

Hero or Coward

by John Ridley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of confessing Jesus Christ and standing up for him in open, humble, and honest confession, despite the potential cost and consequences.

Duration: 55:51

Scripture: Isaiah 57:20, Matthew 9:27-30, Luke 18:13, John 9:24-25, 1 John 4:15, Revelation 2:7

Topics: "Repentance And Faith", "Fear Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher tells the story of a man who lived a worldly life, indulging in activities like gambling, dancing, and hunting. Despite hearing the call of Jesus to come and find rest, the man ignored it and continued his sinful ways. However, one night, when he was forty-five years old, he was struck with a severe pain that made him realize the consequences of his actions. In his anguish, he decided to plead for God's mercy, but hesitated because of the presence of a young maid. The preacher then challenges the audience to reflect on whether they are heroes or cowards in the eyes of heaven, emphasizing the importance of choosing God's praise over the praise of men. The sermon references John 12:42-43, which speaks about the fear of confessing Jesus due to the love of human praise. Ultimately, the preacher warns that gaining the whole world is meaningless if one loses their soul.

Transcript

Beginning at verse one, And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And he sat on the ground, and made clay of the stickle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation, sin. He went his way therefore, and washed, and came to him.

Now we'll drop down a little lower to the fourteenth verse, And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes. Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his place. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

Then lower down again, They say unto the blind man, What sayest thou of him that he hath opened mine eyes? He said, He is a prophet. The Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight. They asked them, saying, Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind.

But by what means he now seeeth we know not. For who hath opened his eyes we know not. He is of age.

Ask him, he shall speak for himself. These words said his parents, because they feared the Jews. But the Jews had it proved already that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

Therefore said his parents, He is of age. Ask him. Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise.

We know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not. One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Has God added blessing, and see this precious word to our hearts to know. Amen. I told you at the beginning of this visit that I had preached many sermons in this church, and was seeking to bring you four that I had never preached.

I didn't intend to speak on this one, but as I was praying last week for counsel and wisdom and guidance, the Lord brought before me this thought. To receive a hero's welcome. You know something about that.

The great Russian man that went away into orbit, and returned and went to Moscow to receive a hero's welcome. What a welcome. Little later, Commander Shepard, returning from his last flight into France to return to Washington to receive a hero's welcome.

Oh, wonderful dream. I expect unforgettable to the Major and the Commander, whether it be in the Red Square at Moscow, or through the grand streets of Washington DC. A hero's welcome.

It's possible to win it in heaven, you know. You might never get it in Sydney, but there's every hope if you'll answer the challenge tonight, you'll get it in heaven. A hero's welcome.

Listen to these two Russians, and then answer the question I'm going to ask. John 12, verses 42 and 43. Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on him, but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the sin of war.

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. My last question to you in this great visit is, are you a hero or a coward in heaven's dark? That's the only thing that matters. The depth of the multitude, the confetti of the crowd, doesn't count.

It is heaven's thought. True heroism is registered. And real cowardice is noted.

While it was a packed train, I was pushed into the corner and in the most uncomfortable position. It was the peak hour of travel, and I was trying to read the evening newspaper. Very interesting edition.

It told the story of the first Victoria Cross run in World War II. Corporal Edmonton, who gave his life for his officer, had won the bridge posthumously. And I was pushed up against the side of the train, holding my evening newspaper like this, and reading with deep interest that current story.

And suddenly I became conscious of a woman's head, leering over near mine. What was she after? Was she trying to kiss me? Thanks for the day she wasn't doing that. And what was she after? Was she trying to pickpocket and take something out of my pocket? Wasn't much in the pocket to take out.

What was that head doing, leering over near mine? Oh, just ordinary, common crime of trying to read her neighbor's newspaper. And having been guilty of the same crime myself, I didn't refuse to be elated, but I pushed the paper out a little so she could breathe in the other direction while she read. And she went on reading in comfort until she suddenly said, You'll excuse me while you're reading your newspaper, but you see I'm Corporal Edmonton's cousin.

And all were extremely proud of him. And then she introduced me to Corporal Edmonton, and to his father and mother and family, and Corporal Brennigan, and she was indeed extremely proud of him. No doubt.

He was a hero. He'd given his life for his officer. And he won the highest honor for valor that the Empire in those days could convey to any man, to Victoria Cross.

And most people appreciate heroism. And goodbye, shall it. Never should I forget in a dreadful day, the most awful day I expect I went through, second to one other in World War I, when we were just burrowed into little shell holes and hit the trenches under the terrific bombardment.

A little fracture bearer. Just the thought that jumped into my shell hole. Mr. Ridley said, Would you come across to that trench over there? Covid-X says he must go out.

He can't stand it any longer, but he's not wounded, sir. And he's not really shell-shocked. I can't take him out without an officer's word.

And we waited and waited until there was a few moments left in the dreadful bombardment, and then we dashed across and down into the trench. And I'd passed several men with white tracers ripping onto the earth for their only protection from the shells. And came up to this poor fellow, sitting at the end of the trench, a big bald fellow, trembling like an aspen leaf.

I said, What is it, lad? What's the matter? Oh, sir, he said, Let me go out. Let me go out. I can't stand it.

It'll send me mad, sir. Oh, let me go out. And I said, After a few moments, walking with him, I'll take him out.

There'll be no help to us when we go over the top tomorrow. Take him out. And as the little stretcher-bearer led this man out past these other men with their white tracers and grim-tight grips, I could read what they were saying.

We could all do that kind of thing if we wanted to. And an officer would say, Goodbye, Mr. Cowan. I want to tell you tonight, dear friend, I've far more consideration and esteem for that poor nerd's broken shoulders than I have for the treatment of this Tex tonight.

At least he's on the uniform. At least he stood up for the time to the awful bombardment, and then he's nervous for that. These rulers wouldn't do anything about it.

They were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ of God and the Savior of the world. But they would not confess it. They would not own him.

They would not honor him. They passed him by coldly on the other side. Harvest, you say, Peter.

They were believers. They were. They were believers with a buck to the tooth.

And I want to speak about those scarier bucks tonight, wherein men and women and boys and girls say, I'm a believer. And they do not confess it. They do not confess the Lord Jesus Christ.

They do not acknowledge the Son of God. They do not command the Christ of the cross of Calvary. There's the buck, the barrier of the fear of man.

It's part of the passage. Many believed on him, but they did not confess him because of the fallacy. Who was the fallacy? The fallacy just formed a strong political, ecclesiastical depth in Jerusalem, so strong, so influential, that they could put the fear of death into any man.

Oh, the rulers said one to the other, it's no use. You know us, we confess him. Then we'll be censured, we'll be condemned, we'll be criticized, we'll be cast out, we might even be crucified.

Or not. We'll say nothing of that. But it looks as though he is the Messiah.

Well, I think he is. But we won't confess. Ah, the fear of man.

Freeness of prayer. But to so put his faith in the Lord. His trust in the Lord.

Now, this faith. Ah, well, someone said perhaps in the congregation, they were rulers, weren't they, Mr. Ridley? That's right, that's what the scripture said. They were rulers.

Yes, I thought so. Just like some of these big people, that haven't the common-of-garden courage of the working man. People of more humble strife than in race would have the honest courage to confess the Lord.

Don't you think he thought of that? He was only a poor blind beggar, and his people were as poor as he was. And they sent him out on the streets to beg. There, with his great affliction, war and plagues, he sought to fend for the coins of the parsoned people.

And then came Jesus. Oh, that was different, when Jesus came. And we remember how he sat into the dust, and worked up with his holy sickle, and with the dust of earth, that remarkable culture, and put it on the eyes of the blind man, and told him to go and walk.

And he came and seen, and he passed his thrills. He's come out of darkness into light, and you could almost feel the joy of the man. Ah, go on, Luther.

Ah, no. You were never born blind. You were never... Oh, I was, and said, you can ask my mother and father.

I was born blind, all right. All right, sorry, parents. And soon the Pharisees have brought the parents to the front, and they say, is this your son, who was born blind? What does he now see? Yes, I said, he does run all right.

Yes, we know. We know he was born blind. But by what means he now sees, we cannot tell.

He believes. Ask him. He can speak for himself.

Ah, but parents, he has spoken for himself. He's told them what he thinks of Jesus. He's a prophet.

Now it's time for you to speak. They had heard tells, that if anyone could confess that Jesus was the Christ, they would be put out of the synagogue. And so your parents, poor people, were just as powerful as the rulers.

They would come and beat us, even after following the Lord for three years, perhaps a little more. And when that last betrayal night came, and it was warm, he turned at the fire, and the slip of a girl would let him in at the door, only a maid, crawled out in her rocket flight. This fellow was also the Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter said, Heavens, I know him not. He denied it. With all his muscles, with all his self-confidence, and the thrust of impersonality, he did not confess him.

It's always the acid test in the Christian life, friends. I don't mind whether it's in India, where it costs a man sometimes his life to confess him, where it often costs him his family, where it costs him a hundred percent more than people in this private land, or whether it's here in Australia. It's always the acid test to confess him, to own him.

Let me introduce you to a man who lived in the middle of the last century. He was a wealthy man. He lived gracefully in the world, a prosperous society.

Cards, dancing, racing, hunting, those things made up his life. Frequently he'd heard the knock of the pierced hand. Frequently he'd heard the voice of Jesus say, Come unto me and rest.

But he didn't come. And he took it off and tight-fisted until that night when he was forty-five years of age, playing cards with some of his worldly friends, a frightful pain caught him in the body. He collapsed at the card table.

His son and a friend lifted him up and carried him up the staircase to his own room, placed him on his bed, sent for the doctor, called him the little servant maid to light the fire for Master, for they lived in Scotland and it was cold. And as the little maid prayed to light the fire, but it wouldn't burn because of the winter, as he tried to get it going, this man, in anguish of pain, thought now, What a forty-four years of following the devil down to me. I'll soon be in hell.

I must sit on my knees and plead for God's mercy before I die. I'll do it now. I won't.

That girl seemed to whine all night, whispered to go out of the place, I can't do it in front of her. Oh, I can't. Oh, I must.

The pain is killing me. I must. No.

It only goes from the place I get out. And the pain increased. And suddenly, he rose up and rolled out of his bed and sat upon his knees and cried out, Oh God, be merciful to me, it's enough.

And saved me, Jesus Christ. And down low north, one of the greatest of Scotland's evangelists was born again. Many, many years afterwards, Mr. North Quincey said, I believe that was my last opportunity.

I believe if I had refused to acknowledge Christ before that servant girl, I would have not had another opportunity. I can't say for sure. God is very merciful, for as far as I know my own heart, that was the Holy Spirit's last call.

As I sat on my knees before the girl and acknowledged Christ. Because of the panic. Because of the flames of dismay.

Because of the girls at school. Because of the young shadows you've got to associate with. Because of the world that is all around you.

Fear of man. Wrong doing. How different to that great mass of heroes who march to the relief of luck now in the dreadful days of the Indian mutiny.

And there upon this monument, that grand testimony concerning Sir Henry Callalot. He feared man so little because he feared God so much. And his one testimony in the army was to Christ.

All he feared God to be. That's how it happened, didn't it? Paul, in his charge against the human race, said there's no fear of God before their eyes. How true that is.

David said he would be in the fear of the Lord all the day long. And if a man will not fear God, he'll fall into the snare of the fear of man. And though he's feared, could a hero's welcome in the streets of Moscow or Washington or Sydney? He's still a model and a spiritual talent.

He will not confess Christ. There is no fear of God before his eyes. They that honor the Son honor the Father who hath sent him.

He that honors not the Son honors not the Father who hath sent him. Fear of man. That I, as David preached to you know, David, believers, yes, that's right, but believers with a but.

Because of the dread of loss, they would not confess him. Oh, they might lose the synagogue. Oh no, you can't lose the synagogue or what the synagogue symbolizes, you know.

Oh no, look, look, they're throwing the blind man out of the synagogue now. He didn't do much confessing. He might lose the synagogue.

And isn't it the dread of loss that keeps many a man and woman away from Jesus Christ and from owning him as consular in passion? Watts, the great artist on one occasion, painted a picture of the back of a man, only the back, and underneath his great painting he put these words, great possession. And a friend came to see the picture and looked upon it, and Mr. Watts said, what do you think of that picture? It's only the back, you know, but that's the rich young ruler. He turned his back on Jesus Christ and they say his back looked horrible.

I meant it to look horrible. Can't be turning your back on Jesus Christ with a few thoughts, he said. That's what the artist thought.

But the average man and woman don't think it's a tremendous thing to have to lose the synagogue, you know. Or, what the synagogue symbolizes, probably you heard of that man who was earnestly entreating a friend to come to Christ. And the friend was treating deeply, and the personal worker, young he was, was urging him to an immediate decision in a fine manner.

And then suddenly the friend said, no, no, look here, I'll tell you honestly, I'm afraid of what I'd have to give up if I honestly come through to be announced to you. I'm just afraid. And an older worker, a worker passing, took his hand upon that man and he looked him in the eye and he said, did you ever think, my friend, what you certainly will have to give up if you don't come to Christ and become a real Christian?

That's the other side of the picture, isn't it? That's the eternal side of the picture.

Oh, I've heard the voice of the devil as many a man has, suggesting things in the soul. Listen to him, saying to you tonight, don't you make a stand for Christ. Why, it might mean you'll have to give up that secret sin, that little inward lust, that empty flirtation, that propensity to drink or to gambling or to loose living or to having a bit of a joke that's not so clean.

You'll have to give all that kind of thing up. Or you might have to give up that special thing that you want, that special friend who doesn't like this kind of business. You can't lose that special friend, for Christ's sake.

Or you'll think of what you'll have to give up. You'll have to give up the happy go way of life and the places of the world. Don't you come to Christ.

No. I am not confessing. Actually, I do believe I'm as good as the people that make a great show, and I don't like to be dangerous to call people to the front.

I'm as good as the next man. I'm a believer, all right. But you don't confess him.

Did you ever think of what you most certainly will give up in the world to come? I want to tell you, dear friend, as an old minister of Christ, and as one who has often dwelt on this, if you do not come right to Christ, open your heart and receive him, and stand up for him in open, humble, honest confession, you'll give up four of the most precious, priceless things in the world, and in the world to come. You will give up the pardon of God. Four precious, priceless pardons.

He came far from heaven's glory to perfect a pardon for sinners at the place called Calvary. He finished the work of a comb for sinners. He was crucified, that we might be accepted in him without being put away by the crucifixion of the cross.

And the word of God says beautifully and clearly, if you'll come, let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his foot, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy unto our God, and he will abundantly pardon. Abundant pardon, you say. Abundant pardon.

It's way upon way of pardon. That's what it means, it's like the waves of the sea constantly washing your poor soul and sending abundantly pardon. You'll give it up.

And there is a sin which has no forgiveness, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. And the way to get into the pathway of that dreadful, unpardonable sin is to sting your heart against honoring Jesus Christ. You'll give up the Prince of God.

Jesus went to that cross and shed his blood, the lifeblood of the Christ, the God-man, to give you peace with God. He has no peace through the blood of this cross. And when I come to Jesus with all my discord and all my defilement through the cleansing blood, I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within you that you'll give it up. And then you'll fall into that company of which the word says, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. There shall be no peace.

That's my God to the wicked. I don't know a more wicked thing in the world than to turn your back on Christ, to slight him, to deny him, because you deny the Father of the Son. You give up the peace of God.

You give up the presence of God in your soul. General Gordon's favorite text in the fourth chapter of John's first epistle, Whosoever will confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he is God, that he, if I will, from an honest heart, confess Jesus is the Son of God, God comes into my heart by his Holy Spirit and dwells in me. I'm born again, born from a birth, a new person.

But you'll give it up. You don't want the new birth. You don't want to be numbered with the saints forever blessed.

So you give up the presence of God. And I tell you, you'll give up a fourth thing. You'll give up the paradise of God.

Oh, that paradise, the paradise of God, where there is the tree of life to be overcome. That land of light and love, you'll give it up. There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth and sins defiles.

For whatsoever wrought the sublimation wrought his own passage through by the pride of his own deeds, sublimation's gone. Born makes us alive. Oh, yes, I greet you well.

I may not be a confessor of Christ, but I'm not a liar. I could turn you again to John's first epistle. I could read you from this book of absolute truth.

Who is a liar? But he that denieth, he is a liar. He's a liar. No, you'll give up paradise.

You'll give up the pleasure that God's right hand forevermore. You'll give up that love divine all love's excelling. You'll give up the joy that is full of glory.

You'll give it all up because you won't catch it. Let you lose what the King of God symbolizes. And when at last the cold, bleak winds of death begin to blow over you and the old house is beginning to break up and you feel your feet beginning to thrive, that voice rings out of the eternal saying, What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, his lost all? I don't think any man, be he professed Christian or be he a man of the world, has ever gained a hero's position.

But he's been willing to give something up. I could give you so many illustrations. Let me show you Lord Nelson on the port-a-deck of his ship at the Battle of the Baltics when the printers are flying left and right and men are calling and it seems so terrific that the high pastor singles to him to retire, to come out of it.

And when Captain Foley said the Admiral has signal to retire, sir. Retire, said Nelson. He put his last to his blind eye and looked through the blind eye and said, I really don't see that signal, Foley.

I would like to be blind sometimes and only one eye keeps the signal for closer action flying. And he fought through to victory. But he risked to court-martial.

He disobeyed his senior Admiral. But he was a hero, you see. And if you went to London, right in the centre of London, you would see Nelson dominating England's capital.

A hero. But he risked it the same that Daniel did when the writing was fixed and signed according to the law of the Meek and Persians. If there was any petition offered to any god or man for thirty days except for the king, the riots, he would be cast into the den of lions when Daniel knew that that writing was signed to him.

He went to the open window towards Jerusalem and prayed three times a day at the open window towards Jerusalem as he did aforetime. And they threw him into the den of lions. And God, to prove his power, shut the lion's mouth and delivered him.

Oh, I don't wonder that the apostle Paul said that he was willing to suffer the loss of all things that he might win Christ and be found in Him. Oh, I'll have to give up something if I become Christian. Isn't it a miserable, despicable attitude? I'll lose the synagogue.

Well, would you sooner lose the synagogue than the Saviour? Would you sooner lose the past, the fleeting pleasures of life or lose the pleasures of God's right hand forevermore? The dread of loss. The dread of loss. And then, of course, you'll come to the perverted values, the perverted ambition, the false scale of values.

Because they esteem the praise of men more than the praise of God. Of course, they'd like to have both. They'd like to have the praise of God as well as men.

But they swung out, swung out rather those balance sheets and on one side they put the praise of men and on the other side the praise of God. And then they wave them. Oh, no, don't you.

The praise of men. We want the praise of men. Heroes welcome in Jerusalem a group dancing amongst the Pharisees and the general public.

We don't want to be ostracized. We don't want to be a pilgrim. And we won't want to follow the Nazarene.

The praise of men. That was the cause of our Lord's crucifixion. That brought out like strangers the cross.

Pontius Pilate was, the scripture says, determined to let him go. Three times he said it, I find no fault in him. I find no fault in him.

I find no fault in him at all. Determined to let him go. And then they began to call out from the clouds, If you let this man go, you're not Caesar's friend.

You're not Caesar's friend. And Pilate willed it. Lord saw in the study of the trial bed, Pilate was damned with the dagger of fear.

And he submitted him to be crucified. And he was crucified. But all spiritual cowards, for Pilate, for Peter, and for many, many thousands and tens of thousands of spiritual cowards, he went up to the cross, and he was not ashamed to endure the cross, despised the sight, that he might pay the price of sin, and lead many sons into glory.

He was not ashamed to do it. Not ashamed to call us brethren. Not ashamed to die for us.

People still love the praise of men more than the praise of God. And when you come to lessen up the praise of men, it's simply hot air. It's passing popularity.

It doesn't last. Wellington came back from Waterloo, and they were cheering him, and giving him a hero's welcome, and a castle, in one Waterloo. Thirty years later, the mobs smashed the windows of his house, and there were little groups along the road waiting to kill the Iron Duke.

Why? Because his politics didn't agree with the crowd. And the popularity of the consular of Waterloo had gone down to zero. Oh yes, the praise of men is just hot air.

It doesn't last. That's why Sir Thomas More, when Henry VIII wanted him to agree to another divorce, said no. Not like in God's day.

Oh, said Henry VIII to Lady Alice More, you go and persuade your husband to agree to it. And Lady Alice More went into the prison where Thomas More was in danger of execution, and she said, my dear, just agree with the King for this divorce, and we'll have many happy days together. He said, my dear, how many happy days do you think we will have, should I agree to the King's wrong action? Oh, she said, God willing, twenty years perhaps, my dear, he said.

You're not good at striking a bargain. Twenty years! If you'd have spent twenty thousand years, it might have been nearer the mark, but what a day compared to eternity! Oh, my dear. You're not good at striking a bargain.

Thomas More, Sir Thomas More, went to the scaffold for truth's sake, for right's sake. Oh, but other guys have been dead so often in our campaigns down the years. I knew a certain woman that came out for Christ at one of our Baptist campaigns in the South West years ago, and she asked for one thing, pray my husband in, Mr Ridley, oh, pray my husband in.

And we did pray, and pleaded, and he came once or twice, and then stayed away, and then came for the last night of the lengthy mission, sat in the back seat, and the dear wife was holding on to God so she knew the joy of Christ after twelve days, a new creature. And when I commenced to make the appeal, he did what so many people do, he got up and shut out the door. And she was in tears.

No more mission meetings, and he's gone, she said. And he wept there. And about midnight, my wife and I were retiring in our caravan at the back of the church, and we heard a knock at the door, and we opened the door and there's the husband.

Yes, how are you? Come in. Oh, I'm a cur. He said, I'm a cur.

I'm a coward. There's been a great change in my wife's behavior and life since she took Christ, and I know I should have come out tonight, Mr. Ridley, but I'm a cur for it. I said, come, Brendan, you take Christ with me now, and make your confession tomorrow before your workmates.

I'll do that, he said, I'll do that. And we went to prayer, and we prayed together, and he accepted Christ. And next day, he went down to his workmates and confessed himself a Christian, born again, and a follower of the Lamb.

That was the way back in the early 30s. And about three years ago, I met him in age, a man out in Western Australia with the same wife, Bill Buckley. But I was a coward, I was a cur.

How dangerous it is for fear of man, the dread of loss. It was a poor scoundrel's madness not to confess. I'd like to tell you a very true and tender and challenging story as I finish.

A way on to an island, there was a great time of revival. It was the revival of 59. Multitudes were coming to Christ.

In Limerick, there was a movement of the Spirit that was mighty. Edward Singleton, High Parish of Limerick. Quietly accepted Christ, he said it is, into his heart.

But he reckoned in his own thinking, I'll not make any display about it. I'm well known in Limerick society. And so while it was rumored that Edward Singleton, magnificent handsome man, had come through for Christ, no one was quite sure about it.

And up from the south came Thomas Dredge, a virile evangelist, and he knew Edward Singleton. He was to hold one meeting in the main theatre of Limerick. And he wrote to Singleton and said, I'm coming to Limerick for one meeting.

Edward, I want you to come with me. Give me hospitality and come to the meeting. He got his answer back, Dear Tom, you can come and stay with pleasure, but I'm not going to your meeting.

Ah ha, said Thomas Dredge, and I know why. Edward Singleton is ashamed to phone openly he's on the Lord's side. As they were dining that night at the meeting, he turned to him, to Edward Singleton, and he said, Well Edward, you're not coming tonight, no Tom.

He said, I won't be there. Edward, he said, would you do one thing for me. Will you accompany me in your carriage to the green room just behind the stage? But Tom, what's the use of it? Tom, I'm not coming to the meeting.

I know, but just come with me to the green room behind the stage. Just see the crowds that's playing. You've got nothing on.

All right, he said, but it's useless. I'm not going to your meeting. And when they got to the green room, and Tom Frank sat down, he said, just before you go, Edward, have a look out and see what kind of a crowd I have tonight.

And Edward Singleton opened the door onto the stage and looked out and turned back, and he said, My Tom, you've got a magnificent crowd. The theatre's almost packed to capacity. Oh, that's grand, that's grand.

He said, sit down a moment, Edward, sit down a moment just before I go in at eight o'clock. I want to have another glimpse out, and then you can go. And so they chatted for a minute or two.

He said, well, time's up now, Edward. You better have another glance out. And Edward Singleton opened the door and looked off to the stage, and Frank stepped up behind him.

And he put one hand onto the open door and one hand onto the back of his coat. And he leaned over near his head, and he said, Edward, that's a great crowd. Oh, Tom, he said, that's Lindrich, the scientist who's got tonight.

Are they trained, Edward? He said, trained, no man. Of course they're not, said Edward Singleton. Well, out you sit and tell them how to be trained.

He put one hand onto the stage. And here is the high sheriff of Lindrich staggering onto the front of the stage. And he stood still.

And the footlights glaring up on him. And the writer tells us that on one side of Edward Singleton there was like a roaring lion saying, Do not confess it! On the other side was the angel of Jehovah saying, Whosoever will deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father in heaven. Singleton, after about five or ten seconds of silence, walked to the front and confessed Jesus Christ.

And told him he'd been a secret believer and had been ashamed to owe him. But he now acknowledged before the whole of Lindrich that he was a sinner saved by grace and dependent upon the Lord Jesus and lived from that time as a confessed Christian Christian. Well, French put him on the spot.

And in some sacred way, God puts it on the spot. He says, What will you do with Jesus? You? You cannot be. Someday your heart will be asked, What would be true with me? All stainless man, all with a hero's wealth in hand.

And the voice of that welcoming Lord Jesus saying, Well done, good and faithful. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. May God bless you.

We're going to bow before that great Savior. And tonight as we bow in prayer, I'm going to ask all there are many of us here that know the battle it is to confess Christ. I'm going to ask for those of you who would like to be prayed for for strength and power to make that good confession tonight to raise your hand up in prayer.

And I'm going to ask for any Christian man or woman who feels they've failed in that great heroic business of confessing Christ, raise your hand up and ask for the blessing from God to make you a hero of heaven, a heroine of heaven. And not a coward in sight of the Christ of the cross. Let us bow together in God's presence humbling our hearts and closing our eyes, bowing our heads and in these solemn moments of opportunity may I ask for those who would like to be prayed for for the grace of heroism, heavenly heroism to confess Christ gracefully before men perhaps for the first time tonight or for the strengthening of their confession or for the renewal of it.

Would you lift your hand quietly and let me pray for you just before I speak to God in prayer.

You lift your hand those that would like prayer with that courage to confess Christ openly put up the hand just where you are and I pray for you young man, young woman, friend who needs that power would you lift your hand up humbly and say brother Brittany pray for me that I may be unashamed to confess Christ before men thank you my dear brother God bless your heart thank you that's fine someone else thank you my dear brother God bless your heart thank you someone else while we're bowed in prayer just lift up the hand quietly and say pray for me brother Brittany I'm a Christian but I'm a poor confessor of Christ I failed him badly I want the power of God someone else come on there are many more that need prayer tonight God bless you my sister thank you and he will bless you for that

humble lifting of the hand someone else while we're just bowed in God's presence there are many of us here know our weakness now don't let us hesitate God gives power to those who ask him that dear man is still holding up his hand at the back thank you my brother is there someone else that is earnest enough to say come brother Brittany pray for me tonight that I may get the victory and be a hero of heaven just before I pray someone else we pray these few that have asked for prayer put your hands up young man young woman thank you dear friend thank you another lady two ladies back there God bless you someone else before I pray I may not see you but God will see you put the hand up toward heaven tonight and ask for prayer I'm about to pray someone else that would like to be included the

hardest fight in the world to get this victory place on to lift a hand up and put a heart down under God's mighty hand and say Lord I humble myself do help me to be a hero of heaven in thy power from tonight someone else Our God and Father we commend these dear friends to thee tonight and ask that thy blessing might rest upon them and the power of the Holy Spirit might be their portion and wilt thou give them the victory to honor the Lord Jesus Christ not fearing the face of man not dreading the loss of anything provided they gain at last give heroes welcome into that heavenly realm grant them thy grace and thy blessing we ask it in Jesus Christ's name Amen That has been one of my most fruitful messages in other places and I gave it because I felt God's meaning and if it's not been

received tonight it's not because God hasn't laid upon my heart his word and so blessed a time that I've seen a place give way beneath the power of the challenge to heroes I believe there are others in our gathering who really want to honor the Lord Jesus Christ tonight May I ask for those who have come forward on our other meetings would you just stand to your feet in testimony you've come forward on Friday night or Saturday night or this morning would you just lift up to your feet stand up to your feet those that came forward at any time and remain standing for the moment or two those that came out during this little visit May I ask if there's someone tonight would stand with them in confession of the Lord Jesus Christ you raise your hands will you rise with them now and confess that

good Savior just where you are is there someone that will do that God bless you my brother thank you God bless you is there someone else that could do that I'm going to ask while we sing our invitation hymn for other friends seated whether you've never done it before will you make this good confession tonight and stand with these friends and I'm going to ask for any Christian who feels that they would like to renew their confession at the close of our 60th anniversary will you also stand to your feet as we sing stand up stand up for Jesus 618 chorus tune congregation as a whole is seated these friends are on their feet in testimony I'm asking others to rise in confession of Christ while we're singing this grand message may God bless you and give you grace to rise whether it's for

rededication or acceptance of Christ don't hesitate stand up for Jesus

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