

# Digging Ditches in Dry Weather

by Paris Reidhead

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and wisdom in times of crisis, and recognizing that God is still active and involved in the world.*

**Duration:** 1:00:14

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 5:1

**Topics:** "Christian Life"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of taking action and not just relying on others to spread the word of God. He urges the audience to go beyond their comfort zones and make a difference in the lives of those around them. The preacher uses the analogy of digging ditches to represent the preparation and effort required to receive God's blessings. He encourages the audience to deal with sin and remove any obstacles that may hinder their relationship with God. The sermon concludes with the promise that if the audience is willing to meet God's conditions and dig the ditches, they will experience the fulfillment of God's promises in their lives.

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## Transcript

2nd Kings chapter 3. 2nd Kings chapter 3. Digging ditches in dry weather. We've been speaking in these days past concerning preparation for God's blessing and it seemed that there would be a lesson and a message for us here in this portion of the Word of God. I think if I read beginning with the fourth, well let's start with the first so you see it.

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the 18th year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and he reigned 12 years and he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord but not like his father and like his mother for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made. Nevertheless he cleaved under the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat which made Israel to sin he departed not there from. Might I just stop to say here at this point that the sin of Jeroboam was to set up the calf to be worshipped in Samaria the ten kings the ten tribes worshipped not at Jerusalem when they became a separate nation but they worshipped in Samaria in the mountain to which the woman pointed there when she spoke to the Lord later they worshipped the calf and it was political to hold the unity of the people if they'd gone down to Jerusalem surely there would have been a reuniting of the two the two groups the ten northern tribes and the two southern tribes.

And we begin with the fourth verse and Misha king of Moab was a sheep master and rendered unto the king of Israel and hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand rams with the wool but it came to pass when Ahab was dead that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel and King Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time and numbered all Israel and he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah saying the king of Moab is rebelled against me will thou go with me against Moab to battle and he said I will go up I am as thou are my people as thy people my horses as thy horses and he said which way shall we go up and he answered the way through the wilderness of Edom so the king of Israel went and the king of Judah and the king of Edom and they fetched a compass of seven days

journey and there was no water for the host and for the cattle that followed them and the king of Israel said alas that the Lord hath called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab but Jehoshaphat said is there not here a prophet of the Lord that we may inquire of the Lord by him and one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said here is Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah and Jehoshaphat said the word of the Lord is with him so the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him and Elisha said unto the king of Israel what have I to do with thee get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother and the king of Israel said unto him nay for the Lord hath called these three kings

together to deliver them into the hand of Moab and Elisha said as the Lord of hosts liveth before whom I stand surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah I would not look toward thee nor see thee but now bring me a minstrel and it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him and he said thus saith the Lord make this valley full of ditches for thus saith the Lord ye shall not see wind neither shall you see rain yet that valley shall be filled with water that you may drink both ye and your cattle and your beasts and this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand and he shall smite every fence city and every choice city and shall fell every good tree and stop all wells of

water and mar every good piece of land with stones and it came to pass in the morning when the meat offering was offered that behold there came water by the way of Edom and the country was filled with water and when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them they gathered all that were able to put on armor and upward and stood in the border and they rose up early in the morning and the sun shone upon the water and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood and they said this is blood the kings are surely slain and they have smitten one another now therefore Moab to the spoil and when they came to the camp of Israel the Israelites rose up and smoked the Moabites so that they fled before them but they went forward smiting the Moabites even in

their country and they beat down the cities and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone and filled it and they stopped all the wells of water and felled all the good trees only in Caharasseth left they the stones thereof albeit the slingers went about it and smoked it and when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him he took with him 700 men that drew swords to break through even under the king of Edom but they could not then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall and there was great indignation against Israel and they departed from him and returned to their own land you see all the days of conflict and test and difficulty were not reserved for us upon whom the ends of the ages have come

we understand that we're facing battles we're facing problems we are perhaps in as crucial a week this past week and in the days of the week before us in regard to what our government may do respecting the

soviet build-up of arms in Cuba as crucial a week as I say as we've had for a long time anyone who is aware of the nature of things as they are will recognize that it's not necessary for Cuba to have intercontinental ballistic missiles and other weapons of high artillery and war in order to protect itself from the United States and yet this is what's happening and this is what's there and our government is facing problems and difficulties and decisions are going to have to be made which undoubtedly will be bipartisan in their support nature no one knows this time save the lord himself

what's going to happen but suffice it to say that we're living in days of great danger great difficulty and great threat I do not believe however that the greatest threat to the 20th century to America and to civilization in general comes from mobilized armies and the accumulation of nuclear weapons and the erection of a tremendous structure for offensive as well as defensive warfare as threatening as this is there's something that to my mind is even worse and that is the fact that we're living in a day that seemingly has lost its moral anchor and is drifting the thing is of long standing and it's an oversimplification to try and pinpoint it to any particular time and we I certainly wouldn't do that I would however point out to you that we have come to a time when God seemingly is

virtually without voice and this is the matter that concerns me and troubles me tonight that with all of our elaborate religious structure and it's necessary when you have three people working together someone must know what the first what who what each is to do and when this we can't escape we are going to be dealing in the days of this week with ecclesiastical structure but there is a certain sense in which it's necessary whether it's a Sunday school department or whether it's just a class whatever it is there's necessary it's necessary to have order and so I'm not condemning ecclesiastical structure this is not my thought at all I'm not I recognize that this is not the cause of any evil in our day we are in a situation where the land has many organizations 312 that are

registered with the federal government and others that are just small groups of churches I do not see as I mentioned this in the past any one of which is preparing itself to be a vehicle for the revelation of the glory of Christ in this hour in which we live and this troubles me we all have responsibilities every organization that I know has begun by the development of responsibilities christian missionary alliance the missionary society aspect began one night in this church 80 78 years ago thereabouts when a young woman two young women came from India they had no way of getting back and Dr.

Simpson's great heart was moved with love and burden and said we'll send you well now that meant they had to have a checking account they had to have a checkbook they had to have someone to take care of it and out of that response to a need and an opportunity and a challenge rose the mission aspect of the christian missionary alliance it was it came because someone's heart or many hearts were greatly burdened and so every organization that now exists came into being to serve some other purpose than is presently pressing on us I do not know of a single organization that we have in the country today that exists primarily to meet the need of the 20th century primarily to be a vehicle for the revelation of the glory of God tomorrow primarily for the purpose of releasing the the power of

Christ into our society now there may be such but I'm not acquainted with them we are facing the fact that all of us have had something else to do some other responsibilities some other tasks and all of a sudden we find that there's we've got to drop what we're doing because we're in a status of emergency and I think that this is the case the things we're doing are good for the most part they're helpful they're useful God's honored them and God's blessed them but today we're in the place where we must recognize that there is a tremendous danger confronting us a tremendous problem facing us a challenge that's going to tear at

the very best of each of us and the question that you have to ask yourself is this are you sufficiently concerned about the day and the generation the need and the

opportunity the challenge that confronts you the responsibility that rests upon you to admit that you do not have the answer I am confident that if you have come to that place the place that the two king three kings were facing an enemy facing the challenge facing all that was represented by the revolt of Moab and we could dwell upon the symbolism of this relying and really relating it to the god of this world to all of this is the pressures and powers and influences and if this is correct but if you if you've actually brought yourself to face this fact that today you're living in a generation that is going to have to decide in some grand manner whether we can have the perpetuation and the survival of the values that are represented by your presence here you know well that in so much of

the world tonight such a thing is just a group of people getting together in a public building lighted with utilities and free to take their money and share it with the work this is an unheard of thing this is a liberty that's been forfeited for nearly 20 years in China and much longer than that for the most part in in Russia and other parts of the world and the question that we have to ask is this are we prepared in our day to recognize that what we're presently doing is not enough and isn't adequate for that which confronts us this is what had to happen to Jehoram Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom they had to come to the place that they did not know the answers and they couldn't smugly say well if we'll do a little more of this a little more of that and just some more of the other we're

going to make one of them that Jehoram said God's brought us out here because of our sins to destroy us and it would have been quite fitting and proper if he had where they certainly deserved destruction there would have been every reason why he should have done it and Jehoram probably was had a burning conscience because of his sins and the sins of his father and his mother and was quite prepared to say well it's up now God is caught up with this he's got us here and he's going to destroy us and I hear voices like that in the present who say the sins of the 20th century are so horrible that we've reached such new depths of depravity and iniquity that it's God is going to deal with us as he did with Sodom and Gomorrah and there's nothing we can do we've just got to recognize we deserve it

and set our chins and face it like men and say it's all over and but I do not believe that this was the answer of God this was the answer of despair probably of an unrelieved conscience but it certainly wasn't what God had brought them out to see and I do not believe that God has brought us to this place in history just simply that we can stand by and allow him to pour out judgment and wrath upon us I believe that there are far more than the ten that he asked for in Sodom and Gomorrah that Abraham asked for in Sodom and Gomorrah in our land tonight but the question you have to ask is what is your attitude toward the the danger for we're living in a time of danger we're living in a time when we are we're confronted with a great international conspiracy of communism on the one hand the

erosion of of every value on the other and with the rise of ecumenical authoritarianism still in another quarter and we're living in challenging days days that are filled with threatening and I do not want you to be moved with despair but it would I would be less than honest if I were to say that these are days similar to those of the past it isn't the case and very well could be that we're we're facing a certain final chapters in western civilization now we can take the attitude of Jehoram and we can say the jig is up God's caught up with us he's going to just burn us off the face of the earth and with this is what's to happen I believe this is wrong I don't believe this is the answer at all I don't believe it's what God wants any one of us to think I think that Jehoshaphat was there in

order that he could even though he had to admit he didn't know what to do he didn't know what attitude to take he didn't know what steps to take rather but he knew he knew that there was an answer and he was prepared to go to the proper place to find the answer to the Word of God now he didn't have a Bible that he could tuck into his purse or a testament that he could keep in his pocket remember that we've haven't had the printed Bible but just a few centuries back in his time the Word of God was laboriously copied by hand and there were very very few copies of it it was hard to get and come by and so he didn't have it in the sense that we do but he knew that God had a spokesman he said isn't there someone here that can tell us what God has to say in this situation and Jehoram had had a

lot of trouble you remember his father had had a lot of trouble with Elijah before the day came when Ahab looked at him and said you're the one who troubled Israel why are you troubling Israel and Elijah looked right back at him and said no I'm not troubling Israel you're the one your sins are the cause of the drought you're the one that's troubling Israel so Jehoram had a little acquaintance with Elijah and he also realized that God had had a successor to Elijah in Elisha and he wasn't on two friendly terms with him it's interesting to realize that he recognized who he was but apparently he was quite prepared to do without too much friendship and fellowship with Elijah but when the need came he knew where to go is there not here a prophet of the Lord we may inquire of the Lord by him

said Jehoshaphat and then one of the king of Israel's servants answered here's Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah and Jehoshaphat said the word of the Lord is with him he wanted to find out what God had to say in this day and in this time in this hour are you prepared tonight to recognize that what's happening isn't happening because God has turned his back on on humanity it isn't happening because God has lost interest in the world these things aren't coming to pass because his arm is shortened that he cannot save or his ear heavy that he cannot hear now this isn't what has taken place at all the consequences of of what has been sold in the past being reaped in the present i have a pet theory i'm not prepared to expound it to you other than to say this

that i think that we've had in the rise of the industrial revolution for 125 or 30 years longer 150 years the complete change of our culture and our civilization from what was this land was intended to be to one now where the whole end of being is the product of men's activity and the consequence of this change from emphasis on the process of living and the process of securing a product to the product itself is responsible in some degree for this rise of materialism that has so penetrated every area of our life and unfortunately you as a christian are part of it you've lost the sense of to some degree of emphasis of process in your life in your interest it isn't a question of what a person does for his salary in the sense that the factory anymore it isn't that it'd be a creative

experience that fulfills him as a individual he can sit there when the red light goes on he pushes this button when the green light goes on he pushes that button and as long as he doesn't confuse the buttons when he pushes with the respective lights he's securing his job he has union to protect him and he has the government to ensure him and he's and he doesn't need to do anything more creative than just push that button when that light goes on and something equally destructive to human personality and human dignity but it's it's all part of our culture and climate until in the 20th century we're quite prepared to say for the most part and we have the hope but have not had much to say on it that the whole end of being is just the product of men's efforts it isn't a question of the process

by which we've gotten it that there's some pleasure in the process it's it's just getting the thing itself and so ours is a very materialistic day a day in which the uh people have lost the sense of of the meaning of being

human beings and christian men and women and consequently as long as we can keep having the product of effort we're quite prepared to let any kind of erosion take place in the freedom the liberty and the process that alone can bring happiness let me illustrate it when our lord came he was a carpenter he went into a carpenter's shop he didn't go into a factory that turned out chairs and tables on the assembly line he went into a carpenter's shop he took a piece of wood and he hewed it and he chafed it and he molded it did everything it needed until he presented

from that piece of wood a finished product i believe that our lord was saying by what he did that this was the fulfillment of his own word back in the garden when he said dress the garden and he knew that a man didn't only need a chair he needed the sense of creative experience that came from taking the weed tree the tree that grew in the garden and shaping it and molding it into a useful object he didn't only need the chair but he needed the experience he needed the to do this he had to have the sense of fulfillment and complete completion that came from having participated with god in creation god made the tree and the man made the chair now if this man sits at a table and he only cuts out one little piece and sends it down an assembly line and somebody else puts it together there may

be a little sense of completion in the person that takes all the pieces and puts them together but nothing such as our lord had when he took a tree trunk and sawed it and shaped it and planed it molded it and made a completed article out now our lord knew the need of human beings for creative experience he knew the need of being a fulfilled person and it wasn't just enough to have a chair wasn't just the product of effort but it was the process that also had significance to him and our whole culture today is organized around this end this principle that it doesn't make much difference how you get it the the thing that's important is getting it if it's a chair it doesn't make any difference we don't care who did it as long as it is the thing we need to set in that corner for that

purpose and i believe that this is all part of the disintegration that's come to the church because we do not have the sense of total fulfillment of human beings that is so important if a person is to be able to stand upon his feet and face his day and face his generation courageously now you might ask what does this have to do with joseph it has to do something with the erosion it has to do with the disintegration of our total culture it has to do with the kind of world in which we live in the kind of place in which we live you might ask what's the answer the answer is this that you as a christian living in the 20th century must understand that there's great responsibility upon you to be acquainted with the word of god and the wisdom of god to do as socrates said know yourself but not

only to know yourself but to know god's answer god's provision and god's purpose for you and if you've come to the place that you've seen yourself in relation to the day and seeing yourself in relation to god's will and plan and purpose then possibly you can stand up as did elisha and say thus says the lord but if you are dependent in that final sense upon the system that is before you in which you're a part and you have in no sense any liberty any sense of personal achievement as a human being as god intended you to be then you're going to be blown about my heart is so troubled today when i travel from church to church and talk with men around the land to realize that though it may be an alliance church in detroit if everybody is employed by the motor companies there's an entirely

different point of view from the standpoint of government and the day and the generation then say a church down in florida where everybody owns his own store and business at almost an entirely different church theologically the same terms in the same words but not the same in the sense in which they know what god wants to say and what god wants to have done do you know god's plan and purpose you say

well he wants people to be saved yes but what are you going to do with a person that's received christ what are you going to do with the individual that has opened his heart to the son of god has been forgiven of his past sins and now he says here's my life i want my life to count for eternity i want i don't feel called to go to bible school necessarily i don't feel called to be a preacher

does jesus christ have any thing to say about how a person ought to live in the 20th century so that when the pressure is on he can speak and speak effectively and speak clearly to his day and to his generation because this is something that can't be done for us by an organization in meeting it can't be done for us by a group that passes a resolution you are involved in this you're this is your responsibility it's your responsibility just as wars aren't fought from trenches anymore the next time there's a war there won't be any front there won't be nearly as much as there was in the last world war and there were hardly any fronts then the last time that there was a war where gentlemen fought someone said was in 1914 to 18 there'll never be another such war again and so if just in the same

sense that your home is at the front and anything it'll happen so you are at the front of responsibility and can it be that confused people in your neighborhood in your community realize that you've been with god and you have found how to live the balanced wholesome effective intelligently or lie intelligent life oriented to the whole of the responsibilities that you have can people come to you and expect to hear from god this is the question they could come to a light are you to the lord as the prophet was in his day you say well he had a special revelation no but you see he was independent of jehoram he could look into this king's face and say if it wasn't the jehoshaphat's there i wouldn't even look at you i wouldn't even see you i wouldn't hear a word you said or have you come to the

place where it's though now the policy is the policy have you come to the are you a person that can stand in the day in which god has placed you and the place where you are and simply say thus saith the lord this requires a certain stability of character of christian character and of total life it isn't just something that comes from having taken a bible school course or a correspondence course you don't acquire it there but when you've come to the place that your relationship with god is such that you know him and you're no longer looking to the union or to the government or to the employer for your security you've learned how to live you've learned what god intended you to be and you can stand and face your day and your generation and say this is what god has to say today now it isn't

enough for one to say it here if we have the suppose that whoever was here should have such a hearing in new york city that it would be necessary to move down to madison square garden what are 20 000 among eight million if all are coming to hear one man and just that one man is speaking every sunday to 20 000 someone might say well the blessing of god is on him look there's 20 000 but how do you know that the blessing of god doesn't come until you get 40 000 and then there wouldn't be any the question isn't how many people are sitting here tonight the question is what's happening to you while you sit here tonight are you realizing your responsibility to stand for something and be something in the 20th century not just to have heard something not just two thoughts to have been taught

something not to have been indoctrinated but somehow to have become a partaker of divine life to have become a possessor of truth to have experienced something so that where you go tomorrow when people are confused and they're in battle with themselves and with satan they can come to you and they have something from god from you or do you have to say come and hear our preacher come to the bible school class or or well i have you something from the lord this is the issue there are confused people that are in battle with their senses and their appetites with the god of this world on every end this isn't a battle that's

going to be fought out here 10 years 20 years from now at some crucial point it's happening tomorrow the fact that you are in church that you're an evangelical christian that

you know the words of biblical theology and that you type next to that person who doesn't have any of these things but that you have the same frustrations the same confusions the same perplexities the same uncertainties that they have completely nullifies the irrelevance of christianity in that office if you're complaining about the working hours and you're mad that they put a sign no more than two minutes for a coffee break or whatever it is if this has happened to you and you're in that office then you have completely neutralized and nullified your witness there have you so related yourself to christ have you so partaken of his life have you so established yourself in his word and in his truth that you can stand and face the people that are in your day in your generation and say to one

king if it weren't for him i wouldn't even look at you and say the is what god said now i submit to you that this is the kind of christian character that he wants to produce in the 20th century and he's going to make it out of people like us he hasn't got some super breed that he's going to bring from someplace you know it's been awfully nice for some folks to say that god was going to do everything that he wanted to do by some nation in the tribulation well i've just come to the conclusion that god's going to work with people like us and there's not going to be some super generation of intellectual giants he's just going to take plain old clay such as we are and he's going to do something to us and for us and in us so that we can stand in our generation and know where we stand and why we

stand and on what we stand and we will be able to speak even to the confused kings that have no answer for the things they're facing you say well what do i have to do in order to become this kind of a christian what do i have to do to become the kind of a person that elijah was having an answer from god for the need of his day now did you have any desire for this that's the first thing are you simply content to be part of the problem or do you want to be part of god's and if you're prepared to be part of god's answer to stand for him then the first thing you've got to recognize is that you have to make preparation in advance someone said when is the best time to start training a child and the answer that came was with his grandmother and undoubtedly this is true because there's going

to be a tremendous carryover from the past when is the time to start training yourself to stand under great tests and great difficulty that may lie ahead in the future or to serve in some hour it's simply to begin today if you can't begin yesterday begin today well what are you going to do elijah gave us the answer it's the answer for every life it's the answer for your life and it's what you're going to have to face first you're going to have to recognize that preparation has to be made before blessing comes everyone would like to be saved if they could feel saved before they repented and believe everyone would like to be filled with the spirit if they could know they were filled with the spirit before they trusted god everyone would like to be able to have faith for ministry and

miracles if they could simply know that it was going to happen before it did and so everyone would like to be a hero if it didn't require so much strenuous preparation in advance you've got to prepare now for whatever you're going to be tomorrow you're not going to just accidentally come into valiant christian character and effective christian ministry simply because some accident of events take place this is what this is what elisha is telling us when he he says dig ditches dig ditches and digging ditches simply means that long before you see any any sign of water any sign of blessing you're prepared to make any preparation necessary now do you believe that god still meets people do you believe that god still teaches people do you believe that god still fills people with the fullness of

his spirit do you believe the lord jesus christ still takes a life and moves into that life to bring joy and peace and blessing and fruitfulness in some measure measure as he intends and purposes do you believe that the personal god who loves to personally reveal himself to you do you believe that that god can do more for you than has been done up until tonight well if you have any idea that god is adequate to meet your personal need and remember everything that's going to happen in the future depends upon what happens to you but this is a personal response are you prepared to make the preparation necessary now elisha said to these three kings i want you to understand that god's told me to tell you that today you go out there and start digging ditches do you know what this meant arid soil

a desert and it meant they had to throw back the dirt and make troughs that would lead to pits and ponds and throw up banks why god was going to bless and i can see some of them sitting down and saying oh this is nonsense wait till the water comes and that'll be plenty good enough i can hear people say wait till revival comes then i'll meet god wait till god does something then i'm prepared but i'm not going to dig any ditches well this is dry as a bone there's not a cloud in the sky my friend if you were to have for this generation the ministry that god wants you to have the message god wants you to have and to be to it what god intends for you to be you got to begin tonight you can't wait there'll never be a better time now what is digging ditches going to mean well first it's going to

mean that you're going to recognize that you don't have what you ought to have but you can and so there's an element of faith right here elijah was the instrument of revelation and he said to these kings get your soldiers out there get them to lay their spears and arrows down and give them shovels and make ponds and make pits and make places where when the water comes you can store it otherwise it's all going to rush away and you won't have it when you need it and so they were prepared to do the thing that they were told to do they did it not on the basis of what they'd felt not on the basis of what they'd seen they did it on the basis of confidence in the one who spoke and certain certain that he was going to be well instructed now i believe that i'm well instructed of god when i say to

you that god is blessing today god's finding people he can bless god's finding groups he can bless and he wants to bless you but if there's going to be blessing then right now before you see or sense or feel a thing you've got to dig ditches it's going to mean that you're going to take the rocks out big heavy boulders that may have to be moved and shale that's piled up what is this well let's allow that it's attitude wrong attitudes toward yourself some of you have depreciated yourself far beyond what god and ever intended you've just written yourself off you certainly the scripture says in me in my flesh there's no good thing and that's true but if there wasn't something there that god wanted why would he have said present your body a living sacrifice and so if you rightly view yourself

you're going to see that whereas you do not have the resources to be the kind of a christian that this hour demands you have something that's indispensable to god for it and so you can't depreciate yourself to the point where you say i'm nothing well in one sense that's true but in another sense i am the one of a man i'm a person i'm a human being and god loved human beings enough to give his son for them and they're so important to god that everything he did at calvary now mediates through human beings and so you've got to take change your attitude toward yourself you say well i'm nothing i haven't had any bible school training i i haven't a personality maybe this is a rock maybe this is a is a great barrier in the way of god's blessing that you've just come to the place where you've

written yourself off and you shouldn't have done that and if anything that i've said from the pulpit has given that impression then i certainly want to qualify this is the problem when you're saying one thing so many

times people sense and feel another you're important to god you're so important that he can't do what he wants to do in that office without you he can't do what he wants to do in that home without you he can't do what he wants to do in that place that parkman building without you you're tremendously important to god now he can't do it without you the other thing of course is you can't do it without him and so many times when we're trying to get you to see that you can't do it without him we may give you the impression that he doesn't need you at all well and there's one sense

that's true but there's another sense in which you're tremendously important your life is important i don't care how old you are the days that you have left rightly related to god's will and purpose can change things not one here is too old to have a valiant glorious finish to your life and it's this that i covet for you perhaps one of the things you're going to have to do is to realize that you're just as good as anybody god's used just as bad too but just as good that you might some to whom i speak might say well you know i've been such a sinner i don't see how god can possibly use anyone that's sinned the way i've said well my friend if you've repented of your sins and forsaken your sins and known the cleansing of the blood it may be a blow to your ego to know how bad you've been but i

want you to know god has forgotten them he's remembered them against you no more forever and he's not going to intimidate you with them and you ought to change your attitude about that then some perhaps might have this that they've got to say well i just don't have faith i don't have the the kind of faith that i've read about in the missionary biographies and i don't think i have no we'll agree to that that you don't have but digging ditches is going to have you come to the place that when you're prepared to meet him on his terms then he furnishes everything he's going to furnish the faith he's going to furnish the answer to the faith digging ditches then isn't just a matter of confession of sin it's a matter of changed attitudes the next thing that i would suggest that of ditches is this

that it means there must be expectancy on the part your part that everything that you do toward god god is going to receive now if you confess your sin in brokenness hating it because of what it's done to you and him then i believe that it's digging of ditches to confess it knowing that he's forgiven it we've said this in several different ways but i want to say it tonight perhaps it means that you surrendered in the past and then some things come in that cause you to deviate and twist and swerve from the clear purpose that you made a few months ago and perhaps you might say well god's just written me off i i don't expect no digging of ditches is going to mean that you come back again like a little child learning to walk you fell down you've been creeping for a few weeks all right you get

up and you surrender yourself wholly and completely to the lord and believe that when you do that the vessel that your surrendered life makes he's prepared to fill into use now digging of ditches then means that everything that is necessary for preparation for us to be usable to god we do confidently cheerfully happily knowing that we're not doing it in vain this is the reason why i've pled with you in these weeks past to break completely before the lord to deal with all sin everything that you know that is wrong everything that you know that is grieved him just to confess it can forsake it leave it under the blood why because it makes a depression if you please it makes a pool in your heart now god has something that he can feel now he has something that he can use this is why confession

and brokenness isn't revival in the final sense but it's just the digging of ditches it's just the making of the trough the excavating of the pit it's the preparing of the place for when god does send that which we so desperately need you have made preparation to receive it now what's the consequence of not doing suppose the person next to you believes what's being said here and i don't in any sense equate myself

with elijah elisha but i say the testimony is the same the day the need the danger is the same and the responsibility of you to fit yourself to serve god today is the same suppose the person next to you just right next to you one sitting next to you takes exactly seriously every word that i'm saying believes that this is a day of great challenge day of great opportunity breaks

before the lord deals with every sin that's been committed deals with every wrong attitude makes a full and complete surrender to god and has dug ditches now that isn't going to be too apparent they may be have done this in the week past or weeks past and sitting next to you you say i see nothing different i don't see a thing that's different but i know this that if you will check the life of the person next to you that's met god in preparation and yourself who refused to meet god in preparation this you will see a few years from now the one who was sitting next to you isn't next to you any longer they've gone on into usefulness they've gone on into fruitfulness they've gone on into blessing and you're right where you were failing every day to glorify christ in the office in the home in

the shop wherever in your apartment building where you live having no testimony and no ministry why because you see the word of god was dig ditches make preparation you didn't do it the other one did god met the one who did and he hasn't been able to meet you he loves you just as much but you've been useless to him and failed him we that are associated with young pastors and have been young pastors ourselves oftentimes in conversing we'll say this about a young man in the ministry my if he just break if that young man would just break if he just bend before the lord if he just bow before god how god could use him had this experience a few years ago up in canada two young men both pastors of their first church i'll never forget during these meetings we're trying to bring them to see the

truths that are really before you now and the service progressed to the place of an invitation and at the altar that night there were two young men side by side both bible school graduates both pastors in their first church one of the men wept i'll never forget him oh god i'm such a failure i came into this task so cocky so proud so arrogant so self-assured lord i don't deserve the ministry i'm absolutely without anything to offer he broke the other man saw he saw but he never broke he was pitying himself feeling sorry for himself wouldn't accept responsibility and while the one man was down there broken before god the other one got up went got his violin started to softly play music behind the altar and i talked with the one who was in charge of the meetings and he looked at me and

through his great concerned eyes he said he's never broken he's never broke well what happened two young men far as one could see they had equal opportunity in equal town the one is back in the family hardware business giving up the ministry and the other is a district superintendent of that district why the one man broke he dug ditches and then he went back to an impossible task task that he was resenting a task that he hated but he went back broken god caused the waters to flow now my dear if you're prepared to dig ditches tonight if you're prepared to meet god's conditions the promise is the water is going to come up this valley shall be filled with water there wasn't a storm he said you won't see thunder you won't hear see lightning you won't you won't hear thunder see like you won't

see the ray it's going to come over there it's going to just sweep up and you see we have such a preconceived idea of what revival ought to be and this is why some people miss oh they've heard people write and tell about it they've read stories about when revival comes the emotional atmosphere becomes electric well it may become electric and it has and god's worked that way but you know it doesn't seem to me in the present time he's working that way but i'm meeting masters and people through this area that are broken before the lord and bent before the lord they've dug ditches and the water apparently the rain

has been somewhere else because the water just came right down into this place and where there were draws and pools they were filled and i find that happening today it's happening

in this church it's happening all around us that people that are prepared to meet god are finding god what about you god has so much for you this is such a tremendous day such a tremendous responsibility how are you going to rightly relate yourself to such a complex culture as ours how are you going to be able to find your way through this jungle of philosophies that conflict with one another so violently how are you going to be able to stand in that place where god's put you to work as a wholesome happy fulfilled individual that has something to say to the people around you how are you going to do it you don't have the resources in yourself you're tremendously important to god as the vehicle by which he can reveal how gloriously he meets human needs are you that kind of a testimony and

witness are people going home at night after having spent some time with you saying what is there about her oh my there's something there do they sense that the great empty place in your life has been filled with the water is there something cool and refreshing restful about you to the people that are in the school where you teach shop where you work want to get near you just because there's something heaven something of god something of eternity do you carry with you by your demeanor your poise your life that epistle that's known and read of all men say well i haven't thought of it that way i guess i don't what are you going to do go back to the office the way you left friday go back to your work the way you left friday you ought to do something more than that you owe it to these people

you owe it to the people in the apartment building where you are you owe it to the people that work with you you owe it to the people that know you the people from whom you buy your produce your food you owe them something more than that you can't just say come and hear my preacher you're the preacher you're the epistle you're the letter you're the sample you're the whole of the gospel you're the bible you're the only christ they know what are you going to do well i suggest that tonight you start digging some ditches dig a pit dig a valley dig a trough i'll take away everything that stands in the way deal with all sin all the rocks that clutter all the dirt that take the shovel of confession get it out get rid of it get a valley there get a trough there then surrender yourself to it just

give him everything realizing how important you are to him and how wonderfully important he is to you that without you he can do nothing without him you can do nothing do that and if you will then i assure you that the water oh it may not come be that everybody in the church meets god at the one time but god never were concerned about and you are going to become what he wants you to be but if you wait for everybody else you won't have been ditched you won't be in a place to receive what would happen if right the spirit of god would be poured out upon this congregation and only the ones that have completely broken before the lord in confession of all sin were filled with his spirit and only the ones that have completely surrendered their lives to him were filled with the spirit if the

spirit of god were poured out upon us it wasn't the day of pentecost and only those that have completely broken before the lord and have completely surrendered to the lord with him what would happen to you would it make any difference to you would it have you done that this is what you ought to do this is what we ought always to do we ought to make preparation now knowing that when we do god meets us let's pray our father we have a tremendous responsibility to thee with truths such as we hold that jesus christ didn't die just to take us to heaven but to fill us with himself and to live his life in us in the most complicated and difficult of situations to prove to those that are in such situations how inadequate he is and here we are lord of people that have been in the heart of this city

seeking to serve thee and somehow failing to understand that we're part of the battle we're part of the conflict we're part of this day and generation we've been sort of standing on the sidelines spectators to life instead of realizing that maybe that young man that lives in our building that talked with us in the elevator became completely disillusioned with life because when talking with us having heard we were christians they said so little that was different father if thou can get this people that are before thee now in this room to realize that they're essential to thy purpose valuable in thine eyes worth more than all the world one soul more than all the gold of the world and whereas we can't do it thou art ready and willing and able to do it in us and through us and thou canst not

do it in one sense because of thy decree without us lord grant that there may be tonight some digging ditches some preparation it's going to mean that thou canst feel with eyefulness oh how wonderful to realize that the spirit of god wants to fill us with himself and make real the presence of christ in our lives dear friends while we're waiting here bowed in prayer if the water were to rise tonight do you have the ditches dug or is there just no place yet where the blessing of god could rest now if there's bitterness in your heart this unforgiving spirit there's then there's no ditch no pit no place no place for the water to stay oh tonight out of concern not just for yourself but the people that are looking to you and have a right to look to you do you not feel that it's imperative that

you deal with the things that the spirit of god has shown you and as i've been speaking you know your heart you know what he's showing you you know what's standing in the way of his meeting do you not feel that the wise thing is just now tonight to put yourself in the way of blessing god can meet you and use you for making that channel for the revelation of himself let me ask you will you do it are you prepared to say yes tonight i'm going to just deal with everything i want to deal with absolutely everything that stands in the way of god using me i know what it is i'm prepared to bring before him i'm prepared to confess that which he's shown me i'm prepared to surrender all i have i want to be on blessing ground i haven't been kind of christian i ought to have been i don't want it to go

on this way would you just quietly stand right where you are if this is your desire tonight and you really are prepared to break completely break and deal with everything that god has shown you that stands in the way of your being a fruitful effective useful child of god witness for christ

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