

# When God Comes

by Mose Stoltzfus

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*The sermon emphasizes the transformative power of God's visitation in our lives through faith and sacrifice, as exemplified by Abraham.*

**Duration:** 58:40

**Scripture:** Psalm 104:4, Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:25-27, John 1:1, John 1:14, 1 Peter 1:23-25

**Topics:** "Revival"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of faith in God and the power of His presence. He uses the example of Abraham, who didn't have a religious background or training but believed in God and was counted as righteous. The preacher also highlights the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who refused to bow down to an idol and were thrown into a fiery furnace. However, God came and delivered them, causing the king to recognize the presence of God. The sermon emphasizes the need for faith, sacrifice, and the power of God's word in our lives.

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## Transcript

Greetings tonight, in the name of the Lord Jesus. Well, this is a new experience for me, to be in this community in this way. I don't know how long it's been since a tent has been in Harlem, but it doesn't matter.

Here we are tonight, and we thank God for the opportunity to preach the Gospel here. God bless you all for coming, and we're glad to see this much interest in the preaching of the Gospel. And it's our heart that God would change lives here this week.

That's our heart and our prayer. I sense God's presence here tonight, and on my way here, and as I was preparing for the message here this afternoon, and trying to prepare my heart, I want God to visit me likewise, and touch our hearts together, and do what it takes to have revival and to get close to God. May I just pause for a word of prayer or two? Father, we are but vessels of dust, and without you we can't do anything.

And it's not our desire to just go through the motions of meetings this week, but we do pray for a divine and holy visitation of God. Use this poor vessel, if it's possible, Lord, that it can be used for your glory, that the words that come out of my mouth would be inspired of God. And I believe that's a noble order.

It's an honor to stand in that place, God, and we're not worthy. But Father, we pray that you would first of all visit the speaker here, and then visit the populace in the tent and in this community, and touch the lives of many, that in these last confused and troubled days, a candle of the Lord can burn again in the hearts and lives of these people. I pray, dear God, that your wind could blow through this community.

You know the conditions of the hearts of these people better than I, better than anyone here. We know where humans are, there are needs, especially in this world in which we live. And our prayer and our heart's cry is that those needs could be met at the foot of the cross.

Now we thank you, Lord, for the tested and proven gospel. And we know we have no new word tonight, but the old word which was from the beginning, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And also, Peter tells us that being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of the incorruptible, of the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

And we look forward, Father, for you to share that Word with us through your Holy Spirit, and touch the hearts of many in this tent, night after night. We look to you beyond our human abilities and strength, wisdom or knowledge or experience, and ask for the wisdom of God. In heaven and on earth, in the form of His Spirit, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

The title of my message, at least for the first one and possibly a few more, and maybe all week we'll see what God leads, is When God Comes, When God Comes. Now there are numerous incidents in the Bible when God did come to His people. And there are numerous incidents in history, likewise.

And I'd like to give some interest tonight and some attention to the subject of when God comes. Now I know He's come to a number of you in your homes, in your hearts, in your communities, and likewise in mine in the past number of years, maybe just a few years for many of you, some of you. But I know that He comes and has come.

And I also can prophesy that He will come. If we meet the conditions of God and His Word, we are in the age of grace, I perceive, under the authority of the Word of God. The curtain of this age is not closed.

And we are in the age of grace and therefore have opportunity tonight to have a visitation from God and that He'll come and visit the hearts of those that will seek Him. Now, it's going to depend on us, on you and I, as to whether God will come in a real way to your heart and to mine. That whether God wants to come is not a question tonight.

Whether God would like to come is not a question. Whether God can come is not either a question. Whether God has come in the past has been established through history and the Word and the Bible that we have here.

So now, whether He will come in this week will depend upon us, we believe, because God has already desired, according to His Word, to come and meet with men when God comes. Let us turn our Bibles for an introduction to this great subject in Genesis chapter 15. Genesis chapter 15.

We have a man here in this great book, the beginning of the books, called the five books of Moses. This is the first one. It's the beginning of many things.

It's the beginning of heaven and earth when God laid the foundations of heaven and earth. The stars, the animal kingdom, birds, plants, trees, and all things were created by Him and for Him. And in that

beginning, He also created man and woman and put them in a garden.

Christ Jesus, the Lord of glory, united with the Father, they created heaven and earth and in the beginning was truly the beginning. We're not here to say exactly how many years ago that was, but we are persuaded of a short earth, not a billions of year old earth as deceived scientists would have you know. We don't believe that because the record of God is given as a short earth, approximately 6,000 years old.

And in this span of time and in the beginning of things, God visited the earth in the form of a man by the name of Abram. Abram, later known as Abraham in the change of names that took place there. We have the account in Genesis chapter 15 that this Abram was a heathen in the land of the Chaldees, in the land of Ur of the Chaldees.

Now it's a blessing to me when we look at when God comes in the subject that we have before us tonight, that in faith we understand and know that God can still visit a heathen. You don't have to make yourself good in order for God to come tonight. You only have to get down on your knees before the God of heaven and acknowledge Him to be who He is, God, and call upon Him.

And God will come to you though you be a heathen and still bound in the depths of sin and ungodliness. If you mean business with God and call upon Him, I don't care how wicked you are and what kind of a heathen you have been or still are tonight, God will come. God will come because He sent His Son, as the Bible says, He came to the earth for He shall save His people from their sin.

And He came for that purpose. Therefore, if men and women are still bound in sin tonight, when God comes, He'll come right to you. If you want Him to, if you're willing to turn from Him because God delights in mercy and He loves to come and visit humans who are wanting to get rid of their sin when God comes.

Well, He came to Abraham here in Genesis 15, and I love this account, this story. And He put a call upon this man's life to come out of the land of Ur, the Chaldees, out of his heathen background and out of his past evil works. And there, He was called upon to come out into a new area, the land of Canaan, and God was going to multiply him and make him a number as a fan of the sea.

He told him to count the stars, and Abraham went out at night and looked them all over. And I don't know how many he thought there were, but I believe he gave up counting them somewhere that night. And God said, As the stars you have seen, so will I make thy seed.

And therefore, God gave a promise to him. And somehow, Abraham got faith and believed that what God had given him. And he didn't have any children.

He didn't know how it was all going to come about. But he laid a foundation for you and I tonight and for himself, that whosoever would ever come to God must come to Him that way. And that is, he believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

That man, Abraham, believed the record that God gave that when God spoke, it was so in his mind. He believed that when God said something, He meant it. And I only wish that people could get a grip of that today.

There is so much unbelief and faithless weakness and doubting in people's lives that you can hardly get them saved many times because they're not willing to believe the record that God gave of His Son. And not believe that what God says, if He comes to me, I will no wise cast out. Or if you confess your sin, He is

faithful and just to forgive your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

And if God said that, and you would have faith like Abraham, that when God said it, that's it, it's settled and it'll be so, then you would repent and give Him to God and you would be cleansed on the spot of all your past sins. But you know what happens? It's people don't believe the record that God gave of His Son like Abraham did. And therefore, we continue to wallow in the bondage of our sin and corruption and don't believe in God to take them away.

And therefore, we continue messing around with them for years to come. And that's sad. That's very sad.

Oh, when God comes, when God comes. Abraham is such a beautiful example. He didn't have a good upbringing.

He didn't have the background. He didn't have the religious training. He only believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

You don't have to have all the seminary training tonight. You don't have to go to Bible school for the next four years in order to believe the God that made you. All you have to do is believe the record that God gave of His Son and the Gospel that He preached and you can be saved.

And you can be turned away from your sin. May God have mercy on us all for our feeble faith and our unbelief and slowness, as He said when Jesus walked there on the way to Emmaus and He talked to those two fellows there, Caiaphas and I forget the other man's name, and he acted like a stranger, you know. And they said, you mean to tell me you dwell around here and you don't know what's been going on over the last days? And he said, oh, slow and fools of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Those are the words that came out of Jesus' mouth when He talked about they acted like they didn't understand what was going on. And yet they were scribes and had read and understood the Scripture. And He reproved them and He said, oh, slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken concerning Christ.

And they hadn't believed it and therefore were on the outside looking in yet and did not experience that grace and that power that Abraham had experienced in his heart. Well, when Abraham believed God, God declared him righteous. And I think that's a powerful blessing.

We need to understand that tonight. When men and women believe God, God declares them righteous and they might still have long hair and might even have a pack of cigarettes in their pocket. God wants to clean a man's life up and He does that.

But I want to tell you tonight that He will clean you up when you come to Him. And that will give you the power to change your life. He doesn't wait till you clean up to accept you and to declare you righteous.

But if you come to Him tonight, you can come just as you are and God will accept you and change you though, providing you're willing to turn and repent from your sins like the old timers used to when they came to God. Our new fangled belief that we have today seems to have latched hold of the idea that you can come to God as you are and then you can stay as you are. But that's not the gospel that we know historically and it's not the gospel that I'll be preaching here this week.

Well, this man Abraham, he believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness. And in the Thanksgiving, and now this is where the blessed assurance of salvation so beautifully comes to visit this dear man Abraham. He believed, he had the witness in his heart that God had accepted him, you see.

He knew that God had accepted him. Somehow when he believed God and God gave him the witness of it all, he knew that he was a Christian and he knew God's visitation had come and touched him. And he believed God and he had the blessed assurance of it and he wanted to do something for God.

And I'm not sure how it was here that, yes, he got the command of Lord God in verse 8. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? He wanted an earthly demonstration or some kind of a confirmation of it and we do too. And God has given it to us over in 1 John. For this cause, we may know that we know because He has given us the witness of His Spirit.

God gives the Holy Spirit to witness to you if you are a child of God. Now, if you don't know, then you may not be one yet. But once you are a child of God and you have believed that, then God will give you the witness.

I can't give you assurance of salvation in life, but God can. And God does that. And that's what He did to Abraham.

Abraham wanted a little earthly demonstration that he's right with God. And I think we all do. You know, we don't see God with a literal eye.

So we want a little bit of a down payment here on earth to know that we're Christian. And that's right and good. And God gives that to people that come to Him in the form of the witness of the Holy Spirit in 1 John.

I'll tell you that up ahead. But Abraham didn't have that. He was an old covenant believer, not a new covenant in that sense.

He was an Old Testament believer. Christ had not come. The blood had not been shed.

And the power of the Holy Spirit did not come and dwell in the hearts of individual believers like He does today. So Abraham was told that here's what will happen. You can take... Thank you, brother.

I feel like I need a little bit of that. Abraham was told that he should take a heifer, about three years old. And what else was it? A she-goat and a ram and a turtledove and a young pigeon.

Well, the heifer and the she-goat and the ram, he cut in half. And he laid it out there and the pigeon and the turtledove, he took whole and laid them out before the Lord. And that night when the sun went down and it was dark, it says there, Behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

God came. God came to Abraham that night. And He came as a burning lamp and a smoking furnace.

Isn't that interesting? When He came to John the Baptist, the Bible says of Him that He was a burning and a shining light. That old furnace smoked and burnt for all the years that He prophesied until Herod lifted his head off of Him. But that's exactly what needs to happen when God comes.

There needs to be the presence of God as a burning lamp and a smoking furnace. My God is a consuming fire, David said, I believe, in the book of Psalms. And He was described that way in numerous places in

the Word of God.

And I'd like to describe to you tonight that when God comes, He comes to dwell in the hearts and lives of people as a smoking furnace and a burning lamp. I don't believe in this half-hearted, dried-up, shriveled, dead religion where people don't have any joy, and they can't say Amen, and they can't praise the Lord, and they can hardly smile, and they aren't any different from any other Joe Smith down the road. A burning lamp and a smoking furnace.

Well, you know what smoke did for the Indians back in the colonial days? That was a sign for the next tribe. And the next one around, and they sent messages by that smoking furnace that they made. Well, I want to tell you that that's what God wants with you in my life.

He wants us to be a burning lamp and a smoking furnace. And when Jesus came and He began His earthly ministry on the Sermon on the Mount, He talked about, You are the soul of the earth and the light of the world, and it should not be hid under a bushel, but set on a hill for all to see. And if God has touched your life, you shouldn't be so humble as some religionists would try to tell you, that you never dare say anything about it or tell anybody, because you're proud if you do.

That's not what God says. God says when He comes, you ought to be set on a hill and let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works. Oh, I don't have any.

I don't have any. Yes, you need to have enough of good works that people can see that you have been touched by God, and you have been inspired and changed by His power, and you are made different and new, and that old things do change and pass away, and all things become new. That's the God who comes as a smoking furnace and a burning light in the hearts of all those that come to Him, and trust Him for their salvation.

Now, if you've had a childhood salvation at five years old, and God never did anything to you because you didn't understand what's going on, you better go back to the cross again, because you need that kind of a genuine change in your life, in order to change you, in order to give you power that people can see and everybody can know that you are not in the world anymore. You have been born again, you have been changed by the power of God, and you are now a little Christ, and you're walking on this earth wanting to follow Him. Wanting to follow Him.

That's the kind of things that happen when God comes. When God comes. Well, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp.

The beautiful, beautiful picture. I want you to notice how long ago this was. Abraham lived a long, long time ago.

This is not some new doctrine that when a man gives up and believes God, and surrenders his heathen lifestyle like Abraham did, and gets delivered out of the old earth of the Chaldeans and comes out into God's country and God's place, like he did there in the land of Canaan, and God came in this way. I tell you, he was a burning lamp and a shining light down there on those sacrifices. And you know, that's another thing I'd like to talk about for a little bit.

When God comes, when God comes, men take things of value and sacrifice them. Now that's a little bit radical in our day too, that when you are born again, that God should affect your things and your possessions and the things you call precious. But back in the olden times, it was not that way.

When God comes into the camp of men, then men sacrifice things of value. They sacrifice their time. They sacrifice their possessions.

They sacrifice their pocketbook. They sacrifice bank accounts. They sacrifice all kinds of things.

Cut them in half and laid them open before the Lord and said, Lord, you can have them. Possessions, positions, jobs, professions, expertises, and what have you. Business and everything.

It went on the altar, like Abraham did. When God came to Abraham, then he took a heifer, which was probably a promising young heifer, that he could have had bred and multiplied and made his flock bigger from it. Well, it didn't matter.

God came first and He took that heifer and butchered it and cut it in half and sacrificed it and laid it out before God. And believe me, it was probably the primest heifer in the bunch. In the bunch.

If God comes to your and my life, you will not get very far unless there's some sacrifice involved. If you want a Christianity this week that won't touch you where you live, won't touch your pocketbook, won't touch your pleasures, won't touch your sin, won't touch your habits, won't touch anything that's your own, then you've come to the wrong place. And I don't think that you'll get any benefit whatsoever from it.

You may hear a few words that might sound good and you might get a little bit of a sooth of conscience that you went to some Gospel meetings. But if you're not interested in sacrifice, then I'm sorry, I can't guarantee that anything will happen and anything will change in your life. Oh, for the old times, religion when men and women sacrificed before God.

And I'm not talking about killing bullocks and lambs and burning them up for God today. The times have changed. The covenant has changed and we know that.

But we're here to say that if you become genuine with God and God comes to your home and to your heart and to your life, there will be some sacrificing. And one of those things is time. I was meditating about beloved Peter and I don't know how he did it.

I don't know how he did it. But I had to think of him. You know, he sacrificed when God called him and God came to his life and said, Peter, come and follow me.

He first of all gave up the fishing business. And I don't know what that cost him. But the next thing we know, he must have given up his wife.

Because the Bible would teach that he traveled with Jesus for three and a half years and he was a married man and had a wife. Because his wife's mother was laid sick of a fever and God healed her. Jesus healed her.

So I don't know how he arranged all that. But I do know one thing that he knew what sacrifice was because when the subject came up, he said, Master, we've left all to follow you. That's what he said.

And he knew what it meant and he knew what it cost. And he probably knew he had a wife living across town that he could hardly spend much time with. I don't believe he neglected her.

I don't believe he left her to starve and the children starve. I don't think that's in God's program. Somehow, I believe, he took enough time to take care of that.

And God might have helped him. And I don't know why the Bible doesn't tell us how he did it. Sometimes we wish we'd know, us busy preachers, and the call of God upon our lives to preach the gospel, we'd like to know how he did it.

But we don't know and he didn't tell us. And if he didn't tell us, it's for us to figure out how we can fulfill God's call upon our lives. But when God comes, we sacrifice.

And you need a sacrifice. Because God may lay his hand upon your business and upon your possessions and upon some of the things you have. And you may need to give them up.

When God comes, men give things up. One of our practices in reliable meetings, numerous times in various places, is to have a barrel up at the top, up in the front here. And at the end of the services, sometimes at the end of the meetings, we have a bonfire.

And men and women give things up. We have had a bonfire. There's some sacrificing involved if you want to get delivered from the evil in this world.

If you want God to come. If you want God to come. Now, if you don't want God to come, you can go home the same way you came.

But I hope you want God to come. And if you want God to come, that's exactly how it's going to be according to His Word. And then He'll come.

You see, a lot of people, they make a lot of noise. And they cry out. It reminds us sometimes of the prophets of Baal who cut themselves and slit their wrists until the blood squirted out.

But their God didn't come. And they waited on Him all day long from the morning until the setting of the sun, and He hadn't come. And He never did come.

That's because He wasn't. He didn't live. He was a dead idol that didn't have any life.

And therefore, He never showed up. But when God comes, He does show up if men are willing to have Him show up and touch their lives. But if you're not willing for that, then you might also go through a lot of motions.

And that's what people do today. And they cry out and they do all kinds of things and shout and jump and scream and what have you. But God don't come.

Now, some other spirits come sometimes. And you have some manifestations and a number of things happen. But it's not God, I can assure you.

Because the Bible lays out very clearly some of the things that happen when God comes. And we're going to be looking at them square this week in both the written Word of God and also in historical evidence of what we know that happens in our lives when God comes. And we don't want to be off track there.

We don't want to miss it when God comes. Well, that night, the Lord walked through those sacrifices when the sun went down and it was dark and He passed between those sacrifices. And in the same day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt on the great river, the river Euphrates.

And He mentioned all the Yites that lived in that land. And yet, Sarah, Abram's wife, was childless and the test of faith was on as to whether God would fulfill that covenant that He made. And Abram faltered there for a time, but he regathered himself and he got up on his feet and God gave him Isaac and fulfilled the promise.

And tonight, you and I are probably direct descendants of that promise. We may be direct descendants physically, but I know according to the New Testament that we are direct descendants by faith if we have believed in Christ. And therefore, we are the children of Abraham and those Jews who considered them the children of Abraham were of the devil.

Jesus told them they were not the sons of Abraham because in faith shall the sonship transfer down through the generations, not in earthly lineage, not in family lines, not in those things, but rather in faith. And you and I have the blessed privilege to be in the lineage of faith of Abraham tonight and that's a blessed thing. But I believe we have to say if we want that faith and we want God to come in our lives, we're going to have to see how it happened for Abraham because that is lifted up very extraordinarily high in the book of Romans concerning this matter of the faith of Abraham.

And if we want to be right with God, we need to do that. Now, I will also show you something very unique in this passage of Scripture. Now, I know it's a message in itself, but I don't know how God's going to lead me from night to night.

And I'll probably dwell a little more specifically on some of these subjects throughout the week. But I want you to notice that when He divided these animals in verse 10 and laid each piece against another, then the fowls came down upon the carcasses and Abraham drove them away. I want to show you that if you have had some aspirations to live the Christian life, some aspirations, maybe you haven't given a lot and sacrificed a lot and laid it out before the Lord to make a covenant with God concerning yourself and your future and your possessions and all that.

But I want to show you that if you've had some aspirations to serve God, you are a victim of the buzzards coming after the sacrifice, you see. There's a whole lot of buzzards out there that come and swoop down upon a man or a woman who lays out the sacrifice before God and tries to come and snatch away, as vultures do, the sacrifice away from giving it to God. And there are multitudes of buzzards like that in America here in our time and our day that try to swoop down upon any sacrifice or any heart that anyone has to give their heart and life to God.

And before you know it, if we're not careful and don't drive those buzzards away, that they will swoop down and snatch the sacrifice that you thought a bit to give to God and you won't get to give it to Him. Now, Abraham was a wise man. He was a wise man.

And when those buzzards came circling around that thing and circling around that thing and saw those dead animals there that were laid out for God, not for them, and they wanted them, Abraham, he stood around those things and guarded that sacrifice and walked around through them. And as one after another would swoop down to try to snatch it away from him, Abraham stood up for it and drove the buzzards out of there. And if you're ever going to be worth your salt for God, you're going to have to do the same.

You're going to have to do the same. I don't know if you know that, but this world is full of buzzards that are trying to steal the sacrifice that God wants. And that is He wants you.

He wants you. He wants all of you. And He wants you to lay your life out before God.

But the buzzards of this world, they want some of it. They want some of this sacrifice that you butchered and laid out there and gave up, you know. They want your time.

They want your money. They want your talents. They want your affection.

And they're out to get them, my friend. They want your appetites. They want all kinds of things.

They'd like to have your children. They'd like to have your wives and your possessions. They want them.

They come as the pleasures of life, you know, to come in and swoop away your time and your talents and your money and all these things that you have that you have wanted to sacrifice to God. And before you got them sacrificed and before they were consumed of God, these buzzards come in and try to snatch them away. But Abraham, bless God, stood out there and rolled those buzzards out of there.

And I would beg you tonight, if you mean business with God this week, that you need to stand up and get some holy grit into your life after you've been converted and given your heart to God. Then lay out your sacrifice for God and drive those buzzards away. Drive those buzzards away.

Oh, God, when God comes, we get tested. We get tried. You say, why doesn't God protect His sacrifices Himself? Well, God wants to see whether you mean business with Him or not.

God wants to see whether you have any holy grit in you or not. God wants to see whether you can discern the buzzards or not. Because He not just wants us to be a robot in heaven, you know, to take away all the temptations and all the trials of life and not have you come through the fire.

That's from cover to cover in the book. God's going to bring us through the fire and test us to see. In fact, Peter talks about the trial of our faith being much more precious than gold that perishes though it be tried by fire, might be found in the praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

That's what He wants. He wants tried sacrifices. He wants tested souls.

He wants those that have been tempted and tried and said no and gave their heart to God voluntarily. Not that they were bartered and pushed and bribed in order to come to Sunday school and pass out a few tracts and contribute a little hard-earned money into the offering plate. That's not what God wants.

Reluctantly, you know. That's not what God wants. No, God wants genuine Christianity and if you want God to come tonight, you're going to have to put on the mind of Abraham, the mind and heart of Abraham.

Oh, may God come to us this week here in Harlem. That's our prayer. And that's our desire.

And I trust it's your prayer. I don't know what all Abraham went through, but another thing that we notice is that when God called him, Abraham obeyed. Abraham obeyed.

God did not have to come down there to earth and drag this man out with him scratching his toes and his fingers against the coming out. Abraham obeyed God. He didn't only believe God, but he obeyed God.

And that's also a rare subject today. We have almost relegated that into some ancient philosophy. And I've written it off as unnecessary, but according to the Word of God, I want to tell you, next to faith comes obedience to God.

And Abraham is an example of that, that by faith, Abraham obeyed. When he was told to get out of there, he went out. And the Hebrew writer says, whoever he was, because he knew he had a better country.

Now, if you think the heathen world is better than what you're going to, you're going to do some scratching and clawing not to leave. But once you see the place you come from for what it is, and see the bondage of sin for what it is, and see the misery for what it is, and see the habits for what they are, and see all the other hindrances to joy and the power of God for what they are, you won't be scratching to get out of her, of the Chaldeans. But when God says, come on out, Joe, John, Mary, Elizabeth, come on out, you're going to move.

Because you know that there's a better country that when God leads you out, and I want to guarantee you that, I'm not going to guarantee you no heaven on earth. I'm not going to guarantee you no bird of roses. But I am going to guarantee you that the Christian life is a blessed life.

Even though you might be persecuted for righteousness' sake and misunderstood by your church and your family, I tell you, the Christian life, there's nothing like it. And it's the most exciting and most invigorating life I've ever lived in this world, and I've been in both of them, like all the rest of us have. But it's real.

And it's genuine. And it's something to write home about. And to write on the chimney, as we used to say when we were children, we had a big announcement, we'd say, well, this is something to write on the chimney, we used to say.

And tell the world about. I want to tell you that a true born again experience by the Spirit of God is something to write on the chimney and tell the world about. And the joy and the peace and the satisfaction that I get out of serving God is in no way to be compared with five minutes of the world and the miseries of sin and all that that goes with it.

God have mercy on us. I know for many people the Christian life is too dry. And that's our own fault.

It's not God's fault. It's ours. It's too dry.

There are too many long-faced Christians around. Too many miserable people, miserable Christians, because they don't have enough of Christianity to get the power and the victory, you know, over sin. And therefore, they wallow around about halfway bound up yet in sin enough to take all the smiles off their faces.

Well, God help us. God help us tonight. But we need to live for God.

And we need to have something that is genuine. A burning lamp and smoking furnace. That's what we need to be when God comes.

When God comes. You know, I look at Jacob for a moment here tonight. And this was a grandson of Abraham.

His name was changed when he made his covenant with the Lord. God changed his name to Abraham. And he finally had a son called Isaac.

And Isaac had a son called Jacob. And Jacob, God met him too, likewise. And also Isaac, I believe.

But God came to him. And you know what his name means, Jacob? His name means deceiver. It means sneak.

That's what his name means. But you know, one night, that man, God came to that man. God came to that man.

And he wrestled with God. He wrestled with an angel, I believe. But he wrestled with a man of God.

The Bible says all night long. And the angel kept wanting to be let go. And he wouldn't let him go.

He wanted a blessing. And the whole thing resulted in Jacob being smoked by the angel and he limped the rest of his life. But out of that, he had a changed attitude so drastically that God changed his name.

His name was now Israel. God's beloved. God's chosen people.

That's what his name was instead of sneak, deceiver, like it was before. And God changed that man drastically when God came. When God came to his life.

Now, before that, he did a lot of deceiving and a lot of lying and a lot of cheating his brother out of the birthright. And all those things he did to his father. And all kinds of situations that it seemed like when he married his wife, he was deceived there and somehow he got the blessing of the animals and all that through his own smartness and cleverness.

You know, he was able to breed that stock to his own benefit. And all of those things that man did. But I tell you, when God came, his name was changed and his life was changed.

And that's a blessing. And that's what needs to happen in our day here tonight. Well, we could talk about the prophets.

We could talk about the kings. We could talk about the prophets when God came to them. There would be many prophets to talk about.

And the kings likewise. Some of them were good. And God came and he would tear down the grove and tear up and burn the idols.

And God would bless them. And God would visit them. And God would come into the camp.

His presence would dwell there. And then an evil king rose up and rose up the groves again and revived them and built the idols again. And the power and the blessing and the touch of God left him.

The presence of God left him and God wouldn't come. Forty years, I think under Manasseh's rule, the most wicked king there ever was in history of Israel. That land was given totally to witchcraft and to idolatry of the witch-like we have never seen and heard since or before.

The Bible says he was more wicked than any other king. And God wouldn't come for 40 years, over 40 years. And then, you know, his son rose up and was revived.

Manasseh did turn his heart. In his old days, he turned back to God. And his son rose up and brought revival.

But things were so far gone that God's heart didn't turn entirely to the nation. And they were soon led into captivity. But God came in that revival of Josiah there and brought, or Hezekiah, brought a marvelous revival to Israel in that time.

My heart, or my mind, went to the three Hebrew men in captivity there over in Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. And there again, we have a heathen country. We have Israel in captivity.

They had their instruments hung up in the tree and wouldn't sing a song for God. That's how depressed situations were. They were in bondage.

And there they sat like that. But there were three men who would not bow down to the idol. And when they didn't, they were thrown into a fiery furnace.

And in that most awful situation, God came. God came. And it turned the heart of that king as he looked into the fire that had consumed the men who threw him in.

And he saw the fourth man in there. Then he looked like the Son of God. He looked like the Son of God.

Now, I don't know how he knew what a Son of God looked like. But I know he knew as a heathen man that God had come. And he found out a lot more about it when he got them out.

And he saw that not even their hair was singed by fire. And the ropes were burned off of their wrists. But they weren't hurt by the fire.

Not even the smell of smoke on them. Now, I tell you, that was another extraordinary miracle in the life of God's people in the Old Testament when God came. And I want you to see that for a moment to get you some faith as to what God can do in your life and in mine.

But according to the Word of God there, the ropes burned off of their wrists. You know, they were bound hand and foot and thrown into the fire. And the fire burned off the ropes, but didn't give them the smell of smoke in their hair and didn't singe their hair.

And I want to tell you that that is what happens when God comes. That is what happens when God comes. You get thrown into the fire and you get the towel of your faith.

And all that will happen is the ropes will burn off of your bondage. But you won't smell like the world when you're done. You won't smell like smoke when you're done.

Isn't that something? I tell you, God is a marvelous God here tonight. And He is a powerful God. And when He comes, miracles begin to happen in communities and in people's lives.

And lives are changed. And men and women are born again. And they get right with the God of Heaven when God comes.

When God comes. Now, when God comes in the New Testament era, the Holy Spirit comes upon the lives of people. It's a little different in the Old Testament.

There He came and He dwelt with men as a group. But now He'll come to an individual heart and change their heart, be they who they are and wherever they are. God is no respecter of persons.

And under the new dispensation, God will come in the form of the Holy Spirit and change a man's life. The question is tonight, do you want Him to come? And the next question is, how bad do you want Him to come? How bad do you want Him to come? What things are you willing to sacrifice for God to come? What things are you willing to give up? What things are you willing to do for God in obedience to His Word and to His name? Because if you want God to come, God doesn't want to play a game. God doesn't want to give you an emotional high that will all evaporate in a couple of days.

And a week later, you'll wonder what happened and where it went. That's not what happens when God comes. No, no, that's not what happens at all.

Old things are passed away and old things become new, the Bible says. And we are able to change our lives, you see. We are able to change our lives when God comes.

And so tonight I just want to say to you in preparation for the week's messages, are you willing for God to come? Have you counted the cost and are you willing to count the cost? I want you tonight, if God has not come to your life or you knew Him years ago, but lost track of Him, and you're sitting in this tent tonight, I want you to prepare your heart and to count the cost as to whether you even want Him to come. Because you see, if you're not willing for God to come, in a living reality in your life, then don't waste your time and don't try to bargain with Him. Because you're not in a position to bargain if you want God to come.

God is not a cut rate flea market. Not at all. Where you barter as to how much you'll give.

God simply is looking for men and women who will become genuine before Him. And are willing to do what He said and to go where He sends them and to be what they're supposed to be. That's what God wants.

That's what God is looking for tonight. So if you want God to come, then you need to prepare your heart for that. You need to look at your life and to count the cost.

That's what Jesus said when He came and started His earthly ministry. I think it was very near the beginning. There on the Sermon on the Mount, when He gave that great message about, first of all, sitting down and counting the cost to see whether we have enough to finish.

Because there are so many people who want to start and they think they want a little bit of this Christian life and they want a little bit of touch from heaven. But not too much now. I don't want to be moved out of my comfort zone.

I don't want to change my life too much. I don't want to be considered radical or extreme. And we know in reality there are things like that too.

But today, genuine Christianity is considered extreme by many. And so we just want to challenge you tonight to consider... I think we're going to close the message here very shortly and just send you home to consider that great question. Do I want God to come in my life? Do I want God to touch my life and change me completely? Do I want what Abraham got and the three Hebrew children got? Do I want Christ to be right next to me and my ropes burn off of me but I don't have any smell of this world and its system upon me? Do you want that? Oh, God will give you that.

I promise you God will give you that if you want that to happen. I believe God will visit you right there. But I would just like to give that to you tonight as a closing challenge to this message.

When God comes, when God comes, will you let Him come? Now I could tell you and maybe throughout the week I'll give you some accounts of when God came and some of the things that happened and some of the things I know God will do when He comes. But the question tonight is, do you want Him to come? Shall we pray? Father in heaven, we pause at the close of this message in Jesus' name. We ask You, Lord, to bless these words to the ears of the hearers.

Will You touch this community and these people for Your name's sake? We know that You'll come if men and women invite You. We know You'll come if they want You to come because You've already promised it and You came at other places and at other times and we know You'll do it here. And so therefore, we trust You, Lord.

Oh, give us the faith of Abraham, the faith of Abraham. Give us the sacrifices of Abraham and give us the grit to chase the buzzards away that would steal the sacrifice. God, I pray, raise up to Yourself a people like the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven that love You and will live for You and are descendants of Abraham from this day forth.

I pray it in Jesus Christ's name.

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