

The Ark of God

by Leonard Ravenhill

The ark of God is a symbol of God's presence and a reminder of his holiness and majesty, and it serves as a call to reverence and worship.

Duration: 47:16

Scripture: Exodus 25:8, 2 Samuel 6:6, 1 Chronicles 15:13, Psalm 24:7, Psalm 80:1, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 66:1, Revelation 11:19

Topics: "Gods Presence", "True Obedience"

Description

This sermon delves into the story of David and the ark of God, highlighting the consequences of mishandling holy things, the importance of obedience over sacrifice, and the need for a deep reverence for God's presence. It emphasizes the danger of trying to modernize or improve upon God's ways, urging a return to true obedience and a genuine seeking of God's presence.

Transcript

2 Samuel 6, we read from verse 1, Again David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people that were with him from Baal of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah, and Uzzer and Ahio.

Ahio, that's not a state, that's the name of a man. The sons of Abinadab drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.

And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord, and all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on hearths and psalteries, on timbrels, on cornets and cymbals. And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzer put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzer.

And God smote him there for his error, and there he died by the ark of God. Let's look a minute here in the 25th chapter of Exodus. Exodus chapter 25.

Remember the beginning of this chapter is where the Lord is selecting. He's going to do what I think must have been very strange to Israel. They had never had any covering in the sense of a tabernacle.

They'd been nomads. They'd had no priests. They'd had the heavens for the ceiling of their church, if you like.

And now suddenly, instead of being enlarged, they're contracted to a small space that has been called again, the tabernacle in the wilderness. And God gives specific instructions to this amazing man Moses about the building. It's very interesting that he had no choice in this.

He obeyed every commandment God gave to him. He had no more choice in the colors of the thing, any more than Noah had a choice of what kind of a rainbow he wanted. You ever wondered what kind of a rainbow he might have chosen? If the Lord said, you choose the colors, it would have been a mess.

If he'd asked me, I wouldn't know the colors. But he just did as he was commanded. And it says in verse 8 of the 25th chapter of Exodus, Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.

According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. Okay, come down to verse 17. Thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold.

Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof. And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make one cherub on one end and the other cherub on the other.

Even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another. Towards the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee, and there will I meet with thee. Now that's the first piece of furniture mentioned as regards the tabernacle. It was roughly 54 inches long, this ark.

It was three feet high and three feet wide. And it was a visible presence of an invisible power. It was a kind of an earthly resting place where God put his power between those awesome cherubims.

Remember how often the Psalmist cries, O thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Psalm 80 particularly, before Ephraim and Manasseh, stir up thy strength and come and save us. If you talk about the ark, usually people think you mean the ark where, you know, the children play with at home, they have little animals, and they go into Noah's ark.

Well, that was an ark all right. Now do you remember another ark beside that? Well, it was a little thing a woman made to put a baby in. She made an ark of bulrushes.

And thirdly, you have this ark. Now the ark, actually the word really means, if you get right to the bottom of it, it means a place to preserve something intact. It has complete coverage.

You know, I've said so often that faith does three things, it reckons, it risks, and it rests. I think the mother of Moses must have been, well, she sure was a wonderful woman. And she put that baby in that little ark and pushed it out onto the waters of the Nile.

I think it was a horrible risk. Now did she know a crocodile wouldn't eat it before she had hardly turned her back? Or the lid could have blown off and the sun might have scorched the baby crisp. Or it could have

been carried away on the flood or somebody could have stolen it.

But you see, when you get a word from God, you're not going to be shaken by the Philistines or anybody else outside. God had told her what to do and she obeyed. And again, that's the key, that's the anchorage of spiritual success, spiritual maturity, is obedience.

To obey is better than sacrifice. Remember King Saul filled a hole of that valley with beasts and yet he retained a few of the prized stock. And when Samuel came up to him and spoke to him, he said, well, I've done as you said, and a little sheep gave the story away, you know.

Wonderful what little animals have taken important parts in the Bible, isn't it? And Samuel said, if you've done what you said you've done, then what meaneth this bleeding of the sheep? And the lowing of the oxen which are here. To obey is better than sacrifice. There is no substitute for obedience, none.

Not there, not now, not ever. Again, trust and obey, there's no other way, there's no other outlet. You either do as God says, all right, you begin to shrink, you begin to wither.

Now here is the ark. And the measurements given to us, verse 22 says, there will I meet with thee. And that was a supreme desire of God.

It's a supreme desire of God today that when we come together we meet with him. As I usually ask people when, somewhere in a meeting, did you come here, or did you come here tonight to meet God, or did you come to hear a sermon about him? I talked with somebody today, an internationally known figure who said, you know, I'm realizing how little I know of God. And I had offered somebody a sermon that is the most profound thing I've ever heard, and this person said, I feel as though I don't want to preach anymore.

I said, well that's how I felt when I heard the depth that this man has. Talking about Jesus laying his glory by and being wrapped in our clay. Oh God pity us, we're so commercialized, we're so regulated by circumstances, we get up with the clock, the clock runs our lives, that we lose sight of eternity, we lose sight of the wonder of God's salvation.

And the chief concern is about the whole of the building of this marvelous, if you want to call it, kind of a private area that was to be roped off, and again when you think of all the linen that was put round, and every thread, billions of them were put in there by hand. Rather staggering, isn't it? And then there's to be a place, a holy place, and then not only a holy place, but the holy of holies, and this ark was put not in the holy place, it's put in the holy of holies, and it has the chief place in the holy of holies, and inside of it you have the rod that budded, and you have a sample of the manna that fell from heaven, and it didn't get worms in it either, and there you have the tables of stone. This testimony of God has to be preserved.

And the ark is an abiding place for God on earth, that is, he manifests himself there. Let's skip over a minute here, and read in the first book of Samuel. And, chapter 5, sorry.

We can't go through the whole thing, this is a fantastic study, I'm going to do it myself, but I couldn't do it tonight because it would take up too much time. But if you want to find a minute account of this ark, and God's desire and the way it moved around, you'd have to go to the first book, go to the first book of Chronicles, in chapters 12 to 16, and you'll find a very marvelous account of the moving of that wonderful ark. And then, of course, you'd have to read Psalm 68 and Psalm 101, which also deal with this, and Psalm 24.

You see, this is some little bit of furniture that's tucked away in a corner that has no meaning, meaning, it's the abiding place. If you like, it's the seat, it's the dwelling place. You have the ark, and then on the top of the ark you have a mercy seat.

The Salvation Army never used to talk about coming to the altar, they used to sing. I remember that years ago, 60, 70 years ago, when the army used to sing, Come to the mercy seat, fervently kneel, Here bring you wounded heart, Here tell your anguish, Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. There's a mercy seat, a blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

Somebody afterwards removed that lid and looked inside, and because they did, they got into serious trouble. Now, if you read those Psalms again, 68 and 101 and Psalm 24, you'll find this thing grows immensely, immensely interesting. Okay, we're now in the first book of Samuel, chapter 5. The Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.

When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. Now, when they of Ashdod rose early in the morning, behold, Dagon had fallen upon his face on the earth before the ark of God. And they took Dagon and set him on his place again.

And they arose early in the morning and he was fallen on his face, and his head and his hands had broken off. Now, you see here the peril of toying or playing with holy things. There's a verse I didn't look up, but it talks about the iniquity of holy things.

Now, that's something to really turn over, isn't it? How in the world can you have the iniquity of holy things? These people have captured the ark of God, they thought it would do them good, instead it did evil. They put it at the side of their God. This monstrous God, Dagon, with the upper part of his body was a man and the lower part a fish, something like a mermaid we would say today.

And there he stood in the temple where people worshipped him. And as soon as they put the ark of God there, without anybody doing a thing, big old Dagon fell down on his face. So they stood him up again.

And they went in the next morning, he was worse off. He not only fell down, his hands had broken off, his feet had broken off. Just because of God's presence being there.

Now see what happened further in the chapter. When they rose early in the morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. And the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold.

Only the stump of Dagon was left. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any that came into Dagon's house dared tread on the threshold of Dagon to this day. You see, just that one visitation, that one movement of God terrified them.

So in a sense, Dagon had to go out of business. Verse 6, The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them and smote them with emeralds and Ashdod and the coats thereof. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of God of Israel shall not abide with us, for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our guard.

Going to the end of the 8th verse, And they carried the ark of God, the God of Israel, they carried the ark of the God of Israel out thither. And it was so, after they had carried it out, that the hand of the Lord was against the city. Now here you are again, you see the peril.

What I want to emphasize, two things, I want to emphasize the peril of having these holy things and misusing them. And yet the peril is obviously the opposite to the power. Remember the children of Israel, one of their marvelous escapades, they walked around the city seven times.

What did they do? They carried the ark of God. So then that was the very presence of God. Can you imagine people on the walls looking down and say, well who are these lunatics? I mean, what are they doing? They were not allowed to speak.

That must have been tough on some of them. They were not allowed to speak. They walked around in silence.

They carried the ark. What have they got there? Is that a coffin? What is it? It's a casket. You see, they were not allowed to mount it.

When Moses was sharing out some of the property of Israel, he gave various things to various people, but the sons, I've forgotten his name, Atham I think it was, his sons were not allowed to have any cattle or any of the possessions. They were separated to carrying the ark of God. Now, the peril is this, and I think to me it comes home with great force.

Oh, let me go to the other scripture. Where did we read a bit earlier? I've forgotten that chapter. 2 Samuel 6. 2 Samuel 6, okay.

2 Samuel 6 and verse 6. When they came to Nacum's threshing floor, Uzar put forth his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, and the oxen shook it, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against it. Why? Now they'd made a new cart for it. God said it never had to be on a cart.

God said it had to have four gold rings, one on each corner, and put a staff through it, and that men had to carry this thing. But they made a new cart. You know, the Jews then, I don't know about today, they loved new things.

Remember what Samson said, if you fasten me with seven new ropes, then I shall be like other men, or then I shall be weak like other men. Rather insulting to us, isn't it? Remember it later, when Jesus died, they put him in a new tomb. When Jesus rode an ass, he rode one that nobody had broken in.

It was entirely new. They loved new things. And these people thought they were doing God a favor by, you know, modernizing this thing.

I mean, why carry the thing on your shoulders anyhow when oxen can do it? Now, I don't know what happened to these oxen. You know, it says that when they came to the threshing floor of Uzar, maybe they thought it was lunchtime. You know, they could smell, mmm, that's the stuff we eat, and mmm, right now they're threshing some new wheat.

Mmm, we should stay and have some. And maybe it was the very action of those creatures that swayed the ark. Now, isn't it really awesome? They didn't decide to paint it another color.

They didn't decide to put a second deck on it. They didn't disfigure it in any way. The men didn't go in front of it and start blaspheming.

The man somehow thought he do got it. Oh, look, the ark is going to topple over. Oh, I'll hold it.

Somebody once asked Mr. Spurgeon if he would join a society for the defense of the Bible. And he said, you don't usually walk before a lion with a sword. Why do you need to defend the Bible? All this man did was put his hand up to stay the ark, and immediately he was smitten.

What do you think we're doing with the gospel today? Dressing it up? Painting it up? Somebody told me this week of a Christian group, a rock band, a Christian rock band. But anyhow, whatever they are, they go around, and now they've got sequins on their coats. Well, why not? Johnny Cash has them.

And all the other guys have them. I mean, if the world can have them, can't we? Glitter, I mean, if we've no other glitter, we may as well stick it on the outside if it's not on the inside, anyhow. And we try to steady the ark of God.

We're trying to put some improvement on the ark of God. We try to do that, I think, with the translations we make of the Word of God. We try to make some of those words just a little bit more easy.

As I said to some preachers I've preached with this week, that if we go back, it may be mentioned here before, if we go back to Bible language and call sin what it really is, instead of saying somebody, you say that girl's a whore, you say, no, no, she's a cold girl. You say about a dirty, filthy sodomite, oh, no, no, he's not a sodomite, he's just gay. There's nobody wicked, they're just weak.

There's no iniquity, it's just infirmity. No backsliders anymore, that's a dirty word. A lot of people have a fellowship, but backsliders, you don't use that word.

Oh, how smooth. I remember reading a story of Mr. Whitefield where he was particularly angry one day. I'd like to have heard Whitefield, I think it would have been right up my alley.

He got mighty furious about the possessions the devil had. He was always running the church to pull down strongholds, he was always seeing the enemy doing his evil work, getting people to submit to him. And one day he said, I'm going to shoot the arrows of God into your hearts.

He mentioned an arrow and he pulled the arrow back like this and the congregation ducked. That's the way to preach, if you can get them to do that, at least you've got them halfway down to the ground and maybe when you get them halfway down you can push them the other half. But the anger of the Lord was kindled against this man and not only slaughtered him but killed him.

Come on, in God's name, what are we doing with the gospel today? Isn't it getting more emasculated? Isn't it getting more Hollywood style? Don't you miss the absence and the glory of God? Why? They've got the very presence of God inside and that's all we need. There's an old hymn that says, God's presence and his very self and essence are all divine. I'll ask you again, I've asked you before, when did you last go out to the sanctuary? Tiptoe, because God had revealed his holiness and his majesty.

We go out very much in the same way we came in, go out and say, hey, I like your dress. Someone like that in Sears myself, wish I'd have got it. Or I like some other trivial thing that's got nothing to do with eternity and nothing to do with God.

Oh my. Notice in verse 5 now, go back a minute here. David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord and all instruments made of fir, wood, even hearths and psalteries and timbrels and coronets and ensembles.

Now there's his ecstasy. Now come down to verse 9. This same David was afraid of the Lord that day and he said, how shall the ark of the Lord come to me? That's a big switch. He's excited, they have their band music, everything, they're having a whale of a time and then suddenly God intervenes and suddenly his all emotional life does a somersault.

He realizes what an awful God he serves. What a God of majesty. What a God of glory.

One minute everybody's excited, the next minute wouldn't that be something, it'd be like going into that experience you know when Ananias and Sapphira went to church. That must have been a great morning. I would have enjoyed that I think.

I said, well Lord, why did you stop with two hypocrites? I'm sure half the congregation could have wiped them out at the same time. It would have been more spectacular. But God doesn't do it that way.

But what I'm trying to say rough as and tumbled as it may be because I've had such a hectic day today that the anger of God was kindled for a very simple thing. He did not take a hammer and break the ark. He didn't say this old piece of furniture we can do without.

Do you know the ark is the only thing that was taken out of the original tabernacle and went into the temple of the Most High God? Do you know afterwards in the book of the Revelation it says they've preserved the testimony of God in an ark? Now scholars will tell you that the ark was destroyed in the second invasion and the burning of Babylon and what have you got and maybe it was. And yet God's presence and that's what it matters. It isn't a case of having a wooden box here what it's telling us is that God makes their place his habitation.

Now as I said to somebody today this is awesome this is breathtaking when you say well I'd like to go and I wish we had a box and you can say God's presence is there. He's there in His holiness He's there in His majesty He's there in His glory be careful how you handle this thing. Well we don't need a box we don't need a presence.

Why? Because it says you're the habitation of God. There's only so much of God's holiness in this meeting as you and I filled with the spirit the Holy Spirit of God the pure spirit of God. He doesn't dwell in temples made oh you can make him a thousand crystal palaces like they've done on the west coast there.

So what? You can't sanctify a building in the New Testament since they didn't do that. Why even Solomon said and I guess he built the most expensive building ever made he used gold to walk on he used gold on the walls he was the most extravagant building ever made he used gold more easily than we use cement. And he built the altar and he had all the priests in total correct display there.

And yet when he made this intercession to God he says look I put up this building I've done everything according to your commandment. We've even got an altar we've even got a sacrifice on the altar. Now what's missing? Nothing except the fire of God.

What good is a house that I've built if God's presence isn't there? What's the good of making a showpiece and saying we've got the best choir we've got the most brilliant preacher we've got this and so what? In God's name does it matter? Don't you think we're putting our hands on so many things these days? You've got to start this way and finish that way and do something else. We're getting so mechanical. Since when did the gospel need trimming up? I had to go to a meeting this week there was a five piece band there.

It was band B-A-N If I had the ought to do it it would be B-A-N-N-E-D band I had to band the whole thing. Oh how they swerved and jazz and what not. They didn't do that too long after I really got going.

The preacher said amen for ten minutes then he lost all his pump his energy and somehow lost his voice. Who's touching the ark? David was afraid of the Lord. He hadn't been afraid before.

Isn't it incredible that this people that knew God in such an intimate way this people who had gone round a city without a gun the most despised people of all and they went round one day round another day round another day round another on the last day they went round seven times so thirteen times they went round that's pretty unlucky isn't it? And they kept down and they stood all the criticism of the people that were watching and all they had to do on the last day was shout with a great shout why?

Because God was there and I don't see any fun in shouting and carrying on in a meeting oh you can clap your hands that's ok but mercy if that's all you have to do if you have to whip people up and I thought my dear friend Dale there his father belonged to a tribe called the Quakers and I thought of that when God says I want a tabernacle and there at the mercy seat will I meet with thee?

God wants me to meet with him it's more than me preaching for him it's more than me being a mishra for him he wants to meet with me he wants to reveal himself to me he wants to talk to me he wants to come and work in this being of mine a lady called me from the border of Mexico today and she said she was weeping and she said God has called us here we're Hispanics God has really blessed us but oh we do want to be such great soul winners and she went on and I said my dear look the first commandment is not thou shall be a soul winner the first commandment is thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart soul mind and strength there are lots of missionaries that don't love God there are lots of missionaries that should have returned from the field six months after they got there they're

doing a thing mechanically and it's hard to enjoy that kind of burden when you're doing it mechanically but when they do it under the anointing of God when they do it with the love of God can you imagine this procession stopping hmm they had harps and psalteries and timbrels and cornets and they're having a great time and suddenly death came do you wonder that David was angry afraid and he said how shall the ark of the Lord come unto me verse 12 it was told king David saying the Lord bless the house of Obed-Edom and all that pertaineth unto him because of the ark of God so David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom into the city of David with gladness and it was so that when they that bear the ark of the Lord had gone six paces he sacrificed oxen and fatlings and

David danced before the Lord with all his might and he was girded with an ephod now notice what he danced with he danced with all his might he didn't say he danced with a girl he said he danced with all his might he danced in the presence of God there's nothing sensuous about it he isn't linked up with some woman in his arms he's dancing in God's presence God has turned his sorrow into joy he started off in joy there comes bereavement there comes sorrow they've disobeyed God they've hurt God they've transgressed against God do you ever wonder if you're getting insensitive to what God's trying to say to you do you ever wonder when a certain thing has happened that somewhere in your nervousness you put your hand up to steady the ark and somehow the sensitivity went and the compassion you

had went and the concern you had went again this man didn't take an axe and split up the ark he didn't say we've carried this thing long enough we need no no no no all he did was try to steady the ark of God oh mercy how we're trying to steady the ark of God these days we want to do some new thing we wouldn't just steady it we'd paint it we'd paint it we'd put a musical box inside of it we'd put the priest in some new

garments we'd try and make it more acceptable you know there's nothing this generation needs more than a baptism an old fashioned hellfire preaching I'm sure of that the power and the presence of God were resting on that tabernacle and while they were obedient they had success doesn't matter if you have to get a city down again the most ridiculous thing and they stood all

the criticism and scorning and yet on that final day because they'd obeyed God the whole place came tumbling down well let's not be too critical about them because you know you and I again have more we've more to answer for than they have we've seen the mighty workings of God I don't know anybody that's pulling Jericho's down do you? can you think of our obligation that we have as a nation with all our Bibles all our broadcasts aren't we studying the ark of God in the way we're presenting the gospel these days the gospel is still the power of God it's all done to salvation to all who believe and when I hear people I heard somebody say well you know there's a different approach today isn't there? isn't there really? you go tell a woman who's just lost a child well these are modern days you

don't have to weep over it and groan over it I mean they did that in the Bible days but of course women were women then but nowadays it doesn't matter all they've done is lost a child is there any difference between the grief of somebody who's heartbroken today than there was in the grief of somebody who lived three thousand years ago we say human nature's changed human nature has not changed human nature is still a sinful nature human nature still needs God and I think there are times when God tries to stop the business you know when I think of again they all they did was put his hand up to the ark he didn't curse God he didn't take a hammer and smash it he didn't say now you're all lunatics for going this way this is too old fashioned well do you think that God maybe has been speaking

have you noticed how many tragedies we've had this winter one whole town swept away with a mud slide just like that people went into eternity Mississippi has covered more area than ever we came down past there just the other day acres hundreds of acres just little bits of roofs standing up out of the water and all you could see looked like you could see for 50 miles just stretching the water and some farms just standing on a little island they'll never get any crops in there this year the sludge will be left behind they can't do with cattle it seems as though God is trying to check us but we won't take the checking we won't take the warning and again I say to you the most distressing area I believe is the area of the church itself we're trying to study the art we don't want God almighty

to govern the whole thing we want a little bit of flesh in it we want a little bit of humanism in it we want a little bit of organization in it we want some of our skill in it and God holds off and God holds want to do it in the flesh? why the word of God says some trust in chariots and some trust in horses but we will trust in the name of God alone oh I'm aching on the inside to see somebody that will really really really have no confidence in the flesh won't try to organize isn't it horrible when we try and subsidize God's cause with a few dollars here and a collection there and something else now either God is God or he isn't as I've said before this book is either absolute or it's obsolete there's no middle cause it either has all the answers or it has no answers I've got to get to

the place where I say Lord you can strip everything else away from me and on Christ the solid rock I stand all of the ground is sinking sand I'm not going to study the ark I'm convinced God's going to do a new work I've talked last two or three days with a brother I love very dearly and he's at a crossroads in his life and I know others who are men that you think are at the top of the tree you think they should be satisfied with what they've got and they're not they're suddenly realizing there's a new dimension that God wants to bring to our generation a new revelation a new unfolding of the word of God if you like men that don't try to

study the ark by organization and saying you must do it this way and you must do it that way you must do it this way say no listen we're going to follow

if it takes us we have to follow those lowing oxen they look pretty scruffy things but before long you remember that David he went and slew the oxen and he took the fatlings and he made a sacrifice to God and then he danced before God why? because he got rid of many of his obstructions the Lord is very merciful do you know how merciful he is? he's so merciful he'll strip us right down to the place where we haven't a thing to stand on we haven't a thing to lean on we're cast in nakedness and we say in despair you know the church that was rich and increased in good that's where the church is today she's rich she's increased in good she's in need of nothing which church was it Jesus spewed out of his mouth?

I would either hot or cold so then because they were neither hot or cold it didn't spew the cold one out of his mouth it had never been in it was his church that he spewed out of his mouth it wasn't a heathen religion it was his church they were neither hot or cold they were kind of mid street and because they were neither one thing nor the other he vomited them out didn't vomit the cold church out didn't bother with it God will not stand for mediocrity I think I need to sit down in fact I've said to somebody today I'm going to do less preaching in the next few months as little as I can and I'm going to meditate on certain things I'm not young anymore I'm getting older and older but that doesn't mean you can't I mean Moses was 80 when he started and I'm not 80 yet so maybe when I'm 80

I'll wake up and start doing something but there's a hunger there's a the class we talked to last Saturday morning there's some fine young men maybe about 30 of them 32 or 3 and half of them were zealous they were sitting on the edge of their seats at all prospects most of them there were seminarian fellows eager keen even asking afterwards well Mr Rainer what's the secret really of abiding what's the secret of abounding in the Christian life what's the secret of not being a failure what's the secret of not letting your branch get withered up I had somebody calling today for prayer again every day they call I'm sorry for the situation some of them but it's the only way they'll go in grace anyhow in the knowledge of God they've been leaning too much on what they have and now God's going to

dry up their sores so that they only have God on whom they can lean they've had so much flesh they've had so much ability they've had so much organization they've had so much security God says well let me pull it all over you doesn't the word say trust ye in the Lord forever for in the Lord is everlasting strength I think one of the shocks in eternity will be to discover how little we've ever used of the available power of God not for our own mean silly self that there's a world out there that's dying there does God have resources to meet this generation come on I learned from my horror just while I was in Brooklyn there a man who is a professional fine Christian man last year the churches in America spent close on two billion dollars on radio and TV preaching two billion do you know how

many people we reach less than four percent of the national family less than four percent of Americans listen to the gospel and we spent nearly two can you imagine how many mission stations that would have built how many churches that would have built in some other country I think we're putting our hands on the ark we're rather afraid that we might go a bit overboard you know doctrinally somebody comes up and says hey well steady a minute and he hardly knows he's putting his hand on the ark anyhow we're just afraid it seems of some new revelation some new some new demand that God will make upon us not just individually well it is individually of course and collectively we're just afraid now I guess I didn't get this over to you as it came to me but I'll tell you when I read it the other

day I was shocked to realize that again this man did not smash up the ark he didn't tell all the people to rebel he didn't tell the priest to do it all he did was steady the ark thinking he was doing God a favor when all he did was disobey is that all well that's all Adam did in the garden all he did was disobey didn't curse God and it seems the hardest thing that we have in our lives to learn is how to obey in the very very very simple things that God challenges us with I still say you know if I were a kind of protestant Pope I'd close every church down for a month we're preached to death we heavens why do we keep going to conferences you can't handle the light you've got why do you want some more you know huh turn it on when you go home tonight the next conference you go with it's this

weekend or next week you'll have more light therefore you'll have more to answer the judgment seat haven't you got enough to answer for aren't there areas in your life where you still have not obeyed even though God said do this you put your hand on the ark because it was coming toppling over on you it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God the word of God said Robert Louis Stevenson said I only know one thing and that's when you fall out of the hands of the living God and that happens there comes a time when God says to a nation all right you've been putting your hand on my truth you've been withholding my truth Job says I have not eaten my morsel alone you say well we've given money to missions so we have you know this came to me I mentioned it last night before there

were a number of preachers in that place and I said this I said you know we had a national day of prayer last week no we didn't have a national day of prayer we had a national suggestion if we had a national day of prayer the president would have said every factory is closed down every school is closed down every shopping mall is closed down everything is going to stop it's time we listened to God it's time we humbled ourselves before God but when God wants it that way which he does we put our hand on the ark and say well we'll steady it and make it a little bit convenient dear God there was a time when they were so concerned about revival they even remember they put sackcloth on the animals if you wear sackcloth they think you're a crackpot if you don't think so get a sack get an old

potato sack and cut a hole in the top put it over your head and get your wife to cut some holes so you can put your arms in and go to church like that and say this is an outward sign of an inward sorrow I have I don't care about the style of my clothes I don't care what you think of my clothes I don't think anybody else thinks we've got to have revival we've got to have a move of God and we haven't had it by all our financial efforts and all our geniuses and evangelism all the other things we get so far that we put our hands on the ark there's going to be a conference shortly and I am not in any way troubled that I wasn't invited but I know some of the godliest men in the world and they're not invited to that conference in Amsterdam 2500 itinerant evangelists I guess that's what they'll

get they'll say well they're not itinerant evangelists they're going to meet and they're going to go through a rigmarole again workshops workshops workshops there's a workshop for this and there's a workshop for that the hardest work in the whole world is prayer do they have workshops on prayer no the ark is falling we're going to steady it we've got a new idea every magazine I pick up now Christian magazine is is how to make your church grow I'm looking for one that says how to take your church deeper somebody said to a preacher you've the biggest church in how big is your church he said three miles wide and an inch deep I think that's true of a lot of them three miles wide and an inch deep and while it's humorous it's tragic are we going to change the style are we going to keep

steadying the ark are we going to say no no we're not going any further like this this old cart you've got it done with new cart we're taking it off we're going to do it God's way and it looks silly to carry it on your

shoulders it looks silly to walk around when you can mechanize the thing or organize the thing or paint it up or make it more attractive what in the how can you make God's presence more attractive that's about the height of insanity isn't God himself in his holiness attractive for some reason I don't know why I thought about Westminster Abbey they recently redecorated it oh they climbed up there and they put pure gold leaf it's worth millions of dollars now I don't think God ever enters the place to tell you the truth you know the less of the glory of God we have the more

more showmanship we need inside a fancy good looking choir with marvelous robes on lovely church building everything and the more we get of that it seems as though God says I don't dwell in temples made with hands I'm not comfortable here anyhow you know what we need to do we need to do what David did we need to take all the implements we need to take the cart and break it up and we need to get hold of the bullets and chop them up and have one gun and one big holy ghost bonfire and say Lord God I'm going to live on the stretch for you from now till I die whether I die tomorrow or ten years from now I'm going to meet with you as I've never met with you before I'm going on the stretch for God as I've never been on the stretch before I'm going on the I'm going on the

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