonight, you break up your fallow ground. You allow the plow of God's word to break up that fallow ground in your heart. Allow the Lord to reveal sin to you so you can confess that sin and get it out of the blood of Jesus Christ.

I remember when we moved to our home in Muskegon, I wanted to plant a garden, so I invited my father-in-law to help me out a little bit. At one time, that ground in my backyard was used as a garden and the man had a fruit stand and he sold a lot of vegetables and fruit in that stand. But through the years, he allowed that land to go idle and it was fallow.

It was so hard, I remember when my father-in-law brought that disc over that he had to put some railroad ties on that disc so it would have enough weight to go into the ground. And then that wasn't heavy enough and I had to get on that disc and I rode in back of that tractor and you could hear that fallow ground being broken up. You could hear it.

It sounded like a T-shirt rending, tearing. And then he went over that again and again with that disc, back and forth and back and forth. And then afterwards, I took a rotor tiller and I made that ground nice and smooth and then I could take the seeds, the tomato plants, and the radishes and all these things.

I could plant it in the ground and I had a nice harvest. My friends, if you understand this truth, you'll gain great understanding in spiritual things. You heard the testimonies of men and women this week have been quickened.

They received insight into the Word of God. For years, they'd gone on and they did not desire maybe reading the Word of God because they couldn't understand. And all of a sudden, the Word of God just came alive to them.

What happened? They broke up their fallow ground. They got their sins under the blood of Jesus Christ. Now, how do we go about breaking up the fallow ground? I've already mentioned that we let the Spirit of God convict us of our sins.

Self-examination with the Spirit's aid. You know, there are so many Christians that will cry out to God at the end of the day and they'll say, Lord, forgive me of all the sins that I've committed today. And they think that God is going to forgive them of all their sins.

You cannot speak in generalities when you come before God. You must say, Lord, forgive me of that evil thought. Or, Lord, forgive me of that vain imagination.

You must be specific because your sins are committed one by one and they must be put under the blood of Jesus Christ one by one. Now, the thing that we're trying to bring across this week, we shared with you of how Christians can be blinded, how their minds can be deceived. And when we've fallen away from Christ and when He's done our first love, we become beguiled to the sins that are within our hearts.

Because we become calloused in our hearts. And the Spirit of the Lord is grieved and He coils back to some remote part of our being. And it's a wonder we don't see the power of God and the love of Jesus Christ, the power that God has promised to every one of us as Christians.

So tonight, let's look at some of these sins that grieve and quench the Spirit of God. You might want to write some of them down. The first one, and you're going to be amazed as I mention this, is ingratitude.

Unthankfulness. Do you know that this is an appalling sin in the sight of God? There are some people that walk through life, and all they can see is dark clouds. All they can see is the negative.

All they can see is pessimism. All they can see is the dark shadow of life. The Word of God says, Offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving.

Now, what does that mean, to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving? That means it takes a sacrifice to praise God sometimes. David said, I'm going to praise you with my whole heart before the gods I'll sing praise unto thee. But he says, I'm going to sacrifice praises unto you.

Do you know that we are to praise God whether we feel like it or not? You are to thank the Lord whether or not you're emotionally inclined to do so, whether you're mentally inclined to do so. We are to give thanks always. The Bible says, In all things give thanks, in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

There are a lot of people running around today, and they want to know the will of God. Well, Paul made it very clear. He says, In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Nothing could be any clearer, could it? That we are to live on Hallelujah Corner. That we are to praise God for all of His goodness. Paul said, Of course, you know he was writing out of the Holiday Inn, right? When he wrote the book of Philippians.

Wasn't he? No, he was in stocks. He was probably there with lashes upon his back. He was in hunger and nakedness.

And he didn't know if he was going to get out of that prison cell. And he said to those Philippians, He says, Rejoice in the Lord all the way. And again I say, Rejoice.

And here Paul is admonishing these people who are free, and he is in prison, to rejoice in the Lord all the way. And again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be done unto all men.

The Lord is at hand. Oh, there are so many Psalms that we have of praise, of jubilant praise. You see, God used David to spearhead praise in Israel.

Do you know something? That praise is one of the most powerful spiritual weapons that you have as a Christian. Because, listen to my words, if Satan can get you discouraged, he can do anything with your life. God cannot use a discouraged Christian.

There is no way that God can use someone that is always pessimistic, and always down about everything. Oh yes, the church is in a bad state today, and America is in a bad state, and we need to groan in our heart. But listen, there is a great difference between joy, rejoicing, and happiness.

Happiness is conditional upon happenings. As long as everything goes right, some people are happy. The car keeps running, the house is alright, the children are healthy, you have got plenty of money in your wallet, everything is alright.

That is happiness, because it is conditional upon happenings. Do you know what joy is? Happiness is conditional upon your relationship with Jesus Christ. Although all the world about you, everything else may be in turbulence, you may be going through trials, and tribulations, and discouragements, you may be assailed by the devil, and yet if you have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ, the Bible says that you can have joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

That is what Peter said. He says, as Christians, even on this face of this earth, that we can have joy unspeakable, and full of glory, even through tribulations. And that is why James says, Brethren, count it all joy, when you fall into diverse tribulations.

What were these men talking about? We think of these men. Do they know what they are saying? Yes, God's ways are not man's ways. In gratitude.

I remember one day we were visiting some people in the hospital in Chicago. And we went to minister to them. But there was this one woman, this colored lady, and the pastor said to me, John, come on down here.

I want to show you someone. I want to introduce you to someone. And there was this colored lady there, and we walked into the room, and she said, You know, I don't have many days to live.

And she said, I don't know about my children, what's going to take place in their lives, and about my family. But she says, You know something, I'm saved, and I know Jesus Christ. And she said, Hallelujah! And when she said, Hallelujah! Her arms spread out, and her toes came out beneath that blanket.

And she went on a little ways again, another spell, and talking about all the tribulations, the doctors can't find this out, and they don't know about this. And she said, Hallelujah! And I'll tell you something, this woman kept on praising God, and that room was literally electrified with the presence of God. And we went out of that hospital being ministered to by that woman that was laying flat on her back.

As I mentioned before, that praise is a spiritual weapon. You see praise emphasized in thanksgiving throughout the entire Word of God, over and over again. It's the evidence of a Spirit-filled life, the Bible

says.

Giving thanks and praising the Lord. Learning this truth is a weapon against Satan. You know why? I believe that Satan, Lucifer, before he fell, led all the angels of heaven to praise the triune God.

I believe that when Christians praise the Lord, it reminds them of his lofty position that he once had in the heavenlies. And I'll tell you, I'll guarantee you this, that if you begin to praise God, you may not feel like it, but you begin to count your blessings one by one, you're going to move out of that slough of despond. I've never seen it to fail in my Christian experience.

When I'm willing to count my blessings one by one, and see what the Lord has done, it gives you faith. You begin to see, God delivered me back then, He'll deliver me again. The Lord answered prayer back then, He met this financial need, the Lord's going to do it again.

And count your blessings. You see, we forget about our blessings because we lost circumstances to cloud our vision of God. And in unbelief, we fall away from the Lord, like the children of Israel.

God had miraculously moved in their lives, and He delivered them from Egypt's power, and how God displayed such miracles upon the children of Israel. And yet, when they went to Cajas Barnea, they doubted the Lord. They said the walls are too high.

They said the men are too strong. They've got too many weapons of warfare, and we don't have anything. We've been going through this wilderness, and we don't even have the weapons of warfare.

What are we going to do? And when they began to talk like that, God gave them up to their sins. Because they got their eyes on circumstances instead of the Lord God Almighty that reigns over the affairs of men. And tonight, many of you are caught up in the circumstance syndrome.

And your life is miserable because all you can see is circumstances, and you cannot see a sovereign God that may be trying to get your attention through circumstances. He may be trying to break you and bend you to get you to realize that only as you're yielded fully to Christ can you enjoy Him in life. And if we would only see God in circumstances, my friends, instead of seeing the circumstances without the hand of God.

And Joseph said this, he says, as for you, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. You see, all these men, I use a principle. Don't look at second causes.

If you find and you receive a bad letter in the mail, do you get mad at the postman? No, you don't get mad at the mail carrier. I want to tell you something. So many times we are angry at circumstances.

And if Satan can use circumstances in your life to get you defeated, he'll keep on doing it. It's like the angler says, if a bait works and it catches bass, why change your baits? Use the same lure. And Satan will blast you.

You know why some of you keep on going through tribulations and trials? And you just keep on going around and around because you have not learned how to see God in circumstances. You have not learned to praise your way out of it. My friends, I'm talking about experience tonight in my own life.

I've been swallowed up with such physical infirmities and problems. And God is bringing progressive healing in my own body. Two years ago, I was just, my life, my body, my physical body was drained.

I didn't even know if I could go on in the ministry any longer. And I knew these truths before. But I began to praise the Lord and thank God.

It took time. It wasn't easy. This carnal mind didn't want to live on Hallelujah Corner.

My friends, I want to tell you something. God has wrought a miracle in my body and my mind when seemingly the doctors said, there's nothing that can be done. Oh, let's break out of the... And until you see tonight that this pessimism is not of God.

Oh, listen, I even get into churches and I hear leaders in the church. All they can talk down is everything that's going bad. Listen, isn't there a God that reigns over us? Beloved in Christ? Where is your God? God said to the children of Israel, it's not that there's not a God in Israel.

He's there. He's not left you. He's just as close to you as He ever was before.

And so tonight we want to make sure that we put this down because God inhabits the praises of His people. That's what the psalmist said, that God inhabits the praises of His people. He's there.

When you praise Him, God will inhabit those praises. It seems like it's a place where God dwells within the habitation of the praises of His people. The thanksgiving.

That's why we can sense the Spirit of God tonight because so many people were praising the Lord. Oh, there's so many things that we could thank the Lord for. But secondly, the neglect of the Bible.

Some people go weeks or longer without reading the Word of God. Some people never really study to show themselves approved unto God. A workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

And when you get into studying the Word, that means you're going to look up some hard words. You're not going to just skim over the Word of God. You see what you can do? You can hear the Word of God and you can read the Word of God and you can memorize the Word of God and you can meditate on the Word of God and then you share that Word with others.

All of these different levels of getting into the Word of God. But so many of God's people only read the Word. That's all they do.

They skim over the Word. They do not say like Jeremiah, thy words were found and I did eat them. Joshua 1.8 says, But this Book of the Law shall not be part of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. God said this in His Word, 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 in his law doth he meditate day and night.

He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. You want prosperity in the ranch, at the home, in your family? God says, This Book of the Law shall not be part of thy mouth.

You must do more than just read the Word. You must engraft the Word into your heart. That only comes through meditation, through intense concentration upon the Word of God.

That's why Paul says, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies, a living sacrifice, and the God is the least that you can do. He says, And don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. You know how you form Jesus Christ in you? By engrafting the Word into your heart.

That's how Jesus is formed in you, by getting God's Word into your soul. And God says, There's only one time you find the word success in the Bible. It's linked with meditation.

You've almost got to memorize the Word before you can meditate on it. When you lay in bed and you allow those Scriptures to flow in your mind. Oh, what mental perception and spiritual perception that brings as you allow God's Word to linger in your minds.

You know why people today have so much unbelief? Because faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Faith is revived. Faith is strengthened.

Faith is empowered by searching the Scriptures and reading the Word of God. You cannot live in the Christian life without the Word of God. Where's the Scripture? Jesus said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

He said, pray this, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. What does that mean? It's not only talking about physical bread. I studied this out extensively.

It talks about the spiritual bread that Jesus talked about in Matthew 4 and verse 4. Man shall not live by bread alone. You cannot survive by bread alone. I'm preparing a message.

It's taken me five years to prepare. How the Word of God will heal you mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. How the Word of God can bring healing.

Oh, you could give so many Scriptures tonight and we read these novels and comic books and some of you men will sit down and you'll read the newspaper from cover to cover. But how much time do you spend in the Word of God? How much time do you spend in God's Word? Peter says, As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word. I tell you, I smile every time I think about that.

Because my mind goes back to Muskegon, Michigan. And I've got two little babies, twins, and I remember them crying in stereo for the bottle. And I don't know if you've ever had the great blessing of having twins.

I know there's one that has tonight. But I want to tell you something, they can really squawk for that bottle, can't they? We hear some of them squawking back there, they want a bottle. But when you've got two of them and that crying is intensified, I'll tell you something, you'll run right to that refrigerator, you'll warm that milk up as fast as you can, and you'll stick it in their mouth.

Now Peter says, As newborn babes, he says, You desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby. He says that's the only way that you can grow. He says that you might be able to grow, crave, lust after the Word of God.

That's what it means to desire God's Word, to hunger for God's Word. That's why Job could say, I have esteemed thy words more than my necessary food. And look at all these prophets, they talked about eating the Word of God.

What does it mean, eating the Word of God? As we've already talked, it only comes through meditation, not just skimming. I remember one day, I was sitting in the church, and the preacher announced a very simple text to the audience, to the Christians there. And there's a woman there that was a professing Christian for 20 years.

And she had a son on either side of her. And I was sitting behind her, and I wasn't trying to be judgmental or anything like this. But this professing Christian that was a Christian so-called for 20 years could not find a very easy New Testament Scripture.

And she went from Genesis to Revelation to try to find that Scripture. And one son looked over his shoulder, and the other one looked over his shoulder. And then I heard the mad scramble, and I was wondering what was going on.

And finally she gave up, and she looked in the beginning of the Bible to find out where that Scripture was. One time I was having revival meetings. There was a woman that was in the faith for at least 15 years.

I wanted to share a Scripture with her to help her out spiritually. And I said, would you turn to a certain text in the New Testament? She could not find that Scripture. She was embarrassed.

Listen, you want to know why today false cults are stealing our people from our fundamental churches today? It's because we don't know the Word of God. We have not studied the Word of God. We don't even know the basic fundamentals of the faith.

You can talk to people today, and they can't even quote enough Scripture to you. They don't know the Word of God. And listen, these cultists can come up to the door.

They don't even know Jesus Christ. They're not even saved. And yet, they'll come up to your door even though they will pervert the Scriptures.

And they will quote Scripture right in your face. And in Muskegon we have cultists that come around that don't even believe the Word of God, yet they take portions of it. And they spend midnight oil memorizing those doctrines and Scriptures.

And today we should be ashamed at how we neglect the Word of God. I want to tell you something. Over 40 different authors, hundreds of years in the making, blood and sweat, God gave us this book, beloved.

I want to tell you something. This is the divine book. If we'd only go back to the book, if we get into the Word of God, then unbelief.

Times that you've virtually charged God, the God that cannot lie with lying. The majority of us, tonight we don't realize it, but we've fallen to unbelief. We're in unbelief and we don't even know it.

We say that we believe God's Word, but we don't because in biblical belief you obey with the knowledge. And then, and only then, do you truly believe. When you have the knowledge of it and then you obey it in your lifestyle.

As James says, he said, don't be just hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word. Deceive in your own selves, for if any man be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. He beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

James says, if a man will continue in my ways, in God's ways, he will be blessed in his deed. But unbelief, if we would see that one of the root problems of our unbelief is lack of meditation. It's lack of meditation upon the promises of God's Word.

You cannot believe unless you get the Scripture in your heart. You cannot. You can't strum it up.

It comes from your innermost being. It rises from within. That's the only way that you can believe.

That's why I tell people that the only way you're going to get a burden for souls is to meditate upon passage of Scripture of the damnation of hell. You've got to engraft that into your heart. What a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

What you think in your innermost being, that's what you become. We are a product of our thought life. And so that's why God's Word teaches us that what a man thinketh in his innermost being, he will become.

And I know that as I've meditated upon passage of Scripture about the horror and darkness of hell, about eternity without Jesus Christ, of men gnawing their tongues and gnashing their teeth and screaming and crying in agony, as I look in the passage of Scriptures there about the second death and the eternal lake of fire, and when I get those Scriptures in my mind, I begin to see that, listen, I've got to put this fear out of my life, this bondage of fear, this torment of fear, and I've got to talk to people because unless I do share Christ with them, they're going to hell. And love supersedes fear. But you've got to change your heart first.

You can't work it up. You can't be a soul winner just because the preacher says be a soul winner. You've got to put it in your heart.

You've got to put Scriptures of salvation into your heart. What a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. Then there's lack of prayer, lack of private prayer, lack of family prayer.

Oh, listen, so many families today, they don't even pray together. Listen, you husbands, I want to tell you something. Unless you gather that family together and get them in the Word of God, you're neglecting your spiritual duties, and I would to God tonight that if you are not having a family altar, that you'd raise up that family altar tonight.

It doesn't matter if it's just you there and your wife, or whoever it may be. You must have that family altar. It's important.

That's when God brings a union between the husband and the wife and the children. I remember a young man that had a father that read the Old Testament and the New Testament to him constantly, always. And this young man grew up, and then he fell away from the Lord for a while.

And in his college days, he began to hear in his ears, in the ear of his mind, he could hear his father reading the Bible to him over and over again because his father persistently read the Word of God in that family devotional time. And he looked at me and he said, Brother John, that is what brought me back to Jesus Christ. I couldn't get away from my father's reading.

He was long since dead and gone, but he said, that brought me to my knees. And today that man is one of the finest Christian men I've ever met. He has one of the finest families I've ever seen in my life.

And they have that family altar. And then the prayer meeting. Oh, listen, my friends.

We need to realize today the reason why we don't come to the house of God and pray is because we don't believe God's going to answer prayer. If we believe that God was going to answer prayer, this place would be packed. The capacity.

I want to tell you something. We don't realize it. The Word of God says, Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together.

As the matter of some is, as we see the day approaching, God says, You need that fellowship. You need that strength. You need that prayer time.

And until we face it as sin and rebellion against God, we're not going to be able to have the fullness of the Spirit. You're not going to know the power of God until you begin to do something about it and you don't rationalize and argue the thing out, but you say, I'm going to be in God's house. And I'm going to seek the Lord in prayer.

Maybe we could open one of those windows back there. It's getting warm in here. The neglect of assembling.

We need to think about these things tonight. Neglect of assembling ourselves together. Of coming together.

As God's Word says, that as we see the coming of Jesus Christ is so near, He says, you must be in the fellowship of other Christians because the spirit of Antichrist is in this age. The false philosophies, the cults, the isms, everything is warring against us. The acceleration of demonic activity.

You need the house of God whether you realize it or not. Oh, listen, I want to tell you something. I've had preachers tell me I could write a book on excuses.

All of the excuses that come out. You know, little Billy's got a runny nose and so everyone's got to stay home and wipe his nose. Have you ever heard that one before? Little Sarah, she had a cough.

And she was probably chewing on some bubble gum or something like this. But whatever, some kind of excuse. I have heard the excuses.

People said, well, I couldn't come to the Revival Beach because I sprained my ankle. Watch them run down the street the next day when they're going shopping. Or maybe it's raining and they just couldn't make it because they were afraid that their car would slide and slip.

And then the next week they'll travel 500 miles to go to a shop in the center just to buy a new hat. And all these excuses, you see, we can give excuses to men, but my friends, you cannot give excuses before a sovereign, omniscient God that knows everything and tries the reins of your heart and He knows all the secret thoughts and everything. And then we begin to be stripped and naked in the sight of God, my friends.

He knows all things. God knows all things. And until we get to realize this, my friends, listen, we are in so much unbelief today.

Oh, listen. We need to ask God, Lord, You reveal Your truth to us in these days. And then the lack of love for souls, I've already mentioned this.

We could put a sign over some of our churches, the first church of the deep freeze, pastored by Dr. Jack Frost. You could go out and some of the Christians, you could sprinkle hot chocolate on them, they'll be Eskimo pies. They're so cold.

You know the scripture says, few are cold and many are cold and few are chosen. We could say today that some are cold and some are frozen. Many are frozen.

Frozen in God, out of God, out of the reality of God. My friends, I want to tell you something. This Christian life is not easy.

But it's glorious. I'll tell you something. I'm one of the most happiest persons that you'll probably ever meet.

And yet, I've suffered, I've gone through trials and tribulations. I wish I could be with my family tonight. And yet the joy of Jesus Christ, of seeking His face and getting His word, fulfills your heart.

It gives you joy. It's the only kind of fulfillment. When I'm saying to you tonight, it's not easy to hear all these things.

But I know that the only way you're going to be really happy is to be in communion with God. Because when you were created in Christ Jesus, when you were born again, there's a vacuum within your heart and you will only be content until you're filled with the Spirit of God. You won't be content any other way.

And that's why so many Christians are miserable today. And that's why they've got to go through so many trials because they don't learn these truths. That only Jesus Christ can give them fulfillment.

Listen, riches and money and gold and silver and all these things in a high time. Listen, it's nothing compared to the joy that Jesus Christ can put into your heart. Because I've met men that have money coming out of their pockets.

They've got so much money that they don't know what to do with it. And yet they are miserable because they don't know Jesus Christ. And if you can get your heart in harmony, you'll be full of the joy of the Lord.

And you'll be content whether you're in a shack or whether you're in some place on a foreign field, whether you're in Africa or wherever it may be. If you're in the will of God, you will be content. That's what I'm trying to say tonight.

But we've got to deal with all these things one by one, getting them under the blood of Jesus Christ. What about this lack of love for souls? See, all of these sins are surface sins. They're by-products.

It's not the root of the problem. Our root of our problem is we are not seeking God earnestly. We don't know what it means to travail in prayer, an extraordinary prayer, and wake up in the middle of the night and be prompted by the Spirit of God and pray for an hour, half an hour if God wants us to pray for lost souls.

Oh yes, it's work. But I want to tell you something. The nearness of God, the fullness of the Lord is worth it.

It's exceedingly, abundantly above all those things, more than worth it. Remember Jesus said, I have meat to eat that you don't know of. How true that is.

So many Christians today have never tapped into the resources of God. Jesus said, when I came, when I come, I've come to give you abundant life. Not only in the next world with Jesus Christ in the heavenlies, but in this world, my friends, I want to tell you something.

You can have abundant life. You can. It's available to every one of us.

That lack of love for souls, do we really believe that men will be damned forever? Lack of concern for widows, the elderly, our parents, the needy, the fatherless, missions, giving, those who are around about us. I want to tell you something. We're so near to one of the greatest mission fields in the world and we don't even know it.

Because our minds are so blinded and we're overcharged with the cares of this world and we've got just enough to do with our own things. We can't even look on the needs of others. And that's why some of you are so miserable tonight because you're all wrapped up in yourself.

You want to know one of the major causes of depression? It's self-centeredness. If you are inclined to mental depression, you know that you're having pity parties with you, yourself, and I. Me, myself, and I. And when you dwell on your own problems and your own circumstances, you're going to be in a slough of despondency. You're going to be so discouraged.

I want to tell you something. You want to know a healing balm of Gilead? When you have problems, you just do something for someone else. When you have financial problems, just take a little something and give away something.

Jesus said, Give and it shall be given unto you. We have had financial onslaughts at times where we didn't know where we were going to get the money, what we were going to do. You know what we'd do? We'd start giving.

I would start sending some books out to some missionaries or I would start giving some food away to someone who was poor. Always, we have never seen it. I've been living by faith for over seven years and God has miraculously intervened over and over again.

Let me give you an illustration. One day, during Christmas period time, we were financially bound. And instead of allowing circumstances to plague my mind, I said, I'm going to get the victory over this.

And we had a turkey that someone had given us in the refrigerator, in the freezer. And I took out that turkey and I remember there were some people that really had needs. And they were probably starving and they probably weren't having a good time during that time of the year that many people rejoice in.

And so I said, I'm going to take this turkey, Teresa. And we had a basket that we had up on the shelf. And I said, Teresa, I want you to just take that basket and put some fruit and whatever we have, put some perfume in it for this young lady and for this young married couple.

And I said, whatever you can find, just put it in. And she made that basket so nice. It was so nice.

And all of a sudden, the joy started breaking out. I was just getting excited about taking that basket and that turkey away. I got, like the Bible says, hilarious.

I could hardly wait to get there and give them that turkey and that basket. And I forgot about, we didn't have a whole bunch of food left and that turkey wouldn't have tasted good. But I want to tell you something.

God is my witness. I went over to that home and I took that turkey and I took that basket and those people were so full of joy. They didn't have anything.

They said, Oh, this just means so much to us. This is going to make Christmas for my family. And they were so happy.

And I came home and I was just whistling and singing and praising God all the way. And I went over the speed limit probably 50 times because I was so happy. But do you know what? To my utter amazement, when I came home, I walked into that house and someone from another church was prompted of the Spirit of God to bring us something for Christmas time.

It was a turkey and a basket. God's ways are not man's ways. I could stand up here all night and I could give you, I could tell you 50 stories just like that.

What did it mean? What did Jesus say? He said, Give and it shall be given unto you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. How about carelessness over our witness? Oh, listen, the world is looking at every one of us.

Like eagles, they're glaring at your testimony. They want to see Jesus Christ. This one man, I was talking to him and I came into his home.

We were holding meetings and he said, You know, something God dealt with me one day. He said, For 20 years, I'd been stealing things from the shop. Nuts and bolts and screwdrivers and all kinds of other things.

And he said, One day God convicted me of that sin that it was stealing. And he said, It was the hardest thing I've ever done in all my life. He said, I went all around that garage and I took a big basket and I put the nuts and bolts and everything I could find in that basket.

And he said, I took it to work and all of a sudden the devil perched on my shoulder. He'll do that. Just when you're going to obey God, he'll lie in your ear and he'll say, You don't need to do that.

But he said, I'm going to do it. I'm going to obey God. And he went up to his foreman and he said, I've got a confession to make.

He said, I have been stealing nuts and bolts from this factory for over 20 years and I'm a Christian and I know that it's wrong. And you know what that foreman said? He said, Don't worry about it. He said, I've seen you.

I knew it all of these years. He said, That's all right. Not everyone does it.

And that man says, But I'm a Christian. He said, What do you mean by that? So wonder people go to hell, my friends. So wonder people go to hell because of off-color jokes and because of looseness and lethargy and coldness.

There have been men that have come up to men that have been professing Christ for years and they said, Why have you never told us about Jesus Christ? One man came up to a professing Christian. I just heard this story. And this man came up to this professing Christian and he said, Do you believe in hell? This unsaved man said to a Christian.

And that Christian said, I most definitely do. I believe in hell. He said, Do you believe that if men did not believe in Jesus Christ that they will be lost forever? He said, Yes, I do.

He said, You're a liar. He says, You've been here for 10 years. You've never told me about Jesus Christ.

I've never seen you pass out a track. I've never seen you witness for Christ. And I want to tell you something.

Those people in the world, they expect a lot of you and me as Christians. They expect a lot. We're going to move along.

Lack of love for God. If some of you men treated your wife like you treat God, what would ever happen in your relationship? Days on end you go without seeking the Lord, without listening to His word. Oh, listen.

My friends tonight, God is a jealous God. He said that in the Old Testament that He loves us so much. He wants us.

He's a jealous God. The Bible says that the Spirit of God lusteth to envy. God loves us.

And He wants us for His own. And He is the only one that really has that kind of a right in this universe. Because He made us and He created us.

And since you've been born again, God wants you to take all the idols out of your life that you worship, all of the things, and make Jesus Christ first in your life above all things. I don't know if it's even a right to say first, but make Him above all things in your life. Do you really? Can you really say honestly tonight, I love the Lord Jesus Christ with all of my heart and soul and mind.

And Jesus said, if you love Me, keep My commandments. That's the acid test of love. Jesus said, if you really love Me, then you'll give your life for Me in this short lifetime, in this short period of life that you have in this world.

You'll turn your life over to Me. That's what Jesus said. If you love Me, keep My commandments.

How many of us can say, and you've said, Oh Lord, you've lifted up your hands in the sight of God in your prayer closet. You said, Lord, I love you, I love you. How many times have you taken His word and lifted it before the Lord in your prayer closet and say, Oh God, I love your word.

How many times have you done that? Oh Lord, I love you. Oh, He wants to hear that tonight. If I, through the Spirit of God, my prayer is that God's people would love Him in this week.

And what did Jesus say there in the letters? We find in the book of Revelation, He's crying, His people have always turned away from Jesus that I know your works, I know your labors. He says, I know that you're sound in doctrine, but you're sound asleep, because I want you to come back to Me. You've left your first love.

And some of you, when you were first saved, you loved the Lord so much, you testified for Him, you couldn't get enough of His words, you couldn't get in the house of God enough. But what's happened? Jesus said, repent, or I'll remove your testimony. And how true it is, if we don't love Him.

I want to tell you something, this Christian experience is not a part-time job. It's a full-time occupation. And when you make Christianity a full-time occupation, you'll be surprised how much God will do in your life and how much you'll be able to get done, because Jesus said, seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, my friends.

Those are spiritual laws, but how true it is. Oh, I've been bogged down, and I've been mentally oppressed, and I tried to, and in the energy of the flesh to accomplish things and get things done, and I said, oh, it's worthless. And then go to my prayer closet and get alone with God, and pray, and get my heart wrought up in the Word of God, and pray and seek the Lord until the joy of the Lord breaks loose, and then I begin to accomplish what I need to do.

There's so much peace of mind. You can do twice as much as you tried to do before. You know what frustrates us today? It's working in the energy of the flesh.

Christians cannot walk in the energy of the flesh. The unsaved can, but Christians can't. And not experience misery and depression because you have two natures.

And if you have two natures that are in your body, and they're warring one against another, that's what brings this turmoil, this upheaval within your heart. And that's why as we're going to deal with it this week, is that you'll only be happy when Jesus is Lord of your life. When He's the Master, and you say, Lord, I let go, and I let God.

Oh, there's so many things. I'm just going to breeze through three more things. Passivity.

Passivity. Passivity in the warfare against spiritual powers. We've already talked about that, that Paul said that there are powers and principalities, and we are duped as God's people because we're not putting on the whole armor of God that we might be able to stand against the wilds of the devil.

God's Word says, if you will clothe yourself with My armor, then you will be able to stand in that evil day. Passivity over the death of Jesus Christ. We shrug our shoulders, and we undermine the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, the passion of Jesus Christ, being backslidden and indifferent.

We really are trotting underfoot the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. When we could care less whether souls go to hell, and whether this church goes to ruin, or whether it closes its doors tomorrow, I want to tell you something, my friend. Oh, we need revival tonight in our hearts.

Jesus died for the church. He gave His life for the church. He gave everything that we might know Him, and that we might live in His fullness.

And then passivity, because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, He rose from the dead, and God proved to the world that He was indeed the Christ, the Messiah. And not only that, He walked 40 days in the face of this earth, and He spoke of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and that He ascended into the heavenlies. And now tonight, so many Christians are passive, but do you know that for 2,000 years, my friends, that Jesus Christ has been an intercessory prayer? The Bible says that Jesus Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us.

He is up there at the right hand of the Majesty and High tonight. He is praying that the church of Jesus Christ would wake up! That the church of Jesus Christ would come alive, and that she would march, and that she would come into the fullness of His words when He said, Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That's what Jesus said.

He says that my church will go forth in power, and all the workings of Satan will not be able to resist the assailing onslaught of the church of Jesus Christ. And my friends, I want to tell you something. That's what Jesus is praying for your life tonight, that you may be set free, that you experience revival, that you deal with sin, and be gloriously filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and live and serve Jesus Christ.

And that's what He wants tonight. Every head bowed. Every head bowed.

Every eye closed. I could preach all night tonight, and I think some of you know it. No one could ever cover all the sins that a Christian commits.

But you know why this message was brought forth tonight? Just to show us that we may be a little further from God than what we realized. Because there's so much deception. There's so much disillusionment.

And what we're doing in these days, we're just crying out to God that the things of this world would grow strangely dim, and that eternal realities would brighten in our minds. As we're just meditating, I'm just going to ask the organist to come. Just to come and share, as we meditate upon these thoughts, very softly, as we are in prayer tonight.

How many of you Christians say tonight, Brother John, Brother John, I know that God is speaking to me. God has specifically put His finger upon my life. And you see, my friend, you need to get that sin under the blood of Jesus Christ.

Because the Bible says if we confess our sins, plural, He is just and righteous to forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He said you must bring your sins one by one into the blood of Christ. And when God tonight is bringing these things before your mind, prayerlessness, forsaking the assembling of the brethren, there's so many other things, hypocrisy, robbing God.

Do you rob God? Are you giving your tithes? What about a bad temper? Bad temper is a person filled with self. They say, you've walked over my line. How about idolatry? Things before God.

Murmurings, carnal spirit, complaining.

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