

# The Word of God

by Norman Meeten

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving from God, being bold in sharing the gospel, and being a faithful steward of the gospel.*

**Duration:** 1:04:42

**Scripture:** Romans 9:1

**Topics:** "Word Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of not seeking instant gratification in our spiritual lives. He explains that simply pressing buttons and relying on technology will not make someone a true preacher. Instead, he encourages listeners to seek God and allow Him to saturate their beings with His gospel and truth. The speaker also shares a testimony of a missionary who was deeply impacted by God's power and wrote something in his heart. Despite linguistic and cultural barriers, the speaker believes that the message of the gospel can transcend and be understood by people from different backgrounds. The sermon concludes with a call to continue preaching the gospel, even in the face of opposition and persecution, and to be faithful stewards of the message entrusted to us by God.

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## Transcript

So you know how vulnerable you are. Glory be to God. First of all I want to read from Exodus chapter 24.

That's where I am in my own personal Bible study. Just two verses, verse 12 and 13. And the Lord said unto Moses, come up to me into the mount and be there.

And I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written, that thou mayest teach them. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua. And Moses went up into the mount of God.

Amen, and isn't that what we all need to do? Of course it was the privilege and prerogative of a single man accompanied by his minister Joshua, whom you know in the New Testament is called Jesus. He went up into the mount of God to listen to God, to receive from God, in order that he might be equipped by God to teach the people. It was the prerogative and privilege of a single man to represent God to man, and man to God.

And he said in generation, he served as a mediator. Today it's the privilege and prerogative of every child of God. And how essential it is for you and I to come up into the mount, in order that the Lord can speak to

us, in order that he might instruct us, in order that he might give to us, to qualify us and equip us to teach others also.

He doesn't just give us tablets of stone anymore. That's very wonderful. Praise God.

Pick up the New Testament if you have to change books. Go into the second epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, in chapter 3. Where all that is partial and limited under the old covenant dispensation, it is made universally available to every child of God, who will come to him and believe him and receive from him, to be equipped by him to enable them in their turn to teach others. Verse 2 of chapter 3 of 2 Corinthians, You are our epistles, written in our hearts, known and read of all men, for as much as you are manifestly declared to be the epistles or letters of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart.

And such trust have we through Christ to Godward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit. For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Amen.

What was introduced to Moses in one sense of far off in the Old Testament is made nigh unto you and me within the context of the new, but we need to come to him and allow him to write the glorious truth upon our hearts. Amen. To cut it there, to carve it there into our flesh, into our very nature.

For only what we receive, beloved, can we give to another. You can't impart to anyone else what you haven't first received yourself. Amen.

Jesus never claimed to be original. Lots of people want to be original and like to think that they're the only person who knows this or knows that. Jesus never claimed or made such claims.

He said of myself I can do nothing, of myself I can speak nothing, my doctrines not my own, but his that sent me. You can simply receive and give, receive and give. Amen.

And there's a great law in the spirit that you'll give, beloved, you'll receive. Again, it's cyclical. Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down and running over shall men pour into your bosom.

Amen. You give and receive. And the moment you stop giving is the moment you stop receiving.

And that's why life in the spirit is likened by the Lord's river. Not a pool, not even a well. John chapter 4 talks about wells of living water.

The original dozens of it. It talks about springs. The springs beyond the well.

There are no wells without springs. Springs are only the manifestation that a well exists. Amen.

Springs of living water that of course are the explanation to every river. And as the spring yields up and gives of itself into the river and the river flows out and gives itself away. Hallelujah.

So it receives more and gives more. The same great illustration is in the heavenlies. In the realm of the sun.

The only reason why the sun goes on shining is because it constantly gives itself away. And if it ceased to do that, beloved, it would cease to exist. Glory to his name.

We need to come up into God. Perhaps a week like this, beloved, is such a tremendous opportunity where we can lead so many of the other things. Of course we have to go on eating, we have to go on drinking, we have to go on caring for our children.

There are lots of things that have to be done but there's a sense in which we can withdraw. Jesus didn't, didn't he? He withdrew. Went into a quiet place.

He bared proud. Waited upon his father. Not that his receiving was limited to those events or places in his life.

But he did find it necessary from time to time to withdraw from the hub hub of everyday living. And eat and drink and receive of his father. Come to me.

Come up into the mount. Come to me. I will, I will give to thee.

Amen. Now I want you to turn a bit further on into the New Testament. Indeed the first epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Thessalonians.

Probably the first letter that he ever wrote. One verse in verse four it says, But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel even so we speak. What a magnificent statement.

That you and I ordinary men and women should be put in trust with the gospel. I often think of the days when Jesus left the earth and went back to heaven and entrusted the whole future of his church into the hands of twelve, or rather eleven, incompetent men who had one thing to bear credit. Failure.

Now go and talk to that. Amen. He entrusted his nature.

He entrusted his name. He entrusted his reputation. He entrusted his word.

He entrusted the whole growth and development and future of his church into the hands of initially eleven men. What a wonderful thing, beloved, for you and I to be entrusted. As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel even so we speak.

Praise God. Can he trust you, beloved, with his gospel? Has he written it into the very flesh of your being and thus enabled you and equipped you despite all the limitations and impediment of your natural personality to enable you to communicate it, impart it to other men and women. We're not here, beloved, just to feed ourselves.

Of course we do have to get the beam out of our own eye before we can start ascending to the mote in our brother's eye. There is a sense in which we have to initially be selfish and get ourselves sorted out with God before we can move beyond that. But we have to get beyond ourselves.

I love that statement of the Apostle Paul in the Philippian Letter where he talks about having sorted everything out in relationship to his own life. Let's just read it. It's in chapter 3 of the Philippian Epistle.

No, chapter 4. Chapter 4. In verse 11. It is not that I speak in respect of one, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know how to be obese and I know how to abound everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry both to abound and suffer and weep.

What a state of being, beloved. He is no longer preoccupied with his own problems, his own difficulties, his own needs. That's why he could say further down in the chapter in verse 19 My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

He didn't misquote it as most people do, beloved, and say, My God shall supply all my needs. He said, My God shall supply all your needs. You see, he's taken, he's got his eyes off of himself.

He's come to that place where he's utterly fulfilled and satisfied in God. Whereby his whole life, beloved, could be utilised by God to minister to others. We are not here primarily for ourselves.

I think, yes, we are. But in the long term, implications and outworkings of it, beloved, it's for others. The majority of us here, beloved, we were never to hear another word of gospel, which was, We have enough.

We have enough. Amen. Paul wrote to the Colossian church and he said, You're rich in the word of God.

And what you regard as crumbs, beloved, there are people in the world who would look upon as a donkey today. I go to places, beloved, and they look at you as if you'd just come from Mars or some place in outer space. I can share the things that have become commonplace.

I find myself in a constant dilemma. Amen. How can I justify going to places, beloved, where people already know the truth, when there are places crying out where they've never heard? Was it Oswald Smith, that great American evangelist who said, No one has the right to hear the gospel twice.

All the time there are people who've never heard it once. Glory to his name. That should provoke all of us, beloved, to pack our bags and be gone.

Amen. Not necessarily to the other side of the world. Perhaps just down your street, because there are people in your street, beloved, who still haven't heard.

They may have heard the words, because you can hear the words on the radio, you can hear the words, beloved, on the television. You can read the words in books, even in the Bible, beloved, and still not hear, because they hear but they don't hear. They don't understand.

When you and I minister the gospel of the Lord Jesus, beloved, we must minister the word of God in spirit, because unless the word of God is accompanied by the spirit, it will be dead, let her. We're told here in the same second epistle to the Corinthians, where we were reading, there in Chapter 3, we read it, who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter filleth, but the spirit giveth life. Jesus said, the words that I speak unto you, their spirit, their life.

Wouldn't the God, beloved, in every word, he didn't say the words that I preach unto you, he said the words that I speak unto you. Their spirit, their life. Every word that should come out of your lips and my lips, should minister the spirit of knowledge, the edifying, upbuilding, encouraging, inspiring.

Amen. And you shouldn't have to pray the Old Testament prayer, set a watch before my mouth that I may not sin against me. That was a prayer, beloved, for a Jewish disposition.

For people who didn't know anything of the inward reality of the gospel. It's a quotation. You can find lots of quotations in the Bible below to justify your compromised position.

Amen. You can do what you like, beloved. You can manipulate.

The devil did it with the word of God, didn't he? He made it say things that God never intended him to say. It had an application in the Old Testament. Jesus said, what's in a man's heart will come out of his lips.

Now if the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Gospel, we shouldn't be too concerned about what comes out of our mouth. I didn't say that, Jesus said that. Wonderful.

Glory be to God. God has entrusted you and me with the gospel. Now let's look a little more thoroughly into the first two chapters in particular, the Thessalonian epistle.

Go up into verse 2. If we had been entrusted, beloved, with this glorious gospel and authorized by the Spirit of God to speak, then in verse 2 it says, but even after that we had suffered before and were shamefully entreated, as you know at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. Hallelujah. We were bold in our God.

One of the great characteristics of original Christianity, brothers, was boldness. If you want to see it, go back into the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 4. Amen. We're so apologetic so often, so diplomatic, so cautious, so careful because we're frightened of getting into trouble.

Acts chapter 4, verse 13. And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant, then they marveled and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. They had been up into the mouth, beloved.

But not only had they been with Jesus, I often say this is the grossest understatement, beloved, you'll read anywhere in the New Testament, that they had been with Jesus. That was not the explanation to their boldness. They hadn't just been with Jesus, beloved, they got Jesus living on the inside of them in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Amen. He was their constant and consistent companion. And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John.

Amen. You will see it further down in the chapter. Verse 29.

And now, Lord, behold their threatens and grant unto thy servant that with all boldness they may speak the word, stretching out thine hand to heal, that signs and wonders be done in the name of thy Holy Child, Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they assembled together and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and spake the word of God with boldness. You will marvel, beloved, at the tremendous authority with which Jesus spoke.

Amen. Tremendous sense of conviction and assurance. Lest it be his boldness that frightened him to go into jail.

There was a lovely man in Bhutan who came to the Lord two or three years ago. He's a forester. Great, tall, elegant, robust, Bhutanese, a donker.

He came to the Lord and he said, I don't care what they do with me. They can put me in jail, they can beat me, and I'll tell you to go to jail in Bhutan, beloved, it's no picnic. Some of the palatial residents like British jails, and you might think they're pretty crappy if you've been to look at some of them.

Those are America, beloved. Jails are like high-star hotels. But in Bhutan, beloved, they're like medieval dungeons.

He said, I don't care what they do with me. And at that time, beloved, he was facing the responsibility of looking after four small children because his wife was dying of a terminal illness. In fact, after the first meeting, he said, brother, will you come and pray for my wife? And we walked up the valley to this home, and there she was perched on the edge of the bed, beloved, just a bag of bones.

Skin stretched over bones, looking more dead than alive. And these four little children, beloved, clinging to her skirt. But God had come and met this man in the power of the Holy Ghost and wrought something in his heart, beloved.

And I tell you, when you're in a situation like this, you wonder how they ever understand what you're talking about. Not only do you have the linguistic barrier, beloved, but you've got the cultural barrier, you've got all the generations of Buddhism, beloved, all the powerful demonic, diabolical influence compounded one layer upon another. You wonder how they ever get through.

When you're talking, beloved, when you're preaching through and through and through, and you listen to what's coming out of their mouths, you carefully can believe, beloved, that they're saying the same thing that you're saying. I speak in English, and then one man speaks in Nepali, and then I turn to the second man who's supposed to speak in Gondwana, and he looks at me and says, what did you say? And the meeting which will take one hour here, beloved, will take about four hours there. And in the meeting there will be, they will be translating the Khan and Sharshak and perhaps other tribal languages.

And you wonder how you're ever going to get through this tremendous barrier, all these obstacles and difficulties that seem to obstruct the Gospel, and yet God gets through. Because it's not limited to words. It's not limited to language.

It's not limited to culture, beloved. We so often make great sins about these things. Amen.

God can break right through if He will find men and women who will be bold. Hmm. And neither not, Paul said.

He said, I come in fear and much trembling. Amen. And if you ever cease to tremble, beloved, then there's something wrong with you.

You're depending upon yourself instead of the Lord. And that's a tremendous disadvantage of being an extrovert. Amen.

Who seems to be able to bash through everything. Glory be to God. I spoke the word with boldness.

Amen. The Forrester's Wife. Didn't I say the Forrester's Wife? The Forrester's Wife.

Yes. This is supposed to be about the Forrester's Wife. I let her approach on the edge of the bed.

A bag of bones. Forgive me. You see, these things are so much a part of me.

But I often talk about them and assume that everyone else knows all the details related to them. That's what happens to you, beloved, when you start living and moving in the Spirit. You become so integrated and a part of the situation to which you belong.

But you assume everyone else is there. Yes, the Forrester's Wife perched on the bed, a bag of bones with skin snatched over it and four little children bragging around her skirt. We prayed for her, beloved.

The next year she was in the meeting. Amen. God had saved her.

God had delivered her. God had healed her. She was one of too many women on that occasion, beloved.

Another one was in hospital. The doctor told me. He said, we've done everything.

We've had her here for six months. We've done everything that we know. And she gets worse rather than better.

We've given up. Again, we prayed for her, beloved. The next day she came out of hospital and she'd never been back to hospital again.

Now, don't ask me why God does that there and he doesn't do it here. Perhaps we have too many alternatives. Too many cop-outs.

They hadn't any, beloved. It wasn't even a general hospital. It was a leprosy hospital.

Way out in the sticks. Glory be to God. I am constantly amazed, beloved, as to how God is able to penetrate and overcome all the insuperable barriers but he has to find men and women, beloved, who are prepared to embrace the implications and take the consequences if necessary.

You know, there are more Christians in Nepal, beloved, as a result of men and women going to prison than there have ever been of men and women living free. It was one of the great jokes, sir, that if you went to prison, you evangelized the rest of the prisoners. Bless God.

That's why I never heard a Nepalese ever complain about going to prison. Talk to them about persecution. They're not persecuted at the moment.

Democracy has come. It's a funny form of democracy, but it's come. And there's a measure of liberty and freedom in Nepal today to preach the gospel.

Never been known before, although there's much opposition to it. When we were there last year, down at the hospital, we had the joy of seeing the Lord establish his church and set in position elders and deacons. People were baptized in the river, babies were dedicated.

Glory to his name. And people come into the Lord in one of the most diabolical areas of the whole of Nepal. The low seat of Satan.

Glory be to God. But men, but God needs to find men with whom he can entrust, men and women, but with whom he can entrust the gospel who have the ability to preach boldly the words of God and be prepared for the consequences. Some years ago, before there was freedom in Nepal, beloved, there was a team of wild-rally young people evangelising.

They were 50% Nepali and 50% Russian. They eventually all caught, beloved, and all clapped in joy. Because of pressure from the United States in particular, threatening, beloved, to withdraw their aid, they released all the foreigners, gave them their passports back, stamped them and said that they were persona non grata, and put them out of the country.

The Nepali brothers and sisters, beloved, languished in jail. Some months later, I was speaking at the YRM headquarters in Singapore, and I said to them, if I had been one of those Western people, I would

have refused to be set free until they were prepared to treat the Nepali brothers and sisters in the way that they treat the Westerners. We can go in, beloved, get into trouble and get off scot-free.

I mean, and that's why often indigenous people, beloved, feel inferior to the Western missionary or the person who comes in and seemingly does everything and gets all the glory and they're left to take the consequence. We know, beloved, or we should know, that when we go to countries like Bhutan or Nepal or anywhere else in the world where the gospel doesn't have the same freedom that we enjoy, we know what the consequences are and we should be prepared to take those consequences. If we're not prepared for it, then we should not go.

I mean, we should not go. Then Peter and John knew the implications, beloved, of what it meant to preach the gospel boldly. They'd already been incarcerated once, they were going to be incarcerated yet again, but they still went on preaching the gospel.

They said that we will go on doing it. Glory to his name. Wonderful.

Can God entrust you and me with the gospel, because he knows the integrity of our heart and we're prepared to see it through. Hallelujah. Here's another lovely truth in verse 4 again.

But as we were allowed to God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth the heart. Oh, the great danger, beloved, the great subtlety of being men-pleasers. Again, back in the 4th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you see the same preachable appearing when, in verse 19, Peter and John answered and said unto him, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God judge ye.

For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them because of the people, for all men glorify God for that which was done. Amen.

Do we please God or do we please men? It may not be an extreme situation, but it's amazing how easily you can become seduced into a position, beloved, where you are in danger of pleasing men. I was reading somewhere else again this morning it may have been, it was in those same chapters, 23 and 24 of the Exodus, where it warns men under the old covenant, beloved, about taking gifts in case it corrupts your motives and causes you to do things, beloved, from an ulterior motive of pleasing men rather than pleasing God. It was a law, beloved, one of the great principles written into the legal code that applied to the people of God as they then were to warn them against the danger and suffering of being seduced away into pleasing men.

Amen. That's why it's always a very dangerous thing, beloved, to be employed by a congregation to preach the gospel and be dependent upon that congregation for your bread and butter because I tell you, beloved, they can strangle you. Amen.

God is looking for men and women to whom he can entrust his word who are obligated to no one in that sense but simply answerable to God. Amen. Fear of men.

Amen. Whether they invite you again or whether they don't, read the biography of Charles Simeon, a great Cambridge preacher who refused, beloved, to couch out to his congregation. So they put him out of his church and for some 20 odd years or more he preached on the steps of his church in Cambridge and he was the man, beloved, who influenced so many men to go out to the uttermost parts of Europe to preach

the gospel.

He was the man who influenced Henry Martin the great missionary who went out and aligned himself, beloved, with William Care, translated the New Testament into Hindustani and Urdu, finished it in a city called Kampur and then started working on the translation of the scripture into Persian and died, beloved, on his way to the capital of Persia in those days, in the desert of consumption, as it was called in those days. Fearless, Charles Simeon would not please men. So they kicked him out.

Glory be to God. And he preached on the depths of his church. He's now, read the biography of John Bunyan, you'll find the same glorious story in and out of jail.

Spent more years in jail than he did out of jail. He's now a venerated, bloodied ornate Christian saint. Of course, he was a real one.

Amen. He was a real one. Bless the Lord.

Where are the men, beloved? Where are the women? Who are no longer limited by what people say about them, by what people think about them, by what people will do to them. They will not please men. They will please God.

Hallelujah. Now when Paul preached, he didn't just preach words. Listen to him.

Verse 7. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherishes her children. Though being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the gospel of God only, but our own souls, because you were dear unto us. Amen.

He wasn't just preaching words. He wasn't just preaching sermons, but he was preaching life and giving of himself. We see this in his statement in the 9th chapter of the Roman Epistle, where we find him so tied up and implicated, beloved, in his great desire to see the salvation of his own native people.

He said, I say the truth in Christ, and I not. My conscience also bear me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren and my kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption and the glory and the covenant and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises.

Whose are the fathers of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is overall God-blessed for everybody. He's talking to God. That was the great cry of his heart.

Amen. He was prepared, beloved, to be so involved with what he preached that it's necessary he was happy for God to block him out. Amen.

It's the same great principle that rose up in the heart of Moses. That tremendous verse in the Old Testament, the only sentence, beloved, that Moses never completed. It's the only incomplete sentence in the Gospel.

When he's talking about, in the writings of Moses, where he was talking about Israel's king. And he said, Oh God, let me out. There were men, beloved, who were so bound up in what they were ministering that they didn't stand apart from it.

They were involved in it. Glory to God. People often say to me, you get excited when you preach.

Well, you tell me anything else that's worth getting excited about. I come from a city called Liverpool, brother, where they get very excited about football. I have to say, 23 silly men with one man to keep them in order and a bag of wind to kick around for so many minutes.

I don't know how many minutes involved in the game. My wife could tell you more about football than I can. Amen.

Because she thought brought up my three boys. And on one occasion she went to watch them on a mat and was running up and down the sideline, beloved, speaking in tongues. She ran out of words, beloved, to a smile and encouraged her sons to win the game.

She roared up and down the line. All getting all excited, beloved. It's a game of football.

There's nothing more that should get you more excited than preaching the gospel. When I talk about preaching, I'm not talking about preaching in the professionals. I'm talking about gossiping the gospel in pastoral ministry.

The Lord Jesus, the men and women, wherever you meet them, standing in the queue, beloved, in sangria, wherever it is, supermarket, whether you go and get your goodies, standing on the bus meeting men and women, pacing them up. This man pressured the line, leading about, but he had such an ability to take every natural situation and use it, beloved. To the furthest of the gospel.

Some people used to get embarrassed and all hop under the collar. Amen. But it was so natural.

It was so spontaneous. It was so real. Amen.

Because he was bound up, beloved, in what he was doing, what he was ministering, what he was preaching. You should read, beloved, these great men of God, whose lives, beloved, they weren't just employed to do a job. It's a trouble, beloved, many people see it as an alternative profession.

And lots of people in the ministry, beloved, think it's a profession. Because it looks a nice, cosy one. I wonder, beloved, if you really become involved in preaching the gospel, if God really does entrust you with the gospel, it will consume your whole life.

For all it is doing, it will consume your whole life. Not the gospel of God only, but also my own soul. That's why I said thank you, Donna, for being Donna.

I could say that to lots of you. Glory to God. Anyone can go through the exercises of preaching.

That's no problem. It involves the totality of your being, spirit, soul, body, all that you are, all that you have. Most of the sort of men and women that God is looking for.

That's why Paul could say my gospel. He said, well, it's the gospel of God. It's the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he had become so integrated, beloved, with the gospel that he preached, he could say my gospel. Because he'd become the gospel, beloved. He preached what he was and he was what he preached.

That's all that you will preach. That's all that I preach. Jesus preached what he was and he was what he preached.

He was the Word made flesh and the words that he spoke were spirit and life. One was simply the extension of the other. I know the different meanings between the two words that are in John chapter 1 and John chapter 6. They are two different words in the Greek.

But one is simply the extension or the outworking the other. It's the application, the relevant, the application of the Word of God unto this situation and that situation of the all time. I'll do it, of the former.

Manifest in the latter. Amen. He was giving, giving, giving of himself.

So he said, woe is me if I preach not the gospel. Read that in the ninth chapter, the first epistle to the Corinthians. There he's talking about the great responsibility.

Not just the responsibility but the privilege of preaching the gospel. It's in verse 16. For though I preach the gospel I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me.

Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this thing willingly I'll have a reward. But if against my will a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me, there's an awful inevitability.

I can't be, I can't do anything else. Beloved, if the gospel doesn't burn in you like that, it would be just passing of words, being passing of information. Hallelujah.

But it will be that, beloved, you will be so infectious with the gospel that everyone will get infected or contaminated by you inevitably. Don't have to come to terms, beloved, with what God has made you and entrusted to you. Oh God.

Lifts us out of the professionalism and brings us into the glory, reality and truth that makes the gospel tangible to men and women. Most of us, beloved, are riddled with religion. We impact the world.

We encroach the text. We're like this recorder. Press the button, beloved, and it all comes out.

Amen. But that's not preaching. This is why I tremble, beloved, at the thought of computerized preaching.

You know I all have a hang-up about computers, don't you? Amen. I do see their value, but I see the tremendous danger, tremendous danger of people going to their computer, beloved, for their gospel rather than going up into the mount of God and meeting with God and worshipping upon Him. You see, we live in an age where we want everything instant.

The quicker we can get it, the less work we have to do, beloved, to obtain it, the better. If you can press a few buttons and it pops up on the screen and then press another button and it comes all out on the printer. Wonderful, beloved.

But that will never make a man or a woman a preacher. The only thing that will make you and me a preacher, beloved, is when we go up into the mount of God and allow God to saturate our being with His gospel, with Himself, with His truth, so that He oozes out of our pores. I was in France just a week ago.

A missionary on there with whom I was staying, I asked him how it was. I've always been very intrigued as to how it was that he got involved with us lot. Twenty years ago, came to England, he and his wife, they'd been missionaries in the Gabon, and they came to Cliff Conference.

Couldn't speak any English in those days. Understood virtually nothing of what was going on, except the fact, beloved, that God so impacted their lives with the glorious revelation of Jesus Christ, they'd never been the same since. And they faithfully stood by that which they'd received.

And I said, in Little Humber, how did you come to Cliff? Those years ago. Well, he said, when I was a boy at school, I shared a dormitory with another lad. And he said, he went on to study English, and became an English teacher.

And to do some postgraduate studies, he went to England, and landed up in a place called Exeter, and visited the fellowship there. And he said, he came back home to France, and he said, George, you must go. He said, love oozes out of their faces, oozes out of their pores.

He said, you can't explain it, you can't, you can't, oh, he said, I don't know what to do with it, but he said, it oozes out. Amen. And that's why they came to England, that's why God's doing a work in France today.

Why God, and I'll tell you about it, France is one of the most pagan countries in Europe. And of course, the English, I don't know about the Irish, you may not have the same problem. The English have a dreadful problem.

That little bit of water between England and the north coast of France, love it as an insuperable barrier. You can cross it in less time than you can get from Portsmouth to Liverpool. But to the English, love it, it's an inseparable barrier.

But I'll tell you about it, there's a mission field, just gossip. God is raising up young couples, beloved, in France, who are just hungry for God. They're sick of religion, they're sick of humanism, they're sick of Catholicism, they're sick of the occult.

You go to Brittany, beloved, religion and the occult are one thing, truly. They say there are two great powers here, in Brittany, humanism and religion. And he said, if you don't sit in your own, you'll get squeezed in between the two.

And if you haven't got something stronger than them, beloved, you'll die. Hallelujah. They're crying out.

And the local authorities, beloved, are all ready to obliterate and destroy and pull down everything that God is wanting to do. But there's a group of young men and women, beloved, who are determined that God is going to be honoured and glorified. You don't need a coolness to go to the other side of the world, beloved, you can have one on the other side of the channel.

Glory be to God. The house in which we've been meeting, beloved, has been closed by the authorities. They're looking to God, either to redeem that situation or give us the ability to buy an alternative venue.

But those young, those people, they're determined to go on. Just before I left them, beloved, we had a meeting together and they said we're going to go on. Whatever anyone says or does, we're going to go on.

We want the conference to go on. We want to see the Church of Jesus Christ established in this land. In order that the Word of God, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, might have three-course, blessed be his name.

But in order for that to happen, beloved, God's got to find men and women out of whose lives today's truth rules us. Pathetic performance of preaching publicly that we had there because most of the interpreters get stuck. Some of them want to be so precise that they strangle the very thing that you're trying to say.

And others are so vague or thinking about other things you wonder what you're grappling with. Amen. God overcomes the barriers.

They all went away this time saying it was the most wonderful conference they'd ever been to. I thought, man alive. Oh, glory to his name.

Not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls because you were dear unto us. Amen. Someone once said, beloved, you'll only wing your friends.

A lot of truth in that statement. Paul loved his people. He said you were dear unto us.

In the preaching verse he says, we being affectionately desirous of you were willing to have imparted unto you not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls. For you were dear unto us. If you don't love the people to whom you minister the Gospel, you'll never communicate it.

Amen. Amen. And you have to love them.

You often say to me, how do you cope? Well, there's just one answer. God sheds his love abroad in your heart and gives you a love for the people. And many of the things that seem so insuperable and so impossible to cope with, beloved, seem to disappear.

Of course they don't disappear, beloved. You have to live through them and overcome them and prove that the love of God in your heart is greater than that. Amen.

Amen. And that's what lubricates the Gospel. God make us lovers.

Lovers. Glory to his name. Chapter 1 now.

Verse 5. This is one Thessalonians still. For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance, as you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. Not just words, but power in the Holy Ghost with great assurance and conviction substantiated and backed up by the quality of life that lies behind it.

That's a modern translation. Amen. Hasn't altered the meaning one step.

Our Gospel came to you not in word only, but in power. That's the word ability. You shall receive ability after that the Holy Ghost has come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the world.

The same word, but I mean you shall receive ability to exercise the authority of preaching the Gospel with which you have been entrusted. Those are the two words power in the Scripture. Authority, ability in the Holy Ghost with much assurance for you know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

Bless the Lord. Now God's able, beloved, to work and speak despite man. He's done it many times.

In fact, He once spoke to a man called Caiaphas. He was an agent of Satan liaising, beloved, to bring about the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Little did he know that he was simply facilitating the plans, eternal

plans and purposes of God to be outworked on the earth.

Caiaphas said, It is meet that one man should die that the nations live. Little did he know that he was a true prophet. And the proof of a true prophet is what he says comes to pass.

Not that people clap, clap words, beloved, may all sound all very fine, but the proof as to whether they are real or not or whether they're true or not is whether it actually happens. Amen. Caiaphas was a true prophet.

Prophet of God. He spoke the Word of God. God worked despite him.

He's done that many times. God can take up who He likes, when He likes, where He likes. I'll use them.

But that's not how God wants to work, beloved. God wants to find men and women in whom He can entrust His gospel, whose lives, beloved, substantiate the very thing that they speak. In other words, the life that is consistent with the gospel of God, that upholds the Word of Truth.

Someone once said, What you are speaks louder than what you say. Amen. And what a lot of truth there is in that.

I don't know if I've ever told you this story before. I don't know whether it's apocryphal or true. It illustrates the point.

A lady once went to church on a Sunday morning. She was a regular attendant of this particular assembly and she listened to the preacher preach. And his preaching was magnificent.

In fact, at the end of the meeting, she stood up at the back of the church and said, Mr. Preacher, your preaching is angelic. She happened to be the preacher's wife. She said, In fact, it is so wonderful that I have made two resolutions this morning.

One, I'm going to bring your bed here. And two, I'm going to serve your meals here. Because when you're here, you're like an angel.

But when you're at home, you're like a devil. That would be funny, beloved, if it wasn't often true. Men who function as elders or leaders or preachers in the church, beloved, whose public performance is something quite different from what their private pattern of living is.

What a tragedy. The miracle of the grace of God, beloved, that anything gets communicated. God's looking for men and women, beloved, who when they preach the gospel, it comes not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost with much assurance, with a quality and caliber of life behind them that it substantiates it.

It steals it. It declares it. It's true.

That it works. All because they look at me. It works.

What he says in the Galatian Epistle. He said, Jesus Christ is evidently set forth crucified among you. But he wasn't crucified in Galatia.

Was he? Lots of people think that he was suffered from premature senile decay and had got his past all mixed up and had overlooked the fact that Jesus had been crucified in Jerusalem or just outside of

Jerusalem at a place called Golgotha. Galatia, beloved, was a long way away from Jerusalem. But he said, Jesus Christ has evidently or with evidence been set forth crucified among you.

But he was saying, look at me. My life is the proof and evidence of what Jesus said on the cross really works. Beloved, I knew the contemporary evidence of the reality of what took place at Calvary, which is the culmination of the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

Amen. That's why you are where you are, beloved, to be that evidence, that proof to men and women that it's not just a figment of the imagination but that it's true. It works! And that's what the next scripture tells us in chapter 2, verse 13.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when you receive the word of God which you heard of us, you received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe. Amen. I love this word, effectual.

That effectually worketh in you that believe. Something that is effectual, beloved, is something that works. He talks about effectual prayer.

He talks about effectual power. He talks about the effectual gospel. Amen.

He said the word of God that you received wasn't the word of men but it was the word of God which effectually worketh in you that believe. Amen. That's the proof.

You have heard and received the word of God. You can't cast all the responsibility on the preacher, whoever she or he may be. Amen.

It's a mutual responsibility. Preaching is always two way, beloved. Whether it's in a public sense or whether it's in a personal man-to-man, woman-to-woman sense.

It's always two way. Sometimes when you're preaching publicly, God is like hitting your head against a brick wall. Those of us who preach will have known those sort of experiences where you feel this bang, bang, bang.

Law comes back and hits you. Amen. Go into other situations and suddenly it's literally drawn out of you.

Amen. That's why the African churches are so encouraging when they keep saying hallelujah, praise the Lord. Amen.

They draw it out of you. Amen. It's wonderful, beloved, to have a testimony that's the evidence that the Word of God has worked.

I could spend hours with you now illustrating for my own experience, beloved, the Word of God that has come to me in the power of the Holy Ghost over the years. That one has had the privilege of proving and finding to be true. Right down to the practical everyday business of living.

Wonderful. I wouldn't be standing here with you today if that wasn't so. Glory be to God.

I testify, beloved, that the very fact that I'm here is the evidence that God's Word is true. It's worked. There was a great prelude that led me to the point where I was born again of the Spirit of God.

And I'd been in the ministry four years before that happened. Amen. And then the Lord has taken me on.

I often say one day I'm going to write my biography. I'll be in the coffin before I start. Amen.

But I've got the title. It will be And God Said. So if you're alive when it comes out, beloved, you know who wrote it.

And God Said. I've got lots of books in my head. Whether they ever get on paper or not, that's another question.

Glory be His name. Can't be? But have you found the Word of God to actually sexually work? It's not just about a box of magic called a promise box. Have I had one of those? I hope you haven't got it now.

Amen. You mustn't reduce the Word of God, beloved, to a box of magic. You can't pick up little rolls of paper out of a box.

Amen. I've been to many houses, beloved, and there it sits on the front room table and you can pick it out. And of course, if you don't like it, you stick it back where no one else is looking and pick up another one.

You mustn't do that with the Word of God. Glory be His name. It's not a box of magic.

It's the Word of the living God quickened by the Spirit to become life and flesh in you and me. Hallelujah. Here's a lovely truth that I overlooked, beloved.

I want you to see it in verse 9 of the same lovely chapter. For you remember, brethren, our labour and travail, labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, for any of you we preach unto you the gospel of God. Amen.

You'll see the same great truth, beloved, in the second epistle to the Thessalonians. You just turn over the page of your Bible. Chapter 3, verse 8. He said, Neither did we eat any man's bread, but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we should not be chargeable unto any of you.

And verse 10 of the same chapter, For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any work not, neither should he eat. Hmm. Amazing statement, isn't it? Very practical.

If you don't work, you don't eat. And Paul didn't just pack words, beloved. He lived what he taught.

Amen. He preached the gospel of God freely. You will see it again back in that ninth chapter, the first epistle to the Corinthians, where he's talking about the whole privilege and responsibility of preaching the gospel.

And he illustrates it from the Old Testament, saying that it's illegitimate that a man who preaches the gospel should live by the gospel. But then he says in verse 18, What is my reward then, verily, that I, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge that I abuse not my authority in the gospel. Amen.

He preached the gospel freely. He laboured night and day. Amen.

When he went to Corinth, beloved, originally, he set up home with two refugees. They were called Aquila and Priscilla. What a magnificent couple.

Hadn't faith their biography in the New Testament. They're a most remarkable couple. They were on the road constantly, being checked out of one place, and then another, and then another.

But wherever you find them, beloved, they're sharing the gospel. They're showing to men and women the way of God more perfectly. They set up a church in their home.

Wherever they were, beloved, they were agents and instruments whereby the gospel was becoming a reality to men and women. A wonderful couple. But when you find them originally, beloved, in the 18th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you discover them just having been kicked out of Rome.

They were refugees, and they set up house and put their hand, beloved, to earning their bread and butter. Glory be to God. They were tent makers.

Paul came along, joined them, beloved, and did the same thing. He wasn't afraid of soiling his hands. Lots of people, beloved, think about preaching the gospel and living by faith, inverted commas, as a cop-out for not doing a decent day's work and being prepared to earn their own living.

The only qualification, beloved, for living by faith, so-called, is that the work of God makes it impossible for you to do a secular job and earn your own bread and butter. That is the only qualification. Glory to his name.

Paul said, I preach the gospel freely. He didn't abuse, beloved, his privilege, his authority. He had scriptural verses, beloved, that he could expound to prove that he could legitimately live by the gospel that he preached, but he didn't.

He forwent it. He wanted it to be a testimony to his generation, beloved. The gospel was free.

He received it freely. He wanted to give it freely. Amen.

It's a tragedy, beloved, when men and women make merchandise of the things of God. You know what Jesus did with men and women when he found them in the temple doing that sort of thing, don't you? He cast them out and accused them, beloved, of being thieves. They were abusers of their privilege with which they had been entrusted.

Glory be to his name. You and I are entrusted with the gospel. We're to preach it boldly.

We're to please God and not men. We're to preach not just words, but our own self, to give ourselves totally as we minister. Blessed be his name.

Our gospel is not to be in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost with much assurance substantiated by the quality of life that we live. So that when men and women receive this word, beloved, they receive it as the word of God, not as the word of men. Here's one lovely final truth.

Back in chapter 1, verse 7. It says, You were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of God, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith, the God word, is spread abroad so that we need not speak anything. Isn't that an amazing thing? Paul had gone and preached the gospel to them, beloved, in the way that we've seen.

Amen. And they so responded to the gospel, he said, there's no need for me to come to you anymore. They received the word of God, beloved, and became ensamples to all those who lived in Macedonia and

Achaia, to the point, beloved, that Paul said, I don't need to come anymore and preach the gospel under it because you've become it.

And that's the only way, beloved, in which the whole world will eventually be reached. Because if we keep preaching to the same group of people again and again and again and again, the minority will hear ad nauseum, and the majority, beloved, will die of spiritual salvation. Glory to his name.

God has entrusted you and me with the gospel, whether it be little or whether it be much. And we have this tremendous responsibility, beloved, to go and communicate and impart and give that gospel to other men and women wherever we meet them. That may be in your street.

It may be the uttermost parts of the earth. But you have to begin in Jerusalem. And then you'll go on to Judea.

And then perhaps eventually you'll land up in the uttermost parts of the earth. The greatest privilege that any man or woman can ever have, beloved, is to come to the realization that they have been entrusted with the gospel of God. God said to Moses, come up into the mount and I will teach thee.

I will give to thee. I will show thee. In order that thou mayest go and teach.

Amen. So go and give, beloved, what you have received. Glory to his name.

And you don't have to wait for next week. We've got this afternoon. Let's pray.

Wonderful Lord. Glory to thy name. Amen.

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