

# I Will Work a Work Not Believed

by Leonard Ravenhill

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*God works according to His own divine timetable, and we can trust Him even in difficult times by remembering His faithfulness and promises.*

**Duration:** 1:11:21

**Scripture:** Isaiah 12:3, Luke 10:20, Acts 16:15, James 1:2-3

**Topics:** "Unbelief"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the book of Habakkuk in the Bible. The prophet Habakkuk is in despair as he sees the wickedness and injustice in the world, and he wonders why God does not intervene. However, despite his confusion, Habakkuk maintains his faith and believes that God will eventually turn things around. The preacher emphasizes the importance of using our time wisely and not neglecting our spiritual growth. He also warns against the temptation of materialism and highlights the need for accountability and judgment in the end.

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## Transcript

Tonight we're going to a fascinating book in the mine of prophets. Normally called Habakkuk, but if you've been to college it's Habakkuk. So whether it's Habakkuk or Habakkuk we're going there.

Let's look at chapter 3 and verse 1 for a moment. It's a strange beginning isn't it? It says a prayer of Habakkuk or Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigyanath. Now you know I used to think that was an instrument, but it isn't.

It reminds me of the country church where they had renovation and they got rugs and done the thing up, got a nice new organ. And somebody said the final thing we need is a lovely chandelier. And the treasurer said we can't afford one.

And the other people objected to it. We can't afford a chandelier. What did the other man say? We don't have room for a chandelier.

And someone else said well it's no good, there's nobody in the church can play a chandelier. And finally the secretary said well I can't put it in the minutes, I can't spell chandelier. Well you know I thought something like that happened to this wonderful word Shigyanath.

But actually it means irregular beat in poetry. Poetry is supposed to run smooth. And I think that this poetry does run smooth actually.

I want to deal with the verse here in the end of the little book. In the third chapter in verse 17. I think, well I read it and I find there's real rhythm in this poem.

It is a poem or it's a psalm if you like. There's rhythm and there's certainly very vivid description. Though the fig tree shall not blossom.

Neither shall fruit be found in the vine. The labour of the olive shall fail. And the fields shall yield no meat.

The flock shall be cut off from the fold. And there shall be no herd in the stall. Now if you want to arrange those you can say there are actually six things there.

Two, three, four, five, six. What's the bottom line? If you add them all up it's a picture of absolute desolation. The prophet is in a state of desolation and consternation and aggravation.

But then when you get past that verse you get to verse 18. It changes from desolation and aggravation to glorious jubilation. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord.

I will join the God of my salvation. Actually the Hebrew there says I will rejoice, I will sing aloud the praises of my God. I will dance in his presence in my jubilation.

Notice the next verse he says the Lord God is my strength. He will be my make my feet like hinds feet. I remember a year or two ago we were watching a TV nature program and they showed a man in the Rockies pursuing one of those gorgeous white goats.

He got ahead of him and there was a chasm. I think he said 5,000 feet deep. And that goat made a leap.

I thought he'd go to the bottom but he didn't. He went onto a little shelf and then he started zigzagging. He went down to the bottom of that chasm in seconds.

Never once slipped. I couldn't have done that, I know that. He will make my feet like hinds feet.

It has a special power by which it's able to grip in the dangerous places. And he says God will make my feet like hinds feet and he will make me to walk upon high places. Now we've got to go back to chapter 1 here.

Chapter 1 verse 1 says the burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see. Oh Lord how long shall I cry and thou will not hear. You see he's in despair.

The enemy's got control of the country. There's no equity. He says in the verse 4 it sounds like our day.

The law is slacked. Judgment does never go forth. The wicked doth compass about the righteous.

Back to verse 2. Oh Lord how long shall I cry how long will I not hear. I even cry unto thee of the violence and thou will not save. It reminds me of the verse do you remember in Job where he says I go forward but he's not there.

I go I go backward but I cannot perceive him. In other words he says is there anybody there. And this man is wondering why God doesn't intervene in the affairs of men.

And he's got some shocks coming up. The host a nation is in a state of anarchy, lawlessness, violence. Verse 4 therefore the law is slacked and judgment doth never go forth for the wicked doth compass about the righteous.

Therefore wrong judgment precedeth. Behold ye among the heathen and regard and wonder marvelously. Now this is God's answer to his despair to his desolation.

When the enemy is coming like a flood this is what he says. And we need to take this in our day because there's a flood coming on us before long. He says I will work a work in your days which you will not believe though it be told you.

For lo I will raise up the Chaldeans that bitter and hasty nation. Now this is what terrifies him. Sure the nation isn't walking with God as it should but why bring in the communists that's what it means really.

Bringing a violent bloody group of people to correct us. You see we're not allowed to choose our chastening rod. We'd never choose the right thing if we did we'd have so much self-pity.

But remember when God wanted to get Israel out of bondage what did he do? He raised up Pharaoh persecuted them and they had tremendous suffering. All that he might get them eventually into the promised land. But you know what they didn't make it.

Only two of them actually got into that promised land. They could have got in in 11 days and they didn't get in in 40 years. Moses could see the country afar off.

Well you say he didn't get in either. Yes he did. But when did he get in? At Mount of Transfiguration.

It was a bit late but he got there. But he missed much of the glory. Missed of the joy of putting down the enemies of God.

You know we're all trying to skip as you say over here. We don't play baseball in England. It's a girls game.

But anyhow you talk about skipping base one. You tend to skip the first base or the other. And we're all trying to do that spiritually.

And God says get to base one before you try and get to base two. This man is a lamb. God why in the world are you blind to us? Don't you see our desolation? Don't you see our hardships? Don't you see our oppression? Don't you see the gathering iniquity? Don't you see the nation is galloping in aggravated disorder? And God says I'll do a work in your midst.

Well I'm hanging on to that. What about you Dale? How are you doing? Mr Farrar what are you doing? Are you hanging on to that? I will do a work in your days which will not believe. I believe the bottom is going to drop out of our system before very long.

Financially. Today he said well all the banks are going to be, well not all of them but most of them, last year 120 banks failed in America. There'll be twice that number this year.

And savings and loans. There's no security. You say well I've got my Krugerrands hidden away.

Well I'll tell you what, Uncle Sam will find them. You know what he'll do? He'll make them illegal. You'll have to bring them in and they'll give you a credit slip for them.

They'll melt them and steal them away because we're going to go back into the gold system we're told. And everything that can be shaken will be shaken God says in Hebrews. Everything is going to shake the Babylonian system outside of the church and inside of it.

I don't think these big shots on TV, well I get into trouble saying things like this but I'll say it anyhow. I believe before long there'll be dry ups financially. You know when I lived in England I lived on the northern peak of uh what's it called now? Sir Wood Forest.

I used to go in. I never saw Robin Hood. I made Marion.

I never saw little John. He was seven feet four. I went to his grave.

His grave was by the college where we, where we were placed. We went to college. But you know in those days what Robin Hood did, he robbed the rich to feed the poor.

Now he robbed the poor to feed the rich. Why should a man with 15,000 a year struggling to keep his children and family together send money to a guy who's living at 50,000 a year? It will be unmasked that great day at the judgment. All this lavishly living.

All these creature comforts. The judgment seat. I call it the final checkout counter.

Or if you want it in the language of the IRS, the final audit. You know there's going to be some, there's going to be some shocking things. Now you're nervous now.

I can see that Jacob. You're going to be found out. These rich evangelists are all going to be caught at the end of the line.

No he's not rich. He's just an evangelist. But you know sometimes it looks as though God is indifferent.

Why doesn't he intervene? Because he's working to his divine timetable. As I've told you neither in your affairs nor in the affair of your church or nation. God will hear your prayer but he won't take advice.

He works everything after the counsel of his own will. Why therefore should we afraid? You know this is a dark little book. Let me say that.

But then there's some gems in it. Look at verse 12 of chapter 1. He says, Art thou not from everlasting O Lord my God, mine holy one? We shall not die. O Lord thou hast ordained them for judgment.

Almighty God thou hast established them for correction. Well if he wrote nothing else for the next sentence it's marvelous. Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil or behold iniquity.

Look at chapter 2 and in verse 3 he says, The vision is yet for an appointed time. But at the end it shall speak and shall not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it.

Come on now. What's that thing you're trying to rush God with? You can't rush God. God is never in a hurry but he's never late.

He keeps you to the last moment. I remember preaching in Australia. I preached on Abraham.

You know having to leave his friends behind. Then he goes up the hill. Here he says down here the bend of the river and God says go there to that mountain and there you build an altar.

He has to separate from his friends. He's already separated from his country. He's already unloaded all his wealth and God says go into that mountain and offer thy son and he goes.

With who? He said I and the lad will go yonder and we'll come again. Isn't that faith? So what did he do? He builds, he says to his boy. He must have been a very submissive.

He's a type of Jesus Christ. Isaac. And he says Isaac get hold of that rock and let's lift it over here and they pile up the rocks.

What's this for? It's for an altar. Doesn't it take a lot of grace to build an altar? You're going to be sacrificed on yourself? Yes. It's easy to build an altar to sacrifice somebody else but when you build an altar and you're to be the one sacrificed and the patient boy lets his daddy.

I think we think we say that Isaac wasn't more than 18 or 19. Do you know an 18 year old American who'd let his daddy gag him and bind him? Bind his hands, bind his feet without saying anything? Why me? Why me? He doesn't say anything like that. And there he is laid out and his daddy lifts the knife.

God said go and offer thy son thine only son. And obviously he wasn't the only son. The eldest son was supposed to get all the blessing but he was Ishmael born out of wedlock we'd say.

But God wouldn't take him because Abraham had cried over Ishmael might live before thee and God says I don't want the child of the flesh. You can't give God any flesh. The priest was anointed with oil and it says it ran down his beard and onto his garments, onto his skirt, onto the floor, never on his cheeks, never on his flesh.

God won't sanctify flesh. He destroys it. And there's the boy laying watching the knife come down.

God had told Abraham to do it, he does it. But God knew he couldn't win because Abraham says you kill my son, now I believe you to raise him up anyhow. There's a famous general in America called Stonewall Jackson.

I never met him but I like the heroism of the man. Did not E. M. Bowne said about him? He said God had to kill Stonewall Jackson because every prayer that he prayed God answered but he was praying that the south would win over the north and God said well I'm sorry but that can't be. Maybe he's the only person God ever killed because he prayed like that.

Here is Abraham with his knife coming down on his son and a voice says stay thy hand. Do you know most Christians wouldn't want to have killed him? Why? Because down there at the bend of the river the Lord told me go and offer your son. This isn't God, this is the devil.

But the scripture says my sheep hear my voice and you don't always have to listen to the voice of the preacher, he gets mixed up too. But the Lord said stay thy hand, when? Do you remember when they got the treasure of King Tutankhamen? King Tut's treasures were brought into Dallas, maybe you didn't see them. There was a tree.

Oh I can draw trees, they're easy to draw. Something like this you know, branches and branches and branches. But this is a low tree and there's a goat there with his horns caught in the tree, made of solid gold.

And when it was found at Lugzor on the Nile in what 1920, all the big shots explained all the other things. They said well what's this goat fastened in a tree for? And one man very blushing said after a day, you know I used to read my Bible, there's a story there in the Bible about a man called Abraham. And he offered his son and as he offered his son, he looked around there was a goat with its horns caught in the tree.

And they'd left that buried with old King Tut, or Amenhotep II if you're a scholar. And they found that model in gold. Well the old fellow in Australia said to me, you missed something.

I said I often miss things. He said you said about Abraham going up the hill, the torture of knowing he's going to kill his son. Waking up in the night, seeing his son there and he's going to kill that son.

Walking and he's going to kill that son. Building an altar, he's going to kill that son. Lifting a knife, he's going to kill that son.

And then suddenly stay thy hand. And he said at that very moment that goat got fast in the ram, got fast in the thicket. I said how do you know? He said because I've been a shepherd for 25 years.

And I know this. I said I've seen a goat, I've seen a ram of the sheep trying to get through a hedge and get fast. And when he gets stuck, he says he puts his legs out as though they were made of iron.

And he'll tug away at the tree and he'll do one of two things. He'll either pull his horns off or he'll toss that thing over his head. He won't stay there a second longer.

Once he finds his captain, he breaks out. And at the very last moment God tested Abraham's faith. The knife was up.

Maybe he could see in his eyes his son all bloody and dying. And God at the last moment came in. As our dear Paul said the other week when those men were put into the inner prison, right in the inner prison.

At the last moment God brings the deliverance. I don't know if you know the everlasting mercy by Macefield. But he says God will forgive thee all that thy despair.

You know we have enough evidence in the word of God to make us all infallible. It should be the hardest thing in the world for a Christian to have unbelief. All this is proven history of God's faithfulness and we're still dumb and we're still blind and we're still hesitant and we're still fearful.

Oh we read great stories of pioneers in faith. Well here we have a story of a man who's bewildered. He's confused.

The enemy is coming like a flood. But look at his faith when he says in verse 14 of chapter 2. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. At the moment there's only desolation.

At the moment we're in a state of anarchy. We're in a state of rebellion. We're in a state of captivity to the enemies.

But he says there's coming a moment when God's going to turn this whole thing around. In chapter 3 the prayer of Habakkuk. The prophets upon Shigionos.

Oh Lord I have heard of thy speech and was afraid oh Lord. Revive thy work in the midst of the years. In the midst of the years make known.

In wrath remember mercy. Now let me go over to this thing again. In verse 17 though the fig tree shall not blossom.

Neither shall fruit be found in the vine. The labor of the olive shall fail. And the field shall yield no meat.

And the herd shall be cut off from the stall. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will glory in the God of my salvation.

That was beautifully paraphrased by a friend of John Wesley's, William Cowper. Or you Colin Cooper maybe. Cowper.

He's the man that wrote that lovely hymn. There is a fountain filled with blood. He paraphrases that though the fig tree shall not blossom.

He begins it by saying sometimes a light surprises a Christian while he sings. It is the Lord who rises with healing in his wings. When comforts are declining he grants the soul again.

A season of clear shining to help it after rain. In holy contemplation we sweetly then pursue the theme of our salvation and find it ever new. Set free from present sorrow we cheerfully can say even let the unknown tomorrow bring with it what it may.

It can bring nothing with it but he will see us through. Who gives the lilies clothing will feed his children too. Beneath the spreading heavens no creature but is fed.

And he who feeds the ravens, I'm glad of that, that gets me in, will give us daily bread. Now here's the paraphrase. Though vine nor fig tree neither their wanted fruit should bear.

Though every leaf should wither. Nor herds nor flocks be there. Yet God the same abiding his praise shall tune my voice.

And while in him confiding I cannot but rejoice. You know out of adversity came some of the greatest hymns that we have. Here let me read one an American.

In heavenly love abiding no change my heart shall fear. And safe is such confiding for nothing changes here. The storm may roar without me.

My heart may low be laid. But God is round about me and shall I be afraid. Wherever he may guide me no one shall turn me back.

My shepherd is beside me so nothing can I lack. His wisdom never ever waketh. His sight is never dim.

He knows the way he taketh and I will walk with him. Somebody said to a Christian once where are you going? He said oh no I'm not going I'm following. And as long as you follow you'll be all right.

His wisdom never faileth. His sight is never dim. I said to brother Dave I think yes you know we use that scripture so often when we're in a jam.

Oh well now we see through a glass darkly. And many of us want it that way. We want to see through a why in God's name don't we say well take this thing away.

Let me see the thing as horrible as it may be. As militant as it may be against my faith. I want to see my enemy.

I want to know my enemy. If I can't calculate my enemy I don't know how to meet him and find him. Whatever he may guide me no one shall turn me back.

My shepherd is beside me and nothing shall I lack. His wisdom ever waketh. His sight is never dim.

He knows the way he taketh and I will walk with him. Green pastures are before me which yet I have not seen. Bright skies will soon be o'er me where the dark clouds have been.

My hope I cannot measure. My faith my path to life is free. My savior has my treasure and he will walk with me.

Well doesn't it seem sometimes that the whole thing is upside down. You know you Americans you don't even know your own points. Bless you.

How many of you know James Russell Lowell? What he wrote? One of the finest hymns ever I think. Let me quote part of it to you. Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.

In the strife of truth with falsehood for the good or evil side. Some great cause God's new Messiah offering each the bloom of blight or blight and the choice goes on forever. Twixt the darkness and the light.

By the light of burning martyrs Christ thy bleeding feet retract. Toiling up new calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back. New occasions teach new duties.

Time makes ancient good uncouth. They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast with truth. It is a classic as far as I'm concerned.

Though the cause of evil prosper yet his truth alone is strong. Though her portion is a scaffold and upon the throne the wrong. But that scaffold sways the future and behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow keeping watch over his own.

So often that's true. Truth on the scaffold. Wrong doing everything it wants but God's going to end it.

And that's the confidence this precious man has. One of the greatest of modern hymns written by an American lady. I think she's equal to an American poet anyhow.

It isn't in our hymnbook or we sing it. It's carrying out what I've said here. He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater.

He giveth more strength when the labors increase. To added affliction he addeth his mercy. You say give me more of this.

God says the only way to get it is go that way. Oh I want joy. You get the oil of joyful mourning.

Whether it's physical mourning or or a disaster in your life. He gives the oil of joyful mourning. Lots of you ladies don't want the oil of joy.

You've got oil of the lay and you think that's the whole answer. He gives the oil of joyful mourning. Okay.

To added affliction he addeth his mercy. To multiplied trials is multiplied peace. God will be greater to you when you go through greater trials.

When you allow him to do that thing that he's been trying to do and you keep dodging him and evading him and he can go around but you'll never escape from God. Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. We pet people.

We pamper. God pampers nobody. All the greatest saints have been the greatest sufferers.

When we have exhausted ours. What is it? Our store of endurance. When our strength has failed ere the day is half done.

When we reach the end of our hoarded resources. Our father's full giving is only begun. His love knows no limits.

His grace knows no measure. His power knows no boundary. No none to men.

But out of the fullness of blessing in Jesus he giveth and giveth and giveth again. But he doesn't give it so you can carry it as a reserve in your pocket. He gives it when you get into that place where you're lifting the knife to put it through some treasure thing you have and he says stay thy hand.

And to your amazement he made provision. He's made deliverance. What I want to say actually in this I've got through my introduction now.

I want to talk to you about joy for a little while. I looked up today that I thought I'd memorized it but I hadn't memorized the right quotation but in in Isaiah chapter 12 and verse 3. Remember it's a common thing we've said it so often with joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation. Well he's talking about something that happened way back in the history of the children of Israel.

Just as you read closely through Habakkuk he reminds them of the faithfulness of God. He says you delivered us from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. You delivered us through the seas you brought waters out of a rock and that's what they're commemorating in there in the 12th chapter of Isaiah and verse 3. With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.

There's a feast called the feast of tabernacles. It lasted seven days and at one given point the priests in a sanctuary they went down that rugged pathway to the pool of Siloam. Every priest had a golden vessel on his shoulder and he went down and took water out of that beautiful pool and he came back into the midst of the sanctuary and he poured out that water.

Reminding them of the time when God split the rock and sent them water and they commemorated it. They commemorated it with a blast and blare of trumpets and the crashing of cymbals and all the people followed and they sang praises and adoration to God the God of their deliverance. You know water doesn't mean too much to us.

Now this is a strange injection I'm going to make it anyhow. You know only in civilized countries like America if we are civilized I don't know but anyhow we're not barbarians to that degree. But only in America and England do we use pure drinking water to flush our toilets.

In every other nation they use secondhand water from rivers. We run out of water. The greatest danger to America is not running out of oil it's running out of water.

Take a city like Dallas is expanding so quickly it's a terrible strain on the water supply. And we don't think we turn the tap on or the faucet whatever they call it and we expect a flow of beautiful crystal water. They didn't do that.

They remembered when God split the rock a type of Jesus Christ and the rock of life the water of life followed them and he says we from the wells of salvation and it was a celebration. It was a time of excitement. They were thinking of the great God who delivered them.

Well you know 800 years passed before that happened again. Oh yes it's a feast of tabernacles. How wonderful.

I love to see the procession of priests going down there and putting their golden vessels in and bringing them out. Then they pull the water out in the sanctuary. It was the last day the great day of the feast.

Jesus went into the temple. I don't know why. Read the 7th chapter when you go home.

There was a price on his head. If we see him we'll kill him and the people said well there is why don't you kill him. Why? Because God was round about him and God is round about him.

We sang in that hymn and shall I be afraid. The God of majesty. We don't prove God.

How do we have to prove God? You've got a nice house. You've got some money in the bank. You've got the refrigerator that's stacked up with stuff.

What do you want to prove him for? It's all laid down. Good night. We're so smart we go by in our plot where we're going to be buried.

We get the right insurance. We've got pride in our burial. Don't bury me in a box.

Oh put a silver casket there or something. Like Billy Graham used to say Texas was buried in a gold coffin. It was solid gold and all the men gathered round the labourers and fellows on his ranch and there's a load of casket in the ground.

One guy said to the boy that's living. You know there's pride evening our funerals. You know man does he prepares where he'll be buried.

He chooses his minister. He chooses his church. He chooses everything goes to hell.

He prepares for everything except eternity. Part of the insanity of our living. Part of the blindness of our generation.

So 800 years after that celebration and again we don't know much about the feasts. They're very wonderful in the Old Testament. But you can imagine this great procession of priests and then the crowd following and they sing their halils and sing their psalms and have their doxologies.

800 years after they're celebrating again and Jesus is there in the crowd. They've gone down to the pool of Siloam. They come back into the temple and put out water and I don't know how he got in the temple.

Less still do I know how he got to the place where the priest stood every day. And then he cried if any man thirsts let him come unto me and drink. This spake he of the Spirit and out of his being.

Oh my being nor his being. The Holy Spirit not out of me. He's referring to the Holy Ghost.

He's not talking to me because the Spirit comes in me. He says out of his inmost being. You know if you read Romans chapter 8 it says the Spirit if you're really a Christian the Spirit of God dwells in you.

It says the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. It says the Holy Spirit dwells in you. Well why in God's name are we so feeble if that's true? Or is it just a neat theology? The people stood there amazed when Jesus stood there and again there was a celebration.

You know this joy Jesus speaks of. Remember in the 14th chapter of John it talks about the or 16th chapter it talks about the comfort of the Holy Ghost. When Jesus is leading his disciples he doesn't just say peace he says my peace I live with you peace I've tested.

I'm not working it out on you. And in the 17th chapter says that your joy no man taketh it from you. You know Christianity is supposed to be a joyous religion.

But why shouldn't it be? Well let me tell you why it should be. Let me look at first Peter. Well I'm in our first Peter in the first chapter.

You know these people bless their hearts they're very wonderful. Jesus is saying to his disciples I'm the essence of the Father. You say show us the Father.

You keep talking about your Father. He says he that has seen me has seen the Father. Isn't that something? He had the meekness of the Father.

He had the power of the Father. He had the authority of the Father. He had the intelligence of the Father.

Well if I say the spirit of the living God lives in me shouldn't I have some authority? Shouldn't I have some divine wisdom? Shouldn't I have some divine strength? You know I was thinking the other day about scripture we quote so often. You should receive power after the Holy Ghost comes unto you. And you should be witnesses unto me.

Who says that? Jesus. Oh well that's where they were going to have power to heal the sick. Forget it.

It already healed the sick and raised the dead and cleansed the lepers before ever Pentecost. That's a bit shocking to some Pentecostals but it's there in the book. Then they say Lord oh we've had an exciting revival.

In thy name we cast out devils. In thy name we did many wonderful things. In thy name we raised.

He said there's something greater than that. Rejoice that your name is written in heaven. In the Lamb's book of life.

In the honor roll of the universe. There your name is written if you're really born again of the spirit of God. You know what I've told you so often I'm staggered when I read Hebrews 11.

Men and women of faith. Subdue kingdoms wrought righteousness. Stop the mouths of lions.

Obtain promises. Subdue kingdoms. Dear Lord who does that anymore? But the punchline to me is this that not one of them ever had a bible.

Look at all we have to build up our faith, strengthen our faith, purify our faith. And what do we do? We're scared to death of the devil and the powers of darkness. Look at this in Peter a minute.

You know if those people got excited and danced and shouted and hallelujahed just because they got water what in God's name would they do if they witnessed the resurrection? Look at first Peter first chapter here. Verse three says blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. You know every time I think of a thing I think of Verdi.

Wasn't it Verdi who wrote the opera Aida? And it was first played in the opera house in Milan, Italy. And when they finished people screamed and yelled at 10 o'clock at night. And he unhitched the horses from his carriage and sent them down the street and they pulled the carriage to his hotel.

And at five o'clock in the morning they were still screaming and roaring calling for him. Verdi, Verdi, Verdi. He couldn't sleep.

He got up and looked out the window. There's this great tumult of thousands and thousands. They'd never heard that.

They'd never seen it. But it was so impressed. They were so impressed with it.

They were so caught up with his majesty that for hours and hours they were shrieking. Thousands of them. And then I'd turn and think my God resurrection morning there wasn't one person there at the greatest event in the world.

There wasn't even a disciple. Not even a man who said well you can't trust those others but I'll tell you Lord you can trust me. My name's Peter.

I'm a rock. I'll never let you down. He was about the first to do it.

Which is often true of people. But not one person there. When Jesus wreaked the empire of the devil.

One old hymn writer says on the Easter morning today he rose and today he rose and left the grave and Satan's empire fell. Or if you want it. You know I tease people that make so much about gifts of the spirit.

I say it doesn't have any. The Holy Spirit doesn't have any. None at all.

If somebody leaves you some money the lawyer comes and he reads it out. Your aunt left you this that and the other. Did the lawyer give it to you? No your aunt left it to you.

You say but what about gifts of the spirit? He gave gifts unto men. Every one of them purchased with blood. The Holy Ghost distributes them.

One of old Wesley's hymns says the purchase of thy death divide. Give me with all the sanctified the heritage of love. We're so miserably poor.

But though it tarry wait for it. I've waited 60 years I've prayed for revival. I spent nights in praying for revival.

I some other precious men. And I'm not giving up I'm hanging on. I'm not hanging my harp on the willows because some smart boys come and tell me the Bible isn't this man never forget it.

Look at the rest. Has God any history of failure? He deals with nations. He deals with individuals and he brings them all out triumphant.

They may go through hell but he gets them out anyhow. Well listen to this. We have a resurrection.

You didn't sound very happy about it. Verse 3. Blessed be God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of from the dead to an inheritance. Oh mercy if I got everybody everybody who died you know in England used to say oh don't you worry when you get to be an old man a lawyer will come and tell you I'm leaving you this I'm leaving you that I'm leaving your land I'm leaving your money.

Good night there must be a thousand years older in England. Nobody sent me a dime. You can't trust them.

He says I am an inheritance. Come on get hold of it. Number one it's undefiled which means it's beyond the reach of sin.

It fadeth not away beyond the reach of time and it's reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God. I've got an inheritance. I'm a landowner not here in eternity.

I've got an inheritance which is incorruptible beyond the reach of death undefiled beyond the reach of sin and it fadeth not away it's beyond the reach of time and it's reserved in heaven for me. Does that make you feel good? Apparently not. Well good lord if you can't be happy about that what do you want to be happy? You want a personal visit from Gabriel tomorrow? Do you expect to wake at two o'clock in the morning and there's an angel there with your halo? I'll wake up and say there's something I'm covering.

Oh wife darling do you know I think I'm sprouting wings. I've got something. Come on what do you expect? I have an inheritance.

Devils, demons, circumstances nothing can take it. It's mine. It's reserved in where? Fort Knox? Forget it.

It's reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God. In my office there I have a little thing it's about two inches square and each time they've been mentioning about this thing exploding in the sky the other day I think of it. It's there on a mantel shelf there on top of my books.

It's two inches square. It's a microscopic picture of the bible. It has 750,000 words on an inch and a quarter by an inch and a quarter.

Underneath it said this bible, it's the bible, was carried on to the moon in Apollo 15. They sent it to me from NASA down there in Houston. One of the men walking the moon had this little thing, pulled it out when he got on the moon and so my little bible has been on the moon.

I won't sell it you for a hundred dollars. Give me a thousand I'll be tempted and I'll give a thousand permissions. I'll get home tomorrow.

Jacob if you decide to buy it. But you know what the fellows got to the moon. They said we've often looked at the moon and there it is that beautiful thing up in the sky looking so beautiful.

That's not the shape of it really but anyhow. There it is that beautiful moon up in the sky. It hasn't got any props.

It isn't resting on anything. Nobody's holding it up here. But they said the amazing thing when we walked on the moon we saw the earth like that.

Suspended in space. And suddenly they realized how awesome it is. And you know it took the government billions of dollars to get those pictures.

They sent me a whole stack of those gorgeous pictures. They said the moon hangs on nothing. Come go to sleep fella.

Job says that in his book. He hangs the world on nothing. I don't know why they make those stupid things.

That thing that blew up cost a billion dollars. I could get them done for a tenth of that cost. I'd get one and send it to Japan.

They'd make it cheaper. We'd be able to send them up every week. He hangs the world on nothing.

He says I'm kept by the power of God. Not by the power of my zeal. Not my strong will.

Not my theology. I'm kept by the holy God who hangs that world on nothing. He upholds me.

I'm kept by his power. Why should I be afraid? The storm may roll without me. What was it? My heart may low be laid but God is round about me and shall I be afraid.

God can keep me in the midst of a total adversity. I told you we were fishing once in the Bahamas. And I don't like to say that at ministers meetings because they come after me for teasing them.

You know these preachers don't have. Oh it's amazing he got so many to that conference last week. They don't have time to go.

They've time to go duck hunting for three days. Shot you down. He's a duck hunter this guy.

And then some with him went up to Montana to shoot to shoot elk or something. Then they bring you some sausage and say we shot this thing up. You know what? That must be the most expensive sausage in the world.

Horses to ride into this place and then a good night. There's no time. We'll be sorry about that at the judgment.

Well okay we were fishing. I caught a fish this size. What was it called? A kingfish was it? And the next day the house where we stayed they had servants and everything.

Beautiful place. And they serve this fish up on a goat long long silver platter. Oh the pastor caught this.

Give him the first slice. So they gave me the first slice and I didn't like it. He said you put any salt on it.

I said this thing's been living in salt for 20 years. And all it has all it has to keep it from from the salt getting in is a skin which is no thicker than that paper and yet the salt never gets through to it. Is there anything more tasteless than salt without fish? So God consists I mean fish without salt.

So God can hang that world upon nothing. He can keep the fish in the ocean and that's the strongest salt in the any ocean of the world. That's where mortons get all their salt down there.

And yet there he can keep that fish and no salt gets through to it. He can hang that thing in space. Well how in the world does he do it? Say now that's not the moon that's the sun.

Here's Australia down here. Why did it drop off into the ocean? There's nothing holding it up. I've been in Australia.

I looked at the stars. They look very much as they do here except there's a southern cross there. But God keeps that thing in space.

He keeps my world rotating in space. He keeps the fish. I got it straight remember.

He keeps the fish in the sea and the salt's round and the salt doesn't get in. Are you telling me that omnipotent God who does all that upholds the world upholds the moon? Keeps the fish from getting salty? He can't keep me from sin. We used to say as children in Sunday school, Lord for tomorrow and its needs I do not pray but keep me, guide me, hold me Lord just for today.

Somebody said I don't live a day at a time. So they wrote to him. I need the every hour most gracious Lord.

That comes a bit nearer. Somebody else said I don't live every hour. So they wrote to him.

Moment by moment I'm kept in his love. Well all God has to do is hold me one second. That's all.

This mighty God holding up the moon, holding up the world, keeping that fish from getting salt in it. He can't keep me from sin. You say well you're saying it's impossible to sin.

I'm not. I'm saying it's possible not to sin. There's a big difference.

The first time I got on a Queen Mary I looked at that thing, the deck 80 feet above. I thought they'll never get this thing going. They did.

When it got in mid-Atlantic at 30 miles an hour I thought they'll never stop it. It's got no brakes. Oh it's a wonderful thing until the sea got hold of it and tossed it anywhere it wanted to do it.

It was like a chip on the water. Well as I looked up I knew that ship could possibly for some reason or other have been a collision in the darkness, in the storm and it could sink. It wasn't impossible for it to sink.

It was possible for it not to sink. I was on it when it made its 500th crossing from America to England. I crossed on it about 20 times and I marveled at the navigation and everything else.

Well look if you say well our young people are confused I'll agree with you. If you say we have to sin, well why don't you write a list up in the church and say these are sins you can commit and sins you can't commit. As I say I talked with a famous broadcaster in a university a few years ago.

He made a loophole for sin. When he finished his message I said well the message was pretty good but it had a hole in it. He said well what do you mean? I said you made a loophole for sin.

I said you know while you were saying that I was thinking of that woman in the bible that came to Jesus, a bad bad woman and Jesus said go and sin less. He said what? Well didn't he say go sin less? He said go and sin no more. That's the other side of the cross too.

That's before the blood is available. That's before the promises of God were given. She hadn't a bible.

She had no guide. She had the example of bankrupt priests and a rotten religion that was decaying. You know we think Pentecost would do as many miracles as it would.

But you know I was thinking about yesterday the Ethiopian eunuch. He was an intelligent man. Why? Because he could read Hebrew.

There'd be no translations. He was a rich man. He couldn't have afford to buy it.

He came up from where? Down here Egypt and he goes up there to Jerusalem. He was in Jerusalem. He got a translation of the scriptures all handwritten.

It cost a ransom. He bought it and he had about a two-week journey back going home and yet in the place where the Holy Ghost came he never got saved. There was no fire there.

A man had to meet him with a chariot in his chariot and explain to him what are you reading about. Oh I'm reading about a man and you remember it was the 53rd of Isaiah. And what did he do? Well there and then he was baptized it says.

But you know fire soon goes out in our individual hearts in our churches. We've trouble with North Africa now. Do you know about I guess about 200 years after Calvary after Pentecost the whole of North Africa there where it's uh say it's like this and here's the river Nile with all its deltas.

The whole of that coastline there was studded with hundreds of churches that were replicas of the upper room. They were on fire for God. One of the most remarkable chapters.

Nobody talks about it. You see fire will soon go out. If you don't stay on your knees and read this word your fire will go out too.

He says wherefore we greatly rejoice. We have joy. Why? Now for a season if need be you're in heaviness through manifold temptation.

There's no escape from it. You can be in ecstasy one day and in heaviness through manifold temptation the next day. But then it goes from temptation to something else that the trial of your faith.

Paul spoke about this the other day. The trial of your faith being more precious. It's not your faith that's precious.

It's the trial of your faith. It's the purifying of your faith. It's the strengthening of your faith.

It's the challenge to your faith. Dear God we stand still so long. I sometimes can't think I've been saved more than 70 years.

Oh about nearly 70 years and yet I'm so dumb as I am. I know so little. The trial of your faith is much more precious than gold that perisheth though it be tried with fire.

But it might be to the glory the honor and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ whom having not seen ye love though now ye see him not yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable. How many of us have that unspeakable joy? A joy that beggars our language. A joy that makes us feel bankrupt in our vocabulary.

It's a unspeakable. That's what Paul had. A joy unspeakable.

A faith unshakable. A love unbreakable. That's the man completing God.

A joy unspeakable. Nothing can invade it. This is private territory.

My heart isn't something for the devil to come and run through or doubt to run through or fears to run through. It's holy territory. And God guards it by his spirit and guards it by his blood.

Joy unspeakable? Dear God, what else do we want? I like the hymn, Our Firmer Foundation. He's saying to the Lord, what more can he say to me? You know, I get a bit frightened of these guys that keep translating the Bible. They leave so much.

The NIV that some of you love is almost the exact text of the Jehovah Witness Bible. It's so many errors in it. They've left pieces out and God says you can't take away from the Word.

The King James Version, not because it's English, is the best translation anyhow that there is. And God is going to punish these men who take things and they go to seminaries. You can't just believe that and that wasn't in the original.

All I know in the original was original sin. But I'll tell you, God's got an answer for that as well. Joy unspeakable and full of glory, seething at the end of your salvation, end of your faith, even the salvations of your soul.

Why should I be so ecstatic about it? Why is it a joy unspeakable? It's a joy unspeakable because I have faith unshakable, because I have a love that's unbreakable, because I have my name written in the Lamb's book of life, because I have a mansion reserved for me. Why shouldn't I be excited? Have you ever found a saint who is sad, that isn't back as a sinner? I look at the butterflies that come around the garden, not these days, but they do come. And I look at them going to flowers, because they're butterflies.

Like lots of Christians, they flutter everywhere, they don't do anything. But when the bees come, they do, they make some honey. Wretched butterflies, I drive them off, get out of here, go to Jacob's garden.

Oh dear, the salvation of our souls, it's a process. The Christian life is process, crisis, process, crisis. There's no finality to the Christian life, this side of eternity.

Not some of us make more progress than others, because we want it. You'll get what you go after. If you want to read the Bible once a week, do it.

But I'd suggest to you only read it, eat a meal once a week and see how you get on. Starve your body, not your soul. You're going to waste time, waste it.

We've all got time if we want to use it. I noticed a report somewhere now that the guys, some of them missed their prizes in the last Olympics. And from that day till the next four years, they're going to be up at four o'clock in the morning, they're going to run so far, chop so much wood, do this.

They're going to be in prime condition. Come on, do you want to go into heaven in crutches? Do you want to go limping into heaven? Do you want to go into heaven ignorant? I look at my books so often, and every time I look at them, almost every day I say, well I've got a pretty good library. And yet not one of those men who wrote those great commentaries or commentaries or anything, not one of them had a bigger Bible than I have.

He just used it better. He didn't have a back door to God's throne. He asked to go the way I go.

He didn't have a special anointing of the Holy Ghost. Well there are times when God does, but I admit that. But you see, all these resources are ours.

When I think of the saints and apostles and prophets and martyrs, as I quoted earlier, they climb the steepest to heaven through peril, toil, and pain. Don't you think there are thousands, maybe millions of people in Russia today who are as baffled as a bacchic? We've prayed in this jail for 10 years, our skin has gone yellow, our homes have been devastated, our Bibles have gone, our church has gone, and they've got nothing. But they've got everything.

When the walls go out and the God. Though the fig tree shall not grow, it's total desolation. I will rejoice in the Lord.

You see, sometimes God has to get us where there's nothing left to rejoice in. You lose some friends, you lose something else. And God's church is a jealous God.

He wants you. Not your service, not your ability, not your sacrifice necessarily. He wants you.

He wants your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength. He wants a love relationship with you. Yes.

What shocks again are going to be that great day? Men are going to say, well Lord, are you overlooking this? I had a city-wide crusade, I cast out devils in my name. And I did many mighty things. I made a film for your glory.

I tackled the devil in this reckoning. And the Lord said, I never knew you. But he knows our faults are far off.

What do you mean I never knew you? He said, I never knew you in an intimate relationship. You were not married to me. As I said to the folk the other day there, poor old Schofield in his blindness.

I wouldn't like to be Schofield at the judgment. He made a mess of it. See, people read the Bible and don't know where the Bible stops and Schofield starts.

So they swallow him. I wish they hadn't done, but anyhow they swallow his writings. And he says what? The Lord is going to rapture his church and then in heaven he's going to perfect it.

That's a lie from hell. Revelation 19 says that the Lord, the church, the bride doth make herself ready. The bride, who's the bride? The overcomer.

To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on the, who sits on the throne? The king. Who sits beside of him? The queen. Who's the queen? The overcomers.

As I said, I've been to weddings. I remember marrying a girl that was to inherit millions and houses and yachts and I don't know what. And as I saw coming down the just like that I said to myself, well I've seen all kinds of brides, rich ones, poor ones, fat ones, thin ones, educated ones, ignorant ones, but I've never seen a dirty bride.

I've never seen a bride come to the altar with curlers in her hair. I've never seen her take out a manicure, start manicuring her fingers and she's some dirty rags on, stains all over. The mother says, darling, wait a minute.

She throws a beautiful white garment over her. Oh, sweetheart, you look so heavenly. You don't, you stink.

Are we going to be part of the bride with our stains? With our spiritual infidelity? When I've been away in other countries, I remember being in, and I don't know how many countries I've been. I got to Australia. Oh, there's a stack of mail, so I sorted them out.

Oh, they don't matter. Here's one of my, darling Martha, I read the letter. I won't tell you what's in it.

That's not your business, but anyhow, I enjoyed it. Suppose I came home with my satchel full of letters and said, darling, you know, I've had such a program. We've had such big crowds.

We've had such meetings. Will you get me some tea? I'm going to read all your letters for the last three months. That's what we love to say so much when we get to heaven.

Lord, could I go to school for six months? I don't know much about Malachi, and I know less about Micah. I don't know much about Habakkuk, and I don't know much at all. Lord, I want to go in the primary class.

It casts you into outer darkness of going to the world. Where's the outer darkness? You find that out. Isn't that what he did with the unfaithful steward? Pushed him out.

You know, we'll all get to heaven. What a day of rejoicing that will be. We've got some big things before we get there.

They're going to go to the judgment seat. That's going to cut us down to size. Oh, we're going to heaven.

There are no tears in heaven. Where does it say that? In the book of Revelation. You're right.

But you know what? It also says in the book of Revelation, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. When does he do it? At the judgment seat. Some of these big, big preachers, boy, they'll be disillusioned when they get there.

Some little old widows who pray. I know people now who fast and pray every week. I know young men that are fasting five, pardon me, that are praying five hours a day.

Texans. I know men who've laid aside on one business. It's so serious.

Not to save America. I don't pray a minute for God to save America. I pray God revive thy church.

If the church is revived, he'll take care of America. But we want him to save our economy, save our dollars, save our bankruptcy, save our, save us from humiliation. When that thing exploded in the sky, our pride went down about 10,000 degrees, didn't it? I mean, we've always done it.

Nobody can do it. We do it. We've had men on the moon.

We've never had failure. Then we have that terrible blast. It's terrible to think of.

But again, who should have joy except us? Come on and wind this thing up. Jesus said, you may have my joy in yourself. Your joy, he says, no man taketh it from you.

Well, circumstances will try and take it from you. The devil will try and take it from you. But no man, he said, you can have it if you want it.

It can be established in your heart. You can be steadfast and unmovable and always abounding. That's a contradiction in terms, isn't it? Steadfast and unmovable and always abounding.

Work that one out. And yet we can have a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Isn't it a joy to know every sin you ever committed is forgiven? Isn't it a joy to know we're going to have a mansion in eternity? Isn't it wonderful to think we will bow to a throne where the king can never abdicate, never will abdicate, nobody can dethrone him? Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.

A scepter of righteousness is a scepter of high king. I don't wonder if Matthew Bridges wrote, good Englishman wrote, crown me with many crowns. Isn't that a gorgeous hymn? You better say yes.

It is one of my favorite hymns, crown me with many crowns. The Lamb upon his throne. Hebrews 1 says that Jesus has to be honoured by angels.

The occupation of angels is worship, not preaching, thank God. Nobody needs healing in heaven. I don't remember any place in the Bible where it says they pray in I'll tell you what it is, they pray in hell.

The man in hell prayed, get me out of this place. But I say prayers in hell are unheeded and prayers in heaven are unneeded. No praying in heaven.

We're going to see the Lamb exalted. We're going to see all the millions surrounding him. Well, come on, let's learn to worship here.

I don't want to go to a training class when I get to heaven because I don't have to worship. Worship is speechless adoration. There's a new book out of Dr. Tosias, I believe, well I know because somebody sent me a copy on worship.

It's a collection of his old sermons on worship and it's very beautiful. But you know, there should be such a spontaneous joy. I don't know whether you've got them, I don't care.

If you have to have a lapel pin to identify you're a Christian, God help you. What if you lose the pin? You've lost your witness. Dear Paul, oh I'm enjoying Paul being at home, he's so smart, as smart as his mummy.

And yesterday he said, Daddy, you know, he said I was reading about Spurgeon the other day, he said preacher, if you're going to preach on heaven, he said meditate until your face shines, until the light of God shines out of your eyes. He said if you're going to preach on hell, your ordinary face will do. I had to tell you that, Jacob, you didn't know that.

But why shouldn't there be something about us which immediately we are in contact with people, they know that Christ is in dwellers. It's not an artificial joy, it's not happiness. Happiness comes from things happen to go right, you happen to go with it.

They happen to go wrong, you go down. But this joy unspeakable, and I quote the last verse, Jesus for the joy that was set before him. What joy is that? Oh yes, we're polite, we hang Jesus on a cross, we put a loincloth on him, he didn't have one at all.

Part of the shame was to hang there in stark nakedness, with spittle running down his face. For the joy that was set before him endured the cross, didn't enjoy it, he endured it. Because it pleased the Father.

I was thinking of a verse that was written by a Scotsman, Andrew, not Andrew, Mary Andrew, Andrew Bonner. Go labour on, spend and be spent, thy joy to do the Father's will. It is the way the master went, should not the servant tread it still.

Toil on and in thy toil rejoice, for toil comes rest, strength for exile home. Soon shalt thou hear the bridegroom's voice. You know what? Remember what John Baptist said? Oh, he said, we're always, people mourn when the bridegroom isn't present.

When the bridegroom's there, they celebrate. Well, the church today is celebrating, there's no bridegroom here. You know, in 1793, that great cathedral in Paris, Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, France, 1793, they'd refurbished that huge building and they dedicated it, they had an official dedication to the goddess of reason.

We haven't done that, we've just unofficially done it in our seminaries. It's all in your head, you've got to think, you've got to do this, you've got to be half a psychiatrist or psychologist as well as a Christian preacher. It's going to get us nowhere.

We've got to get that buoyant joy that when people see us in adversity and calamity and tragedy, we still keep our balance. Like some precious friends here that challenge me so often. Adversity, calamity, tragedy, and I'm steadfast and unmovable, a despair to the devil.

I finally got rooted and grounded in him who is the truth. His word is truth. I am the truth.

When he, the spirit of truth, is come, outside of God's word there is no truth. Inside the word of God there is no error. Well, with all this to safeguard me, to build me up in my most holy faith, with the eternal glories that gleam afar to nerve my faint endeavor, I should say, but now to watch, to work, to order, and then to rest forever.

Tonight, millions, tens of millions of dollars will be spent in casinos and drinking saloons and everywhere, trying to find happiness. In a book that you loaned me, I was going to copy it and I forgot, so I need to borrow it again. Oh, maybe you give me the book, it would be better.

But there's a statement there, where is joy to be found? Jay Gould, I think, was one of the richest men in America and he said, I'm the most miserable man alive. Years back in England, there was a very handsome man, he had a lame foot, that's true, but he had black hair with curls, and every mansion, every castle, every royal residence was open to him in Europe. He was the Diodeion, if you want to call him.

Everybody loved him to death, Lord Baron. He wrote more poetry than any man in his day. He got to the top of the ladder in wealth, in everything.

He died on the shores of grief. He said, what was it, he said, I can't get hold of it now. Surely, his joys were all withered, but he said, the worm, the canker and the grief are nine alone.

Dying alone, not in the royal palace, dying on a beach in Greece. The worm, the canker, that's the wages he got, all tied up. What did Saul, king of Israel, say? I have erred exceedingly and prayed the fool.

What did Saul, who became Paul, say in the Bible? I fought a good fight. He didn't say I'm a good fighter, he said I fought a good fight, I finished my course, I've kept the faith. I've been a good warrior, I've been a good steward, and I've kept the faith.

And we end up either fools or we end up faithful. And the thing that stimulates us is to know that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Amen.

That was Hitler's slogan for the youth wasn't it, strength through joy. But the word of God says the joy of the Lord is my strength. What more do I want? He's faithful, he can't fail, he never makes errors, he has a perfect track record, and all he asked me to do is to trust him and obey him.

So if you're in a place where the fig tree doesn't blossom, read it over again. And come out on the clean side, come out on the side, he says, I will rejoice, I'll dance aloud, I'll sing the praises of my God, the world's falling apart, but the more it falls apart, the more I see his faithfulness, the more I see his holiness, the more I realize my steadfastness in him through his promises and by the spirit of the living God. We're going to go to prayer.

I noticed the operation mobilization of venturing on something, I forget what it is, but we need to pray for these ministries. I trust you're praying for the ministers. There was a break at the end of the meetings there in Dallas, but I'm praying that those men will maintain what they got, not only maintain but add to it, to their faith, to their vision, to their strength.

It's the only thing that will turn the nation around. Again, we're not going to be turned around by the White House, we're going to be turned around by God's house if we get it pure.

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