

God Is

by Leonard Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith and the gospel, highlighting that God's problem is the church and that faith is not just signing articles, but acting in faith.

Duration: 1:19:45

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1-32

Topics: "God", "Faith", "Worship"

Description

Leonard Ravenhill emphasizes the critical role of faith in the life of a believer, as highlighted in Hebrews 11, where faith is mentioned extensively. He challenges the audience to not only profess faith but to actively live it out, contrasting the faith of biblical figures who acted without the benefit of scripture to the modern church that has access to the complete revelation of God. Ravenhill points out that God's primary concern is the church, not the world, and that the church must return to its foundational purpose to impact the world effectively. He encourages believers to worship, walk, and work in faith, asserting that true faith is evidenced by action and a deep relationship with God. The sermon culminates in the powerful reminder that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Transcript

Hebrews 11, the key word in this chapter, I'm sure you know, is the word faith. Faith occurs 32 times in this epistle, 24 times in this one chapter, about 340 times in the New Testament. Do you know how many times it occurs in the Old Testament? Anybody know? Twice, just twice.

In the whole of the Old Testament, faith is mentioned. Usually when you join a church these days, they ask you to sign articles of faith. Well, signing articles of faith isn't difficult, but acting in faith is.

Just as many people have faith in prayer, but not many people can pray the prayer of faith. There's a great deal of difference. Dr. Orton Wiley is now deceased.

He was probably the greatest theologian the Nazarenes had. And he has a fine book on the epistle to the Hebrews, and he says that, let's keep this in mind, that the writer has not got a single word to say to unsafe people in this epistle. I think that's very challenging, but what is more challenging is to realize that there is not one epistle in the New Testament written to sinners.

Every epistle is written to the church. God's problem in the Old Testament wasn't the Amalekites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, or any otherites. God's problem in the Old Testament was Israel.

God's problem in the New Testament is the church. God's problem in the world today is the church, not the world. Get the church right, we'll soon affect the world.

God intended that the church should invade the world, whereas now it seems as though the world has invaded the church. I'm not sure, I think it was Dr. Vance Havner that said about the Bible, that one of the wonders of the Bible is that it disturbs the comfortable, and it comforts the disturbed. Hebrews 11 gives us a catalogue of some of the most amazing people in the Old Testament.

And again, to me it is disturbing that this epistle is written completely to the believer. You may say, well our preacher or some evangelist preached the other week on the second chapter, verse 3, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? That is still addressed to the believers. The key to the book, as far as I'm concerned, and for our meditation, and I think even for our lives, is in the 11th chapter and verse 6. This is the, this is the whole thing.

If you get this riveted in your mind, if you get it kind of burned in your mind, this could revolutionize our whole lives. Hebrews 11 6, he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. You preachers could get a whole series of sermons out of that.

He that cometh to God must believe that he is. He is what? Well, chapter 7 verse 25 says he is able to save to the uttermost. Elsewhere it says in what Jude, he is able to keep you from falling.

Elsewhere it says he is able to make all graves abound unto you. God is. The same word, book says in the first chapter, verse 8. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Now if God's throne is forever and ever, we don't have to fear he'll abdicate, we don't have to fear somebody can push him off that throne, they cannot. This God is described in verse 3 for us, upholding all things by the word of his power.

One of the old saints who wrote a very fine exposition of Hebrews, said this about it. That God foreseeing the dangerous heresies which would be hatched, and that's his word, which would be hatched by the papacy, gave us the epistle to the Hebrews as an antidote. Hebrews makes it very clear, the work of Jesus Christ was perfect.

There remaineth no more sacrifice. You can talk about the holy sacrifice of the mass or anything else, there remaineth no more sacrifice. And the mass or anything else is blasphemy.

Now here you have some of the most amazing people in Hebrews 11. Now there's one thing you should never do, and that is believe a preacher. You should never believe preachers, they're crazy.

The only time you can believe them is after you go home, and measure what the preacher said by what God's Word says. The epistle to the Hebrews, again is totally ours. But in Hebrews 11, Dr. Jowett, one of England's greatest preachers, this thing seems too noisy to me by the way, is it too loud? Dr. J. H. Jowett made his name in Cars Lane Chapel, Birmingham, England.

A very distinguished pulpiteer. When he died, the King of England said that England had lost its greatest, most distinguished preacher. But he has a book, and in that book, he has a number, but in one of his

books, he speaks about Hebrews 11 this way.

He says this is God's Westminster Abbey, and this is where God buries all his famous great characters of the Old Testament. Now when I was a youngster in my 20s, it's over 10 years ago, I was, I remember swallowing that hook line and sinker. This distinguished pulpiteer says that God buries all his great characters here, and so it must be right.

Well I discovered of course that he was very very wrong. God does not bury all his great characters here. Westminster Abbey, we bury the kings over here, and the poets over there, and the statesmen over here.

Somebody said they thought the Beatles ought to be buried there. And I said I think so, today. But I don't think they'll get buried there.

This is not God burying his greatest characters. There are some characters I would have put in this chapter that are not here. There are some people in the chapter, in fact most of them, I wouldn't have put in at all.

You see you can stand back with awe, and say oh my look, Abraham, look at this man, look at that, look at the other. And you say well I'll never be, I'll never come to maturity like that, my faith will never be so sturdy, I couldn't step out as these people did. Well let's keep in mind they were very normal people, they were flesh and blood.

They were made in the same mould as we are. They may not have been as mouldy, but they were made in the same mould as we are anyhow. They'd minds, and they were tempted, they were tried.

You see it just depends which way you look at these people in Hebrews 11. And you know an astounding thing came to me one day, it just shattered me. I was meditating on Hebrews 11.

Men and women who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of life. And you know that nobody in Hebrews 11 ever had a Bible. Now you go home and think about that.

Not one of them in Hebrews 11 ever had a Bible. You and I have the total revelation of God. If the world lasts another 10,000 years, God hasn't a word to say, he hasn't a correction to make, he isn't going to say my I should have told John on the Isle of Patmos, I forgot, I better get somebody to write a living Bible or something.

This Bible's been living ever since it was written. Just you hadn't enough, I mean most people hadn't enough sense to realize it was living, so somebody had to stamp it on the cover, the living Bible. I wouldn't like to have carried a dead one around for 50 years, I carried a living Bible wherever I've gone.

Because we've got a living God, and Peter talks about the living word. But they never had a Bible. Now you have as big a Bible as any man that ever lived.

I don't care whether it's John Wesley or Charles G. Finn, or the greatest expositor that ever lived. You have the same Bible, you have the same God, you have the same Holy Spirit, you have the same access. Look what they did without a Bible, look how little we do with a Bible.

How many of you have a promise box? You don't have promise boxes, little, little thing you know with scriptures on and you dig in it every morning. Well they're all right, and they're all wrong. I was in the

house one morning, a lady said, oh I got a lovely promise from the Lord this morning.

Now promise boxes usually, they don't have any rebukes in, they're all nice and smooth aren't they, you know. And she said, I got such a lovely promise from the Lord. I said, you didn't? She said, where did I get it? I said Moody Press, they made the box.

There are no rebukes, no rough spots, that always when you get up and feel, you know you need to drag this one out, that one with a little curl on the corner, you know, you know where to get it, underneath are the everlasting arms. When all the time is, you need something like that to get you moving. But we prefer the everlasting arms, the promises.

No as far as I'm concerned, I'm not facetious, this to me is shattering. That these men and women who could not take a Bible and put their finger on a promise, now Hebrews 11 6 I say, has been a comfort to me many times. I can remember a team challenge, many times we had crises, crises over money very often.

And I can say, remember going to my secretary sometimes and saying, look I'm going back home, I won't be in this afternoon. Don't want to see anybody, talk to anybody, phone anybody, interview anybody. We've got a problem and I would go, excuse me, and lay on my bed.

That's the best way to pray, always pray flat. Don't, don't bend you, if you're going to pray a long while, you, bad for your spine and your nerves. Most of you haven't got your nerves shattered that way.

But anyhow, the best way, lay flat on the floor, lay flat over your bed and pray. And I put my finger on Hebrews 11 and defied the devil, and defied my feelings, and defied the circumstances. God is.

And he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Not seeking him haphazardly, not seeking him apologetically, but seeking him with firm conviction, again that he is, and he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Now here we have it.

God has not anything to say, that's rather disturbing isn't it. Oh I hear people say I wish God would speak, and I think I know what they mean. But God hasn't spoke to humanity for 2,000 years.

He said everything he wanted to say 2,000 years ago, the trouble is we haven't caught up with him. Hebrews 11, there are people in this chapter that shouldn't be in it. At least I think so.

Oh you say they're wonderful people, they're horrible people. Nobody nice in the chapter that I can find anyhow. What about Abraham? Well he is the towering man of faith.

He stepped out of the earth of the Chaldeans, and he went out not knowing whether he was going. He set out in faith, he set out in unbelief. He set out disobeying God.

How do you know? Because the Bible says so. The called Abraham alone. Did he go alone? No.

He took a young man with him, in case he had to run after the cattle. He took an old man with him, because old men have wisdom. And so he took an old man with him, and he took a young man with him.

He did not go alone. Would you put this bunch of people in as examples of faith? Moses, he was a murderer. Noah, he got drunk.

Samson, oh he had all kinds of problems. David, he was an adulterer. Do you think I would have put Rahab, a harlot in as a type of faith? I wouldn't even have mentioned that wretched woman.

You go and analyze the chapter from that angle, and you'll be amazed. I'm getting old. It was my birthday yesterday, thank you for the card.

I'm so old I can remember, I can remember when people who wear jeans used to work. But, and I've even ridden in a train. And I can remember when the first plane came over our area, fifty odd years ago.

We went to see it when it came down in a field. It was a contraption made of, I don't know, look as though it was stuck together with bits of string and whatnot. And this, this wonderful plane, biplane came down.

And not long after this, somebody conceived the idea of taking pictures from an airplane. Nobody had ever done this before. And so we kept getting pictures of what they called bird's-eye view, a bird's-eye view of this, that and the other.

Now one day, somebody went to the top of the Empire State Building, and they took a picture of New York. It was very interesting. Another day, a man went and laid down at the side of the Empire State Building, and he shot his camera up the side of it.

And he took a worm's-eye view. Now if you put those two pictures together, you'll never know it was the same place. One is taken from there down, the other is taken from here up.

Now it just depends which level you look at, when you study these people in Hebrews 11. I say there are people in this chapter, I wouldn't have put a drunkard in like Noah, I wouldn't have put a murderer in like Moses, I wouldn't have been a wretched woman like Rahab. I wouldn't have put anybody hardly in the chapter.

I would have put some people in that aren't there. The man we talked about last night. Elijah, he strangled the economy of a nation.

He made the whole nation tremble. He raised the dead, he changed the weather. He prayed and the rain fell, he prayed and the fire fell, he prayed and the people fell.

Would have been nice to have a few deacons who could do that. But that's just what he did. And yet he's not mentioned in Hebrews 11.

When I mentioned this in a service one day, a lady came up, you know, one of these very knowledgeable ones. And she came up after me, she said, do you know why Elijah isn't mentioned in Hebrews 11? I said, no. Do you? She said, oh yeah.

You want to know? I said, yeah. She said, because it says, it says in Hebrews 11, these all died in the faith. These all died in the faith.

I said, it does. Well, she said, he didn't die. He went up in a whirlwind in a chariot.

And I said, you're right. So as we left the service, she was telling the pastor, I told Mr. Ravenhill he did something he didn't know about Hebrews 11. And I said, that's right, you're dead.

Could you tell me something else? Maybe I could. I said, who's the second person mentioned in Hebrews 11? The second person. I can't just remember.

I said, Enoch. What's he doing in the chapter? He didn't die. Well it never beats a woman, can you? Do you know what she said? Shows you the Bible contradicts itself.

Sure it says these all died in the faith, doesn't say everybody in the chapter died in the faith. I do not know anything more disturbing than reading this epistle. God has spoken, this is the, this is the emphasis.

This is what God has said. Are you going to listen to God or not? Because in the second chapter it says, if the words spoken by angels were steadfast, and it certainly was. The words spoken by an angel to Abraham came to pass.

The words spoken by an angel to Lot about Sodom came to pass. And if the words spoken by angels were steadfast, how shall we escape if we neglect? These are promises. God expects us to take these promises by faith and cash them.

A statement made here, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? How great is that salvation? Well you don't have to guess, it goes right on and tells you. This great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. You see where it started, Jesus Christ outlined it.

It was passed on to the Apostles, and they continued to minister it. Now verse 4, God also bearing them witness, both with signs, and wonders, and divers, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Now that is the gospel.

Anything less than that is not the gospel. Signs, wonders, divers, miracles, gifts of the Holy Ghost. You have a complete gospel.

It does not matter what happened in the, in the fall of man. As Isaac Watts says in his hymn, Jesus shall reign wherever the sun, in him, in Christ, the tribes of Adam boast more blessings than their fathers lost. Tell me everything that was lost in Adam, and it was all restored in Jesus Christ.

Now I do not know any word, any word more abused in our spiritual vocabulary than this word, faith. There are all kinds of weird interpretations about faith. I remember going in a tent, and behind the preacher they had a great big sign, it said turn your faith loose.

Faith is not a magic carpet, faith is not a wishing well, faith is not something you rub and a genie appears and gets you out of all the problems. The word here says that faith is the substance of things hoped for. Now people say extravagantly, usually when the preacher's going he says if you have faith it can do anything.

It cannot do anything. If faith could do anything there wouldn't be a woman here over 25 this morning. If faith can do anything, why don't we have a, make a journey to England and go around the grave of John Wesley and fast and pray and raise him from the dead.

Why don't we raise Martin Luther, we need him. I saw beautiful sculpting in a garden not long ago, a little baby, little cherubic dimples, you know it looked lovely. And I said to myself there's not a man in the world by faith can change that stone baby into a real living baby.

Faith cannot do anything. It can do the seemingly impossible if this is what God wants, but God isn't on a spring that I just use my faith and somehow magically things happen. No, faith is substance this first verse says.

You know when you come right down to this book, the epistle to the Hebrews, to prove the point that the Lord is speaking only to his children, the epistle to the Hebrews actually is a commentary, a commentary on the first five books of the Bible and the five books of Psalms, because Psalms is five books not one. If the writer to the Hebrews wanted to speak to people who are unsaved, he would have started his exposition in the twelfth chapter of Exodus, and he does not do that. Now I'm not facetious here, he passes over the Passover, and he starts with the 24th chapter.

The epistle to the Hebrews is really a commentary on the tabernacle furniture and the journeys of the children of Israel. You see, we become so lenient, we've so Protestant, or Romanized our Protestantism, that even sinning doesn't mean very much to us anymore. Many people it's a sinning cycle, and a repenting, sinning, repenting cycle.

Away in Omaha, they were excavating a lot, and a neighbor said to her neighbor, what's this business? Oh, they're going to build a Baptist Church there. We don't need a Baptist Church. Why not? We've just built a church to Our Lady a block away, we don't need two churches.

And these Baptists will come and start daily vacation Bible schools, and our kids will come home singing hymns, and getting tract. We don't want that. Oh, the lady said, now come on, you don't need to worry too much about the Baptists, they're pretty harmless people.

She meant that in a nice way too. And she said, you don't need to worry. The one big problem in America is Communism, not Baptists.

We don't want a church around here. Well, the lady says, you just put up with it. After all, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, there's not much difference.

Oh yes there is, the lady said. I go to church every Saturday, and I have my confession, and then I go to church, you know, and they have the sacrifice of the Mass, and the priest makes a sign, and pronounces absolvo deus, your sins are forgiven, and so forth. And, well, well just a minute, the lady said, Protestants do the same thing.

I never knew that. Oh yes, they do the same thing. Confess their sins every six days.

Well no, there's a little difference in the pattern, it's the same but a little different. Did you ever see a sign outside of a church revival? The Catholic lady kindly said, yes I've often wondered what it is. Well, now, now this is a bit different.

You, you confess every six days. The, the, the good Baptists, and Methodists, and a few others, they, they save their sins up. And then every six months they have a revival, and they go to the front, and they cry, and they tell God they're sorry, and they repent, and then they go back, and save them all up for six months, and then they go back again.

Well, it's so near the truth it hurts, isn't it? Except you don't pay the preacher when you come after you're a Protestant. How many times did Adam sin before he got kicked out of the garden? Hmm? How many times did Satan, what did Satan get kicked out of heaven for? I don't think he stole a slab of gold off Main

Street. I don't think he sought one of the, Gabriel or somebody, and had to go to hospital.

I don't think he injured anybody. He got kicked out of heaven because he said, I'm gonna be as God. Adam got kicked out of the garden because he disobeyed God.

Isn't it amazing that it says there in Jude, that God took care of the children of Israel, and he delivered them out of Egypt, but he destroyed them. Just for one thing. Moses leads Israel, a million and a half troubled people, and there's all kinds of problems with them, and he led them.

And one day God said to him, you go smite that rock once. And he smote it twice, and God says right, you get punished for 40 years. And it didn't take him 40 seconds to do it.

And for disobeying God once, neither he nor anybody else except two men got into the Promised Land. They could have made the journey from, from Egypt into the Promised Land, they could have made it in 11 days. They didn't even make it in 40 years.

What was the reason that they did not enter in? What is the great enemy of faith? The great enemy of faith is the sin of unbelief. And they did not enter, it says at the end of the first chapter, because of their unbelief. They didn't blaspheme God, they didn't commit a lot of hideous sins, they just said no God doesn't mean that, and they relaxed, and they sunk under it.

Now the scripture that we're nailing our argument on here, is again Hebrews 11 6. He that cometh to God must believe that he is. And he is a rewarder of them that diligently, fervently seek him. Hebrews 11, where are we here, verse 1. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is substance. We kind of think that faith is something theological. Faith is, is some mysterious thing that we have.

No, faith is substance. Faith is reckoning a thing to be that isn't. As in the case of a woman 80 years of age, when God said she should conceive and bear a child, and she believed God.

And her husband, despite the deadness of Sarah's womb, said it is, God is going to do it. Now we'll discover as we go on, that lots of these people had serious cracks in their faith. They faltered.

They were staggered by certain things that God had promised. You see in Hebrews here, there is a pattern. Now there are three things that always happen in faith.

Yours, mine, the faith of these people, it makes no difference. There are three things that faith does. First it reckons God is.

He's a holy God, he's a God of perfect character, he's infallible, he doesn't make mistakes. First, God is. Faith reckons on God.

Secondly, faith risks on God. You hear people say sometimes, well, well you take a leap in the dark by faith. Nothing of the kind.

You read this chapter, and it says what? Moses seeing. And you remember when Jesus had some conflict with some people, and they said, well, they began to argue about Abraham. And he said, your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it.

It may not see the pattern, it may not see what God's doing, but it sees in the distance, God is going to do that thing. It reckons on God, it risks on God, and it rests. There remaineth a rest for the people of God.

How many of us enter into that rest? You want to get rid of your frowns, you don't need the Avon lady and rub soap in, and all these other silly things you do. All you have to do is rest. Faith reckons on God, faith risks on God, faith rests.

You hear a preacher, an evangelist, and he'll say, I've got a word from the Lord tonight, Matthew 11 28, come unto me all ye that labour and heavy laden, I will give you rest. Usually stops there. You should cross the bridge and go to the other half of the text, take my yoke upon you, learn of me, for I am meek and lowly at heart, and ye shall find rest.

They've already got rest. Or they've got rest from worry and anxiety of their, of sin and judgment, and the wrath of the Holy God. But how many of us enter into rest? Faith is the most relaxing thing in the world.

You've got to get to that place of assurance, sure enough. You've got to get a hold of one of those exceeding great and precious promises. Again and again it says in this epistle, particularly in verse 13 of chapter 11, these all died in the faith, not having received the promises, but having seen that the promises, remember, that they'd seen them afar off, and they were persuaded of them, and they embraced them, and they confessed them.

Now look, if faith could do anything, there wouldn't be a martyr in the Church of Jesus Christ. These died in the faith. There is a passive faith.

They rested, God isn't going to open the way for us, all right we'll just rest in him. And they were chewed up by lions. They were stoned, they were sawed asunder, they had all kinds of tribulations.

If faith could do anything, we'd have no heroes. We'd have no martyrs in the Church of God. That faith doesn't always get you out of the situation, it gives you grace to go through the situation.

God doesn't lift, as he says in the 91st Psalm, he doesn't say he'll take us out of trouble, he says I will be with him in trouble. I will deliver him, I will honor him. Honor who? Well, honor the man that's mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, beginning of the Psalm.

Those who put their trust in, he that abideth, isn't that what he said? He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow. He rests, he's tabernacling, he's overshadowed with an Almighty God. And he may not understand the pattern, and things may be mysterious.

You see there's a pattern here in Hebrews 11, you can't change it. I say there are people in this chapter that shouldn't be in. There are people not in the chapter that should be in.

I think Elijah should be there. I think a man that said to the sun, stand still on Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Adullam, that takes a bit of faith. They can't do that at Cape Canaveral.

They've been plotting over there to get something going, weaving through the sky and up past planets, and I don't know how far it's going. And you know they couldn't, they couldn't work the thing out. They were mystified, because somewhere there's a day that they, they couldn't reckon.

And one of the guys over there, or at Houston, said apologetically, well when I used to go to church, you know, and it was simple. There's a story in the Bible about a man that told the sun to stand still. Where is

it? And they searched the Bible.

And they went back there into space, into history, and they discovered that there was almost a day. And then they said, well there's something wrong. No that guy isn't right, because there's about 40 minutes we can't account for.

And then he said, well there's a story about a man who one day was a bit sick. And he said, the Lord said I'll do this. And the Lord said, well he said that's easy.

Why don't you do it the other way. Don't tell the sun to go forward, tell it to go backward. And you know they found the other 40 seconds, 40 minutes.

Isn't that wonderful? You didn't think that's the way they had to deal over at Nassau, with all their genius. But they have to. You can't be smarter than God.

No man is a fool who reads his Bible. No man is wise who doesn't. Oh they're wonderful characters here in Hebrews 11.

But there's a pattern. Who's the first person mentioned? The first person that's mentioned is Abel. What is he mentioned therefore? What did he do? Well by faith he built an altar.

What is an altar? It's a type of two things, sacrifice and worship. Now as I said the other day, I have stressed and still stress prayer. But I'm quite convinced of this, the least known exercise in the Christian life is worship.

You remember Jesus got into argument with a woman, and she said well you say we should worship in Jerusalem, I say we should worship in Mount Gerizim. Somebody says you can't worship without a cross in your hand. Somebody else says you can't worship with women.

There's all kinds of arguments. What does God say? What did Abraham do? What did these other men do? Well first of all we read here that Abel built an altar. He worshipped.

How much do we know about it? Worship is not prayer. Worship is not praise. Worship is adoration.

Worship is a communion of love between two people. It's amazing as I was reading the other day about this fantastic man Job, and when his whole world was shattered he said he worshipped. How much do we know about it? This is where our soul gets culture.

This is where our love is deepened. This is where we gain strength. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.

You ever feel exhausted and washed up, what do you do? Take a shower, spray yourself, do something else, doesn't do much. You've still got problems, may help you physically a little, but the reverberation. They that wait upon the Lord renew their strength.

What's he talking about? Talking about an eagle. An eagle is a unique bird. It's very much like the Christian really.

An eagle lives in the high places, he perches higher than any other bird, he flies higher than any other bird. When there's a vicious storm, like yesterday afternoon, every other bird hides. The eagle takes off

and he challenges the storm.

He loves nothing more than floating in a storm. An eagle has great perception, at a range of two miles he can see a rabbit that length, and pursue it and catch it. It's a wonderful bird.

Lives above every other bird, soars higher, sees more. Lives on fresh flesh, only on old flesh if he can't get, but mostly it will steal, and and it likes things that are fresh. And it says again in the Word of God, except he drink of, eat of his flesh and drink of his blood, he cannot live.

And you do this actually again in worship. You know another thing the eagle does, he, he, he's a huge bird and he begins to get tired when he's about 60. And he withdraws himself.

He goes on a ledge of a rock, you might see them, I've seen some over there in the, in the, in the Rockies. And he'll get on a ledge and he doesn't talk to anybody, and he doesn't eat food, he just sits there and mopes. And the beak that he has, begins to curl under like that, till he can't eat.

It locks his bottom part of his beak, and there he is, and he sits on his perch. And he just says, well I'll have to sit it out, I'm gonna die. And he says, no I'm not gonna die.

I'm not gonna die. And he takes his head and he beats it on that rock till he knocks the beak off, and there's a new beak underneath. And he'll beat his feathers, till they go out, and then the feathers grow, and the beak grows.

And he renews, thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle. He has a really a recreation when he's about 60 years of age. And he lives another 60, lives another 40, or 30.

There's nothing greater, I don't care the best therapy in the world, mentally, physically, spiritually. As good as Bible study, it's as good as prayer. It's contemplation, it's a lost art in the Church of God.

Getting one aspect, gaze on the holiness of God. We're gonna try to do this tonight. The faithfulness of God.

Oh, it seems almost impossible that you and I could have any area of unbelief. We've got all these books, a complete revelation of God. How could we doubt him? We've got stacks of books, look what God did for Hudson Taylor, look what God did for this man, look what God did for, we should be infallible.

When the devil attacks you, you say, go home you liar, look God did this for so-and-so, and he can do it for me if needs be. God did this for his, God has said it. If the words spoken by angels were steadfast, how much more secure, how much more will God honor his word? God has said it, he is a rewarder.

But the first way down this road to spiritual success is worship. Where you don't ask God for anything, you don't want anything, you're just thrilled to death that he ever brought you into his family, and you gaze on his holiness, and his majesty, and his eternity, and his infinity. And to you, little Mary Smith that has half a dozen kids maybe, and a husband perhaps not saved, and not too much money to live on, and you can get up every morning and say that God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Noah, that God is my God.

After all, Billy Graham has no more access to God than you have. Good man that he is. There isn't a man on God's earth, whether he's a bishop or whether, you see the pulpit gives us a kind of a wrong impression, that the men that are necessarily holy and above us, nothing of the kind.

He has made us a kingdom of priests unto God. You have the same access. And I mind you as I said the other day, and morning and night, I forget which, that when God wanted to describe creation, he took only one chapter to do it.

But when he wanted to describe the creation of the camp in which Israel was to dwell, he took seven chapters to do it. And he reminds us that there in the center of that camp, with different groups on either side, north, south, east, and west, which he described. But in the center, first of all, you have the tabernacle.

And the first thing that God described to Moses was what? The mercy seat. I will meet with thee there. The tabernacle is the center of the camp, the mercy seat is the center.

The place of worship, the place where you meet God. It isn't the place first in order to us. It was first in order that God created it, or gave him particular, specific particulars about that, that mercy seat and the altar.

But, the first place for us of course is the brazen altar, the place of sacrifice. But God points out, and I reminded you again, that the priest who ministered to God had to be 30 years of age. Jesus was 30 when he started ministering.

The first Baptist preacher was 30 when he started, John Baptist. Joshua was 30 when he started. Joseph was 30 when he started.

Do a bit of digging yourself and find out how many others were. A man could not be a priest and minister to God until he was 30 years of age. He could be a Levite and minister to the people on the outer court at 25.

He could be a soldier when he was 20. In other words, it's the man who is mature. You'll be amazed how many people we've seen in the last two or three years who said Mr. Abner I've been to Bible school, I've been to seminary, they didn't say much about prayer, they said just nothing about worship.

We were in a home with a bunch of people, Baptist people, and I think doctors, wives, and doctors, and lawyers, and I don't know what. I remember this tall lady came with tears and she said Mr. Abner, I've never thought about it tonight, I don't think I've ever worshipped God. Why don't you come back and teach us about worship for two or three days.

Oh I've prayed, I read books, I witness, I teach a class. But worship, adoration, are getting intoxicated with the glory and majesty of God. It says about the holy beings in the book of the Revelation that they worship him.

They cease not to praise and they worship him. The foreign 20 elders worship him. They don't work, there are no prayer meetings in heaven, no healing crusades.

That'd be rough on some of the boys who want now to make money. But there's there's nothing of that kind. They worship, worship, worship.

I'd like to write a book on it one day. I'd like to write a few but I'm getting too old, I don't have time to write what I'm writing. But excuse me, it's a fantastic subject.

All right let's get past it, we won't get through the chapter before the evening service maybe. If you want to leave, you, you feel free to go. Don't worry about this please.

So the first person, the first act here is that an altar is built, Abel. Who is the second person mentioned? Enoch. Now if you'll go back into the chapter where he's mentioned there, I'm gonna tell you it, search for it.

In the book of Genesis, I think you'll discover this, that everybody in that chapter lived longer than Enoch. But only Enoch is mentioned here. What is he mentioned for? Worship? No.

Enoch walked. But you can't really walk with God till you worship. He walked.

Now he's not the only one. Noah walked with God. Abraham walked with God.

But specifically we're reminded that this man Enoch walked with God. But you worship and then you walk. Now who's the next man that's mentioned? Noah, being warned of God.

Is he famous for worship? No, but he did build an altar. Is he famous for walking? No, but he did walk. What is he famous for? He worked.

Oh he didn't know faith works. Is he famous for worship? No, but he did build an altar. Is he famous for walking? No, but he did walk.

What is he famous for? He worked. Oh he didn't know faith works. Well some of our faith doesn't work, I know.

But I mean you can work and have faith. You say well, yes Abraham. Oh we remember the what, what Paul said about Abraham.

Abraham, what did he do? Well Abraham was the father of the faithful we say. And he was justified by faith. Right, he got it right the first time.

He was justified by faith. That's if you believe Paul. If you go into that little practical epistle of James.

James says Abraham was justified by works. Do they contradict each other? No they're not contradictory, they're complementary. Justified by faith.

Well sure, vertically I'm justified by faith. But I'm only justified for having that faith in the eyes of the world, if my faith works. If it doesn't work, why should they believe me? Faith without works is dead.

Step back into the tenth chapter, notice a little thing there. Verse 36, you have need of patience that after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. Now there are two major problems in the life of every Christian, sooner or later.

Number one is to know what God's will is. Number two is more difficult, that is doing it. You have need of patience.

Do you remember how old Abraham was when God started working on him? He was 75. Do you know how old he was when God finished working on him? A hundred and seventy-five. So cheer up, you have a good way to go yet.

Seventy-five, a hundred and seventy, God worked on him a hundred years. You have need of patience. When you know what God's will is, ah that's one thing, but you can't leap from here to there, you need of patience, trial, the furnace of affliction, sometimes the hammer, sometimes the saw, sometimes the file.

You need of patience. You see, there are no duplicates in this wonderful chapter, they're all so different. The will of God for Noah was that he built an ark.

How long did it take him? Well we figure about a hundred and twenty years, you need some patience to keep doing something that everybody laughs and sneers. You know that man Noah is such a nice man, never did a shady business deal, never told a lie, he's a gentleman, he's such a nice man. But he's crazy, he's building a boat.

He says there are gonna be holes in the ground, the water's gonna come up, and holes in the sky. Did you ever realize that it never rained? There'd never been any rain. They'd never seen a shower of rain, this man says it's gonna rain.

Rain? He's a lunatic. Well you say how did the vegetation grow? Well it tells you that God watered the earth by a heavy dew in the morning, and a heavy dew in the evening. No rain.

And Noah says holes in the sky, holes in the floor, water coming up, water coming down. He's a nice fellow but you know when you get it as bad as that, you're in trouble. And they sneered, and they scorned, and he took it all for a hundred and twenty years, but he came out the winner.

You have need of patience. You're going on a long journey, you need of patience. Oh we don't, patience doesn't develop very easily.

Somebody said the other day, people say Lord I want patience, and I want it now. That's about the way we pray isn't it? You have need of patience. If faith is gonna be trusted, faith is going to be tested.

And notice all these people were individuals. They weren't committees, they weren't groups. God only works with groups so far.

If God's gonna make you a man, he's gonna take you on a lonely trip, say goodbye, kiss goodbye to lots of people. If you're gonna do God's work, you're gonna do it alone, because the church isn't gonna go along with him necessarily. You see how lonely these characters were.

As I mentioned last night, Moses in the back of the desert for 40 years, that's an awful long while isn't it? Enoch walked alone. It's a big test loneliness isn't it? When you can't share, when you can't ask advice, when the Lord says stay. Said last night about tithing, tithing our time as well as our money.

In the middle of the Welsh revival, when Evan Roberts, under God, was shaking that great community of Wales, he had had a fantastic revival. And he was moving to the north of Wales, and the press reporters came, take his pictures, give him a lot of free advertising. Oh just the thing you need.

You need that maybe in evangelism, you don't need it in revival. And he was praying and the Lord said to him, you fast for a week. Well that wasn't difficult, he often fasted.

No the Lord said, no fast, fast in words, don't speak to anybody for a whole week. And when the press reporters came, they said you want to interview this man and take pictures and and splash it over the newspapers and let all England know and let the world know what's been happening. And he took a piece

of paper and said, just wrote on the paper, God says I cannot speak for a week.

Silly, can't speak for a week. Wasn't it Pascal that said, perfection is made up of trifles, but perfection itself is no trifle. It's the little things, the tiny things, the small things that God says, you obey me in this.

And you have to do it. Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it. If he tells you get up an hour earlier every morning, do it.

If he tells you to fast one day a week, do it. Tells you not to use makeup, quit it. Tells you not to play golf, quit it.

Somebody else will ridicule you, doesn't make any difference. That's the first testing ground. He that is faithful in that which is least, it may be infinitesimal, very small, it doesn't look much.

Except it irks you if you say, well I'm sorry preacher I can't go golfing with you. Oh you decided to be holy, the Lord told me not to play golf anymore. He said you could use that time in prayer, or Bible study, or some other thing.

The Lord just says no. I may be wrong, but I don't think there's any rewards for golfing. I don't think you'll get a reward, some of you youngsters, for knocking your home run in the church league.

You see we're in the midst of the greatest battle in history. Principalities and powers. We've had a series of serious problems out on the west coast, as you know, you've read about it, and it's in other areas.

It's been in this area, where the kids have gone overboard on demon worship. There's a sacrifice down on the coast here, the other week we're told. You know the kids have thrown that over.

Devil worship, Satan churches, walking on the cross and spitting where the head of Christ was, having a blasphemous mass which they've had. And all the other things, they've just about thrown it out over the west coast. You know the rage now is the occult, mysticism.

Not God, but gurus. Fantastic. Satan's battling for minds, getting people so involved.

You've got to say one thing for the kids of our generation, speaking generally, they've rejected materialism. You've been in a place not long ago, there's a tall handsome boy and another fine fellow there, and these kids, handsome looking fellow. They've got sports cars at home rotting, they won't even drive them.

One of them, his daddy is the head of one of the greatest corporations in America. The other, his daddy is the vice president. They've got millions of money, they're not bothered.

They live in three-decker, three-story mansions. They've got servants and fantastic candelabra, and everything you could mention. And they just say, no we're not interested.

We never saw any love of God, we never saw any true devotion in our home. And they've hit the road a lot of them. I talked with hours, for hours with some of them.

They've rejected materialism. Daddy and mummy left for it, sold their conscience for it very often, trod people down to get it. I'm going to get to the top whatever it costs.

And then they got there, very often ended up in divorce and misery and all kinds of things. And the kids say we don't want that. They don't quite know what they do want.

They're searching, searching, searching to enough. And this is one reason why the Church of God must get right back to this apostolic Christianity. Signs and wonders and divers, miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Not that every meeting has to have some phenomena in it. The greatest phenomena is when you go to the house of God, there's an explosion of divine power and you tiptoe out. We had some meetings in Wales a few years ago, and night by night God descended on that group.

One night, one morning after the morning session, a lady came to me and she said, Mr. Abner, I think this is the greatest meeting since 1904. It's just like the Welsh Revival. I said, why? She said, well we climbed the mountain last night, it's a hill really, a big hill.

And when we got to the crossroads, we didn't realize till we got to the crossroads, that not one of us had spoken to each other. Usually going from church, we talk about this. Do you know there's a sale at so-and-so? Do you know you can get this? We, we chit-chat, all trivia, you know, mere, mere nothing.

But she said last night, it wasn't till we got to the crossroad and it came time to say goodbye, we just, just nodded. The stillness of eternity. I've said, and I still say, and I will say, as much as it hurts and people hate me for it, very often preachers and others, that I think we're the most impudent brood of Christians or mighty gods ever had to raise.

We pay lip service to the Holy Ghost. He can come at 11 o'clock, he must go back at 12. Of course the deacons want to go home and watch the rams play the goats.

And then he must come back at 8 o'clock, come back at 8 at night till 9. And then he can go home till Wednesday night. We just want the Holy Ghost on a string. When revival came to the Hebrides, Duncan Campbell told me that he went to church at 8 o'clock at night when the men had finished fishing and finishing the thieves, 8 o'clock at night.

And in the first six months of that revival, he'd never less left the church before 4 o'clock in the morning. The meetings were eight and nine hours with the Spirit of God brooding. Some nights he got up and gave a text, preached ten minutes and the congregation fell off the seat.

One night he preached, nothing happened. Closed the meeting at 11 o'clock. As they went out from the sanctuary, the people stand on either side, out of sheer courtesy for the minister, just as though it was a wedding.

As the preacher comes out they just bow, say thank you. They got right down the hill, they have some stuff there that looks very much like sagebrush here, they call it heather, it's a pinky red, very beautiful. When he got to the bottom of the hill, one of the deacons said to him, God, as they say in the Scottish accent, God, he says, God is very near.

Duncan Campbell said, I thought God was a million miles off, I never had a harder time preaching. This big angular Scotsman says, God, God is very near. And the old deacon turned around and says, look, look at Campbell.

And as he looked around, all those men and women, scores and scores of men and women, suddenly keeled over. They fell down in the heather. It was 11 o'clock at night, they didn't come round till four o'clock in the morning.

And when they did, there wasn't one of them that wasn't saved. Don't, don't ask me how it's done, I don't know how the Spirit moved. There's a man going down the road one, one morning, totally drunk, six foot two, Highlander, been on some hard liquor, swaggering down the road and suddenly keeled over and he fell in the dirt, fell in the ditch.

He woke up at six o'clock, completely transformed, born again, just rubbed the dirt off and praised God. He's one of the outstanding ministers of the Church of Scotland today. Don't know how it happens.

I know it pays to obey God, I know that God works mysteriously. I know that that revival was like every other revival, it had had birth pangs through a woman 82 years of age and her sister 84 years of age, that got their hands together with some deacons and refused to die till God split the heavens. But in years of patience.

What happens in childbirth? Three things. Conception, gestation, birth. You can't alter the order.

What happens in revival? Conception, gestation, birth. There's no pattern, there's no two revivals ever been the same. The revival in, in the Moravian revival, when the clock moved to 11, it's just turning here, when the clock moved to 11 on the 24th of, on the 23rd of August 1737, 1727, as just as that clock got there, the Holy Spirit hit that community.

And that one room where God descended on those Moravians was never empty for 100 years. It's the longest prayer meeting so far as we know in history. Sometimes that prayer room was filled with little boys and girls, eight, nine, and ten years of age, crying and traveling for revival.

Sometimes old people, you go two o'clock in the afternoon. We don't get things like these anymore. We think if we pray five minutes with tears, God ought to pull a lever, a switch, and save America, send revival.

Doesn't do that. I believe, you disagree, I believe in spiritual pregnancy. I believe you can find a body of people in a church, who will allow God the Holy Ghost to come on them, and they're going to stay and believe God until that revival comes to birth.

You have to learn to worship, and you have to learn to walk, and maybe you've got to do a bit of building. We won't come to the other characters, let me mention one before we go. See there are some characters here that don't get any reference at all hardly.

Verse 22, Joseph when he died, made mention of his bones. That's, that's not very dramatic is it? Made mention of where he wanted to be buried. That's all it says in Hebrews 11.

Do you know the two most perfect characters in the Old Testament? One was Joseph, one was Daniel. They were both blameless, you can't find a fault in their lives. Isn't that nice? Wouldn't you like to be like them? You would? Well look, this is how it goes.

Here's Joseph, he's up here with his daddy. His daddy says go down to Dothan, to your brothers. When he gets there, they put him down in a pit.

They take him out of the pit and sell him to the Ishmaelites, and they take him down to Egypt. When he gets into Egypt, he gets falsely accused, and he goes down into the jail. And when he gets down in the jail, the bottom falls out.

He helped two other men, and God delivered them. He was about 17 when he went into jail. He did 13 years for something he hadn't done.

13 years of punishment. 17 when he went in, 30 when he came out. The time Jesus ministered, the time John the Baptist ministered.

You want to be like Joseph? Torn out of your home, put down into a pit, sent down into Egypt, put down into jail. Everybody gets out, you're left there. What about the other half of the story? Well he begins to climb up, and up, and up, and up, and up.

Until he sits on a bench with the king, there's nowhere higher to go. Until the king puts a chain around his neck, and a ring on his finger, and he says I'm leaving town, I'm leaving the country, you take charge. Oh the second half is very nice, but the other was all by himself.

Nobody wanted to share the pit with him, nobody wanted to share jail with him, nobody wanted to be abused with him. And so the Lord says all right, you took it all that way, you go this way by yourself too. You know sometimes when we pray, we, there's a, maybe a little conceit gets into our praying, we kind of figure well, the Lord answers my prayer very often you know, he did this for me.

I don't think God does much for us really. I think that God always has a second string, if I can say that. Joseph was a lovely man wasn't he? Do you remember how he was born? His mother flung herself at the feet of her husband and said give me children or I die.

And God gave her a child. God solved a problem, God took away her barrenness. All right.

But God did more than that. God didn't merely solve her problem, God solved his problem. God didn't get her off the hook, God solved his problem 20 years up the road.

He needed a Prime Minister. And so he said well I'll give this woman the Prime Minister, she thinks she's got the child, but he's my child, I'm gonna use him 20 years up the road. Do you remember how Hannah prayed? What did she pray for? A what? Child.

No she didn't. She prayed for a man child. Because the male opening the womb, sanctifies the womb, it said in the Old Testament.

Did you still think the first child, that's fantastic, that's a blessing of God. I know that you know men are nicer than girls, but anyhow, she prayed for a man child. And the Lord gave her a man child.

No he didn't. He didn't give her a girl, no he didn't. Is there another kind? No there isn't.

What did he give her? He gave her a prophet. He didn't merely solve her problem, he solved his problem. He was going to need a man up the road 20 years, and so he gave her a child.

He gave her a man child. He did more than she could ask or think. Yeah this is God's way.

Note there are not two Josephs in this chapter, not two Noahs, they're all one of a kind. They're all people like us. Faulting, failing, discouraged, getting up, fighting battles.

But again, you and I are pretty inexcusable really when you come to think of it. After all we have all their lives exposed to us. After all we have the full revelation of God.

God has nothing else to say. If the world holds together a hundred years, which I'm sure it will, God isn't going to add another word. He said everything he, well in that lovely hymn, remember that hymn, Our Firmer Foundation.

And when I think of Hebrews, I think of that. What more can he say than to you he hath said. Your Bible is as big as mine.

We serve the same God. Again I say we're not only buttressed with the Word of God, we've got all these vast volumes of history, church history, what God did, what God is doing in the world even today. And he's asking that you and I get a faith which is vigorous, a faith which is strong.

Faith is the substance. Now I finish with this. Faith is sub-stance, made up of two Latin words, sub and stance.

Sub means under, submarine, sub way, it's under, stance, the way you stand. So faith is sub- stance. Sub is under, stance is stand.

So you say it means to understand. No it doesn't, it means to stand under. It means to get under with assurance.

After all God has given us all that we need in his Word. How does faith come? I've heard people say sometimes, it's used very often this illustration, when you get in a plane, you just sit down there, show the British stewardess your ticket, fold your arms, sit back and relax, if you can. That's faith.

No it isn't. Oh yes it's faith, but it's natural faith in natural people. We say to somebody at the altar, only believe, only believe.

That's not what God asked the man to do. The first requirement of God is not that a man has faith, or exercises faith, or believes. The first requirement of God is, that a man repents of his sin.

Now somebody else says, well faith and belief are the same thing. They're certainly not. The Word of God says the devils believe and tremble.

Do they have faith? Belief is believing God can do it, faith is saying God will do it, before it happens. If God can turn water into wine and he did, well if I say to you, do you believe that God could turn this this desk into solid gold? You'd say well I believe he can do it. If I say well I'm willing to close my eyes, you pray the prayer of faith and do it.

Oh that's different. I believe he can, but faith says he will. Not only he can do it, faith is more than belief, it's believing action, action, acting.

It's believing the thing that is not, as though it is, it's there, it's there in reality. Even though I can't handle it, I can't see it, I get an inward assurance and I declare my faith. Have you ever heard people say after a certain thing, oh I knew God was gonna do that.

Boy don't you wish it told you 24 hours before it happened. When your faith was wobbling and nothing looked as though, and they say, oh I knew, oh I've known that you know for a long while, the Lord told me months ago it's gonna happen. Why didn't you declare your faith? Anybody can declare it, it's not faith afterwards.

But faith is just as though you have substance, it's solid, it's real. No, the man there kneeling there doesn't have any faith. Do you know why? Well you read Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians and again it supports my argument that God's concern is his church, not a lost world.

The church first. Do you know why? Because Paul, the greatest man that lived after Jesus, says to the Thessalonians, I'm praying night and day for lost millions, know that I may see your face and supply that which is lacking in your faith. He didn't say they had no faith, he said it was an incomplete faith.

In the second epistle, the first chapter verse three, he says I rejoice that your faith groweth exceedingly. He says in the second epistle chapter three and about first two, verse two, all men do not have faith. Faith is the gift of God on my repentance.

Now how does faith develop? There's only one way to develop it. You can't gaze on God and say Lord my faith's getting stronger and stronger, it certainly is not. How do you develop your muscles? My muscles are hard to find, because I never used an axe, I never used a hammer, so I don't have much muscle.

Now here's a man, he comes along and he says Ray, you don't have much of a physique. I say no. He says I've got a book here, this changed my life, put three inches on my chest, an inch on my biceps, two inches on my legs.

Man, this has worked miracles in my life. I'm going around the world, I'll leave this book with you. And when I come back, you can give me the book back.

He comes back and he says you don't look any different. I say no. Here's your crazy book, take it.

Hasn't done me a bit of good. You told me to read that book, read it. I've memorized chapter three, chapter five, chapter seven, chapter twelve.

You ask my wife, I sat up every night in a chair with my feet up, with with Fritos in one hand and a Coke in the other, and I've just read this book and I've digested, I know all it says. Well it's never, I've loaned my book out and it's changed so many lives. You mean to say you read this book and you did all the exercises? Oh you didn't say do the exercises, you said read the book.

It'll change your life. It's rather shattering isn't it, when you realize reading the Bible won't make you a saint. Nor reading Watchman Me.

You can read from here to doomsday and be a spiritual dwarf 50 years from now, as much as you are this morning perhaps. What does the Word of God say? Be, what is it? Doers of the Word. Oh that's how your faith develops.

You've got to exercise it. Your faith groweth exceedingly. But only when it gets in the conflict, only when it gets up against the wall.

Your faith won't make Mrs. Smith's faith grow. Your faith won't make Mr. Jones's faith grow. Mr. Jones has to get that Word of God, it has to get in his bloodstream, he has to be tested to the nth degree.

He has to go down in the pit with Joseph, he has to go on a pilgrimage for over a hundred years with Abraham maybe. You know one of the privileges we have as Christians, one of the great privileges we have, you have every right to tell God you want to be a saint. But that's where your rights end.

You've no right to tell him how to make you a saint. Don't you wish you had? Don't you wish you could write a little prescription out and say Lord be very tender with me here, and be very careful with me here, and shield me from the wind there, and wrap me in cotton wool here, and don't let anybody shoot a fiery dart, and please keep the devil as far away from me as you can, please take me to heaven on an escalator. We'd like it that way, but that's not the way it happens.

I like the hymn our song leader likes too. Every joy or trial falleth from above, traced upon our dial by the Son of Love. We may trust him fully, all for us to do.

They who trust him wholly, w-h-o-l-l-y. They who trust him wholly, find in him wholly true. I quit with this, I mentioned my little friend last night, that little Scotsman that hasn't been to bed one night for the last 28 years, prays every night from 10 until 5 in the morning.

Oh he's not famous, he wouldn't be amongst the top 10 famous preachers or evangelists. He knows what God called him to do, and for 28 years he's walked with God alone in the midnight hours. Born burdens, born conflict, fought battles, resisted the devil, got many scars, many bruises.

The only way God pours in the oil and wine is when we get torn up. He doesn't spray us with some kind of Jeanette or spiritual deodorant to make you smell nice. As a hymn we used to sing in England, go labour on, spend and be spent, thy joy to do the Master's will.

It is the way the Master went. Should not the servant tread it still. If you're going to walk with him, you're going to have some of the greatest disappointments you could have this side of eternity.

Somebody's going to let you down, you're going to have lonely experiences, you're going to get 40 days on the backside of the desert, you're going to have a Judas somewhere, you're going to trust in somebody and they'll just let you down. And if you're not careful you will say that's Christianity. He didn't ask you to look at Christianity, he asked you to look at Christ.

He won't fail you, others will, he won't. You don't produce a masterpiece in a weekend. You don't become saints overnight.

There's a test of faith, the trial of your faith being much more precious. Faith is the only thing which is a fruit of the Spirit and the gift of the Spirit. No love is also, but faith is a fruit of the Spirit, a gift of the Spirit.

And in the sixth chapter, pardon me, sixth chapter of Ephesians, the shield of faith. Because if you say that God is, and he's working everything after the counsel of his own will, you don't understand the thing. But you just say God is.

God is perfect, he's infallible, he's holy, he's just, he's righteous, he never makes mistakes. So as bad as it seems right now, it's all right. Now tomorrow we're going to start with Abraham.

Right down in the Ur of the Chaldees, follow him right up to Syria, right down into Egypt, back again. See the mistakes he made, see how God made him. And when you think God had finished with him, he just started.

But that's why he's the man of faith. And the God who slipped his hand as it were, into the hand of Abraham and led him every inch of the way, that same God will lead you and I every inch of the way. You can't always see him but he's there.

We have his exceeding great and precious promises. Read them, take hold of them, they're yours as much as mine. Great to prove God, nothing more exciting in the whole world, than to prove that God is.

He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. More and more exercise your privilege in worship. Worship him, walk with him, work for him, witness for him.

It's the way to growing grace. We pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/30/SID30184.mp3>

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