

Not to Be Wasted

by Paris Reidhead

The sermon explores the depth of God's love in John 3:16, emphasizing the importance of not wasting one's life through sin and the need for personal transformation.

Duration: 57:17

Scripture: Psalm 46:10, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Romans 6:6, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 5:18

Topics: "Grace Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of dealing with sin in the way that God prescribes. He explains that when we allow sin to have dominion over us, we are robbing God of the glory that he deserves in our lives. The speaker shares a personal testimony of how he experienced the joy of being forgiven of his sins and having Christ come into his heart. He also discusses the need for victory over sin and how some may doubt its effectiveness, but he encourages the audience to consider the inexhaustible grace found in John 3:16.

Transcript

I'm asking you this evening to consider with me, at least as the point of beginning, one of the most familiar verses in the entire Bible, John 3:16. It's a verse that we've all seen and known since earliest childhood, and yet, however much we may spend with this verse, it's an inexhaustible store of treasures of grace. It comprises more of God's grace in fewer words than any other statement in the Scripture, in my opinion. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It's a verse that's little understood by us. Because its first truth is so clear and is so needful to us, we have a tendency to feel that that is all that there is in it. But this verse was spoken to a teacher in Israel, one who had, at least in germ form, insight into the offerings and the sacrifices and the purposes and the promises of God.

And consequently, he would have had some background to understand the significance of the verse beyond the simple truth that it so clearly carries. Our Lord is speaking to Nicodemus and assuring him that the means by which we enter into this that he calls the kingdom of heaven is not by blood, nor by nature, nor by the will of man, but by God in a glorious and supernatural work of God's grace. And so it is that the verse carries to us this primary meaning.

But I want you to notice a word in the verse that's usually neglected by us. It's the little word perish. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish.

Some years ago I was given the privilege of a trip to the Holy Land. My wife and I had five weeks in the land of our Lord. One of the most impressive experiences was to stand on the Mount of Olives and have the guide point out to us the beautiful gate, the gate that was sealed by Suleiman, the Mohammedan ruler of Jerusalem, who said that it would not be open until Christ came through it again.

And the wall, that only portion of the wall, of the original Jerusalem of our Lord. And to look at the city that was spread out before us and to realize that down at the foot were the very olive trees that had been old and narrowed when our Lord had kneeled among them two thousand years ago. And then the guide pointed down the valley of Jehoshaphat, the brook Pedron, and he said that down in there was the place where they'd brought the refuse.

In the time of our Lord they'd carried all the straw and hay and cloth that had littered the streets and the homes out and buried and dumped it. And because it was such a nature that spontaneous combustion would set it on fire, this area gave off a noxious stench and carried with it also smoke, which evidenced fire. And that this place had given rise to the New Testament concept of hell, a place of burning, a place of smoke, and thus of torment.

But as I looked at it and thought upon it, my heart seized upon a truth that had not up until that time been emphasized to me. That this was not only a place of burning, a place of, if you please, because of the fire, torment for personality that might be there as it would be applied to hell, a place of punishment, but it was also a place of refuse, a dump, if you please, where waste material was taken. And a new meaning to the word perish came to my mind and heart, and I'd like to just give you that as a very free paraphrase.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted and become refuse, but should begin to live now and go on living in the full meaning of life forever. Now if you can accept this, then you're going to see far more in the gift of God's Son than escape from punishment. Now certainly you'll see that.

The Bible makes it very clear, patently clear, that our Lord Jesus taught that there was beyond the threshold of time a place of suffering, a place we call hell. A place to which the rich man went not because he was rich, but because he was impenitent and unbelieving. The impenitence of his heart is evidence that even in the midst of his flame and suffering, he does not repent of his sin and plead for mercy, he only asks for comfort.

And so it is that we understand that God had to provide a penitentiary, a place to which the traitor, the rebel, the anarchist, the transgressor, must be consigned. For were God to make such to go to heaven and spend their time singing the praises of him whom they despise, heaven would be an infinitely more intolerable place than hell would be. And consequently he provided a place that would be the residence of those whose moral gravitation drew them there.

We're told of Judas that he went out and went to his own place. As I speak to you tonight, there's a moral gravitation in every one of our minds and hearts and spirits. Maybe some of you are here because you've been inveigled into coming by your wife or your husband or your sister, your brother, your children.

And if you were where you wanted to be, it would be some distance from here. But by the same token, there's a moral gravitation in the human spirit. And when a person dies, they go to the kind of a place they wanted, or the direction of the desire, the moral gravitation of their hearts while they were alive.

And so God has provided this place for Satan and the angels that fell with him, the demons of darkness, and those who choose to live under the moral government of Satan and despise the grace and mercy of God will certainly go there. Now God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is so clear in the word of God.

As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? This is the entry of God, the call to the unconverted, said Richard Baxter, as he dwelt upon these verses from Ezekiel and tried to uncover to the heart of a sinful generation the heart of God that breaks with compassion for lost men. If anyone here, for instance, should go out of time into eternity lost and make their eternal dwelling place in this that we've described as the penitentiary of the universe, hell, they will have to do it over all of the pleadings of the word of God and the remonstrance of conscience and the warning of friends and the wooing of the Holy Ghost.

It is possible for a person to die unsaved, and many do, but it's impossible for a person to die unloved. We've got to understand this. Now, God did not want man made in his image, in his likeness, made for himself, made to be the object of his love, to be loved by him and in turn to love him, to go out of time into eternity lost.

Oh, how marvelous is this thing, human personality, a human being, a man, a woman. Think of the fact that the wisest person that's ever lived has never used more than ten percent of potential brain power. And some psychologists have measured it and said that it's nearly two to three percent.

And I read one man who very seriously declared that it was less than one percent of the potential of the human brain that's been utilized by the wisest man that's ever lived. Why, just the brain itself, with its enormous capacity for knowledge and thought, demands an eternity. One of the hardest things that students have when they go to the university is to narrow down the field of their study.

The higher you go in education, the narrower becomes that field. I had a professor in college, down at the college that's in the same facilities and buildings that Dr. Logan has served for these ten years past, at John Fletcher College, a good Dr. Bowles who had a Ph.D. in, well, if you must know, in diseases of apple trees. But not just all diseases.

He wrote his thesis in warts of apple trees. But not all warts. Just one kind of wart on one kind of apple tree.

Now, as someone has said, you study more and more about less and less until you know everything about almost nothing. And in a sense, this is the requirement because the ocean of knowledge is infinite. Now the human brain is capable of all of this and it demands an eternity.

And therefore I'm sure that the fellowship of his suffering, when you rightly understand it, is to see a man or a woman with this enormous capacity and potentiality deem themselves worthy of nothing more than to go out into this penitentiary of darkness. This place where there never can be the fulfillment of personality. And one has described hell as being the place where there never can even be the fulfillment of sin.

That it will be eternal raging of lust with the inability to ever gratify that lust. And so it is that this becomes then the most horrible place that the human mind can imagine. A penitentiary where God finds it absolutely necessary to keep a semblance of moral order in the universe.

That certain personalities must be there and so in darkness dwell forever. Now God sent his son into the world. That Christ might live a sinless life and die a sacrificial death.

That whosoever believeth in him should not go to hell, a place of punishment. But again should not add to the waste of the universe and be there forever thus deprived of the possibility of fulfilling God's grand purpose for humanity. He's not willing that any should perish.

He's not willing that any should be wasted. I speak to you tonight. Are you lost? I knew I grew up in a Christian home here in this city.

I had been trained at the Sunday school and church and at the knee of my mother and from a godly pastor. I had everything but light. And there at old Red Rock camp meeting in that two weeks meeting, God the Spirit exposed my heart to me.

At first I thought they were talking about me and then I found out that they were talking about another kind of Christian and then I thought perhaps I was a semi-Christian. And finally the Spirit of God forced me to face the awful fact that if I died as I was and God didn't have a hell, he'd have to make one to take care of me. That I was lost.

Lost. Now dear friend, God save the one who stands before you. And if you're here tonight and you do not know that you've passed from death to life, I have good news for you.

Christ died for lost men. He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. That is certainly the teaching of John 3.16, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

But are we through with the verse? No. Not if we take this word perish and give it this larger dimension. That whosoever believeth in him should not be wasted.

For it is quite possible for one to have been saved from the penalty of sin and have the assurance of forgiveness of sin. Yet being overtaken in a fault and led aside by appetite to do that which grieves God. I recall, and you'll permit a personal testimony, there was that wonderful assurance of sins forgiven.

Went back to our farm in Anoka County and started to work. I recall so clearly the joy of trying to witness to the hired man and share this testimony with the youngsters that I played with and worked with. That God the Son had come into my heart and I was a Christian and I had the assurance of sins forgiven.

It was during the drought in 1934. We had a farm and our only power for work was horses. You may recall how dry and hot those drought years were.

We planted some sixty-six acres of corn. No rain and we thought the only way to save any of it was to continue to cultivate it and try to keep the soil stirred so that there wouldn't be too much evaporation. But the horses couldn't stand the heat through the day.

So we would awaken at three in the morning, harness the horses in the dark as I learned to do, and get out there just as soon as the light was enough to see the shoots in the corn row, we'd begin cultivating. Six o'clock we'd come in and I had to milk six or seven cows, quick bite of breakfast, aiming to be in the field at

seven because we had to get out again by nine-thirty or ten. This particular morning as I had left the horses at the end of the row and took the old mason jar wrapped in burlap up to the well to fill the jar with water and wet the burlap so evaporation would keep it cool, I came around the side of the house.

My mother came out. When she saw me, she faced the light and she said, oh, Sonny, I'm so glad to see you. I've got some errands for you to do.

Well, what I needed right then least of all was air. Now I was tired and hot and I'd been up since three working and I didn't seem to get any better any earlier than otherwise. And I did something that I hope none of you understand.

I sassed my mother. And she spoke and I sassed her again. And she spoke and I spoke the same way the third time.

And when I had said that the third time, she looked at me and said, Sonny, I thought you were a Christian. And she turned and walked through the screen door and back into the kitchen. Well, I was smitten through.

I went out, set the jar on the top of the cow tank and went out to the hay barn and walked down between the mangers and crawled up the ladder into the mow and found a valley in the hay and threw myself down and I sobbed like a baby. I was smitten through because I discovered in that moment that I had carried into this Christian life a traitor that if given leash would betray me. And I was frightened because these first hours of conversion had been so exquisite, such a delight, such joy.

One of the things God had used to show me that I'd never been born of God, though a church member, was that I had dishonored my parents in so many ways. And now here I'd done it again. And I can recall saying, Oh, God, I don't know what this has done to me.

It's unsaved me. What it's done, oh, God. And in bitterness I wept.

And then in the midst of my weeping I heard the faint echo of a song we'd sung at the meeting a few weeks before. Peace, perfect peace in this dark world of sin. The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

And I knew He'd forgiven me. But I knew then in that moment that I had in me a nature, a disposition, traits, attitudes, which unless they were dealt with somewhere, somehow, someway, would betray me and rob God of all the glory that He wanted to get out of my life. And my life would be wasted.

Well, I went on. I remember one day talking to a teacher at Bible school. And I told him about this problem and others.

And he looked at me and he said, Oh, you're just too sensitive. Your conscience is too sensitive. And he patted me on the head and said, You're going to grow out of a lot of these problems.

Don't worry too much about them. When you sin, ask the Lord to forgive you. And sent me on my way.

A few years, 1943, I went to the mission field. And there I discovered in this abrasive environment that I had, as I mentioned to you, a critical mind and a sensorial spirit and a sarcastic tongue. Those three years on the mission field, for all practical purpose, though I worked so hard, doing linguistic survey work among tribes that had not had contact with the gospel, I so irritated my fellow workers, my wife, myself, that one told me, Fair as we know you, we've got reason to think you're converted, but the way you talk with the

sarcasm that you use, sometimes I've wondered.

Now, I hated it. I knew I was converted because I detested it. But I also knew that unless somewhere I found an answer to this, my life, my ministry would be wasted.

I knew back there that if when I had sinned against my mother in sassing her and refusing to honor her, that it would have put a barrier between me and God. I dealt with it. But now, years later, a missionary supported by a church, I'm face to face with the fact that somewhere, somehow, there has to be an answer.

To the tyranny of traits and disposition and personality, or these same traits and this disposition and this personality is going to utterly ruin my service for Christ. I'll not forget that awful revelation from reading Rotherham's translation of 1 Corinthians 13, that love is very patient, very kind, never rude, never selfish, never irritated. Oh, my soul, how that cut and burned and seared and brought me to the realization that God isn't glorified by what we say or what we know or what we do, but by what we are.

He that beareth much fruit. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye beareth much fruit. The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace.

This I have not, not in degree that would honor him. Now the truth that I wish to press to your heart is this. I know you.

I know about you. And I know that my problem is similar to yours. Oh, maybe not identical.

Maybe the wolf is a little different, but my dear, the wolf is the same. And I know you. And I know that you, early after you were pardoned and forgiven, discovered that you needed more than pardon from past sins and forgiveness against the crimes you committed against the Lord.

You had that, but if you were honest with your spirit, you were crying out, as Paul did in Romans 7, when he gave that universal echo of the forgiven heart, O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death? He discovered that there was the law of Moses, yet from its penalty he had been set free. But there was the law of sin and death, the laws that he had learned when he was in sin and under the sentence of death. And now, pardoned and forgiven, he carried these habits and attitudes and dispositions over with him into the new life.

And the result? The result is that his heart is crying out for deliverance from something that is eating and burning in him, this realization that he has a traitor in his heart that will rob God of the glory that he deserves in his life. Now we've got to see that the Spirit of God is moving through the Word of God to teach us that there is a sense in which you can be saved from hell and perish as far as the youthfulness and effectiveness of your life is concerned. In other words, the days of your life can be wasted because you've not entered into the secret of victory and deliverance.

Now whenever a child of God sins, we've seen several things happen. Fellowship with God is broken, God no longer uses him, prayer goes unanswered, he falls into the attacking clutches of Satan and into the chastening hands of God. And sin must be ever dealt with the way God prescribed, be judged, forsaken, and hated.

But whenever we permit sin thus to have dominion over us, we in that sense are robbing the Lord of the glory that he ought to be getting out of our life. And therefore his concern is not just to provide some

means of cleansing after we've sinned, but to provide victory. I was speaking to a group of students up in Boston, students from Harvard and Wellesley and MIT, some of the universities there in the Boston area, and I was outlining to them this way and means of victory that God provided.

And a year later I was back, one of the young boys met me and one of the things I love about student work is the great candor and honesty with which they come to those who minister to them. And he said, you know it doesn't work, this teaching you have, it doesn't work. He said, I want you to know that if you're going to talk about this victory business, that as far as I'm concerned, you might as well not, because I tried it and it doesn't work.

Well, I said, I'm awfully glad to find out now rather than the last day of these three we're spending together. But now let's find out what you tried and what doesn't work. What is it? Well, he said, you said that there's victory for you, child of God.

And I said, yes. Now what did you do to have it? Well, he said, I took that verse that says, God is faithful, will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with a temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear. I said, yes, go on.

Well, he said, every time I was tempted, I would quote that verse back to God and say, God, your word says that you are able to make a way of escape. And it doesn't work. It just doesn't work.

I never had victory. I said, now let's just open our Bibles, return to the verse. Now I said, read it.

And he read it. Now I said, what does that say? It says he will make a way of escape. Now I said, what is the way of escape? He said, this verse.

Oh no, I said, this verse says he's going to make a way of escape. What is the way of escape? This verse. No, I said, this verse tells you there is a way of escape.

Now what is it? He said, I don't know. Well, I said, then let's not say it doesn't work. Let's say that you didn't know how to work it.

Yeah, he said, I guess so. And then we went on over to Romans 6. I said, now this is the way of escape. He not only wanted to save you from what you've done, he wanted to save you from what you are.

So he not only died for you, he died as you. He took you with him to the cross, and since he was there as you, you were there with him. And notice what it says.

Our old man is crucified with Christ. I said, I never saw that. I said, you should have.

I spent three days talking about it. Yeah, I said, I guess I didn't understand, did I? Well, maybe you didn't. But I said, you're going to understand.

He said, I certainly want to, because I'm so ashamed of myself this past year. And as we went on into the truth, and he began to see that the Lord Jesus Christ not only died to save him from hell, but died to save him from himself. Died to save him from bondage to temptation and appetite.

Died so that he could be delivered from the tyranny of his own nature and his personality. And so we went on a little, and he saw that the way of escape is to, in the moment of temptation, recognize that he was on the cross with Christ. And he said, Father, the part of me that would say this, or think this, or want this, or

do this, is the part that died the day Christ died.

I saw him some months later. One of the first things he said was, it works. It works.

Yes, it works. Because, you see, God so loved the world that he wanted you to be a witness to the world. And his purpose was not only to save you from hell, but to save you from everything that would interfere with your being that witness.

He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that if you'd believe on his Son, you wouldn't have to be wasted. But you could begin to live now on the meaning of this resurrection life and go on living forever. So here we see another aspect of it.

But come on for a moment. The Word of God clearly teaches that God has a plan for your life. A plan that he made before he made the world.

He saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was in Christ Jesus before the world began. Now, really, the essence of consecration is to say, Father, I want thy will to be done in my life. Our Lord taught us to pray that way.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy will be done on earth. Make it personal in my life as it is in heaven.

Now, this implies that the Father has the will. He knows everything and he knows what's best. And because he's love, he wants what's best.

And because he's God in sovereignty, he's able to produce what's best. When you want what he wants. And thus it is that if you, as a child of God, save from the penalty of your sin, and even if you please, save from the power of temptation, somehow are so inconsiderate of him who made a plan for your life, and unconcerned about the best use of your life, that you want to go on simply living a decent life.

Secure against hell and embarrassment by your temperament. You may be able to do it. Oh, I've talked with many that at the close have said, you know, I believe that somewhere back there I missed God's plan for my life, and my life has been wasted.

Now, what do they mean? They've been living in open sin? Not so. They've been living in grossness? No. They're lost? No.

They know that the past is under the blood. They know that they know the way of victory. But you see, they've been content to go on without that embrace of the will of God for one's life.

You see, it isn't just enough to have a moment of surrender. Lord, I want thy will done. But it is that we are to live every day from that time, and every issue that arises must be met in the light of that.

Or else, five, six months or years down the way, having forgotten that some moment of crisis we said, thy will be done, thoughtlessly we make a decision that becomes to us a dead-end street. And therefore, every issue, every decision ought to be made in the light of that decision which committed us to the will of God. For instance, if you were to start to drive from here to New York State, the first thing you'd have to do is to decide to go east instead of north, or south, or west.

And there are many areas of the east you could visit. You could get to Chicago and go out on the turnpike and take the Pennsylvania turnpike that would take you down toward Washington instead of taking the New York Thruway. So, it's not only the decision, but then there's a series of decisions.

But it's not only these major decisions along the way, but perhaps there's a crosswind over the highway. And, you know, you say, I'm going to New York. If you do not correct against that crosswind, you'll end up in the ditch.

Without having made any major decision to go into the ditch, your carelessness and indifference to your destination can have the effect of putting you in the ditch. And so, I find that along the way there are many of God's children that did begin to run well, but they were hindered. The cross breeze came in, or a groove in the road caught them, and instead of correcting to the overall master passion of their life, they followed the groove or went with the wind, and they've ended in the ditch.

The ditch of what? The ditch of stalling, the ditch of waiting, the ditch of lost days or years. And it's so extremely important, therefore, that you should understand that God's love for a lost world is so keen and so constant that he not only wants to save you from hell and save you from the heartache that comes from sin and from the disappointment and loss that comes from being bound by habit and attitude, but he wants to save you from the frustration that comes from having gone through days and years decent, honorable, upright, in some measure a victory, and rejoicing in the partner that will take you to heaven if you die. And yet, in that day to stand before him and find that these days and months and years have been burned up because you were living somehow instead of in the sovereign will and purpose and plan of God for your life.

God doesn't want you to be wasted, but there's something else. God not only wants your time to be of value so that every day becomes precious, because after all, all he gave you when you came into the world was life and time, and life is made up of time. And therefore, every minute is a responsibility, and therefore he doesn't want you to waste days or years.

But he also doesn't want you to waste talent and potentiality. Now, the Apostle Paul had great talent. His forensic ability is unchallenged.

His logical powers are perhaps unequal. He's said to be one of the five greatest intellects of history, the Apostle Paul. But when God saved him, it wasn't to sanctify the abilities that he'd honed and developed up at the University of Tarsus.

It wasn't at all. God was not going to use this particular area of the talent and the strength and the power of Saul of Tarsus. Why, in fact, he had to spend three years in unlearning.

Three years to the point where he could say that, in me, in my flesh, there's no good thing. Now, that certainly wasn't the attitude of a man who was the successor to the head of the Sanhedrin. That wasn't the attitude of a man that was determined to be the ruler of his people Israel.

That's the attitude of a man who's discovered that the things he counted gain to him were lost to Christ. And therefore it behooves you to recognize that God has a right to use anything and everything that he's invested in you. Anything and everything he's invested in you.

And there may be abilities and powers and capacities that you don't know about, and they're his, and he has a perfect right to use them. And you have an obligation, therefore, to abandon to him all that's in your

life and to let him bring out of your life anything and everything that he wants. I think of that young man that came to see Keith and Vi Hunt in the University of Michigan.

Keith and Vi worked for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, staff workers in Michigan. This young fellow came several times to talk to them about Christ, because as a second-year medical student, the witness of the other students had moved him to the point where he was considering the claims of Christ and the possibility of becoming a Christian. One night he was sitting in the Hunt home and talking with them about it, and he said, well, now, what difference is it going to make to me personally when I become a Christian? This stirred Keith up to say, well, tell me, how did you decide to become a doctor? Well, he said, my grandfather was a doctor, my father was a doctor, and all my life I've been planning to be a doctor.

Well, this is the difference coming to Christ makes. When you receive Jesus Christ in your Lord and Savior, you have to take your plans to be a doctor and put them into his nail-pierced hands. Because you see, you made these plans to be a doctor before you came to Christ, and when you come to Christ, then you don't just say, now, Lord, I'm coming to you as a doctor.

You come to him and you say, I'm coming to you, period. I will be done. He said, now, wait a minute, Keith, let's get something straight.

I'm considering becoming a Christian, but there's one thing you've got to understand. I'm going to be a Christian doctor. I'm going to be a doctor.

Christian or no Christian, I'm going to be a doctor. See, I'm going to be a doctor. And so after about three or four minutes, Keith went over to the closet and said, well, I'm awfully sorry.

I'm terribly tired, and I know Vi's tired. If you don't mind, he brought his coat over and held it for him. Just five minutes later, after this statement, maybe ten, the young fellow was out and on his way back to his dormitory room.

He knew he'd been given a brush-off and a cold shoulder, and when he left, he was kind of stony. And Keith and Vi went up to the bed, but they couldn't go to sleep, and they prayed for a long time, that God somehow would get him to see and to understand what was involved in coming to Christ. About six in the morning, they heard a ringing, and Keith said, I was so tired, I was sure that it was just bells ringing in my head, and I put my head under the pillow to make them go away.

Well, they didn't go away. They just kept on and on and on and on. Finally, he said he got up and went down, and here was a second-year medical student with blurry, furry eyes and a fuzzy face.

And what's the matter? Forget something? He said, no, Keith, you know, when I left here, I was cussing you under my breath and determined never to step back in this house. I know you gave me the brush-off, but I deserved it. About three o'clock this morning, I realized that if I came to Jesus Christ, I'd have to take him on his terms and not he take me on mine.

Keith, I'm ready to pray, and I'll be anything Jesus Christ wants me to be. Will you pray with me? Well, a few minutes later, this second-year medical student had opened his heart to receive the Son of God because he discovered that when you come to Christ, you don't bring him your plans for him to approve. You come and say, Lord, thy will be done.

And I'm afraid there are a great many people that have received Christ, and they just assumed that they were to go on being what they were. I was talking to one fellow this past winter, and he used a word about himself that I won't use, and I got furious with him. I've known him for many years.

And I turned on him, and I said, Listen, don't you ever say that about yourself again. He said, What's the matter? I said, No man is a noun. No man is a noun.

You're far bigger than any noun. You're a man. You're made in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ and brought into the family of God, and don't call yourself a noun.

I find some people say, I'm a farmer, or I'm a teacher, or I'm a doctor, or I'm a preacher. I don't believe a Christian has the right to equate himself with a noun. You're a child of God, and you're anything he wants you to be.

If he wants you to be a prince in the house of Pharaoh, well and good. And if he wants you to be a shepherd on the backside of the Midian desert, you're a shepherd. Do you understand? You're not a noun.

You don't commit yourself to a noun. You commit yourself to the Son of God. You are what he wants you to be.

He was doing what God wanted him to do, but in no conspicuous public place. We don't know what he did. Maybe he was farming.

Maybe he was running a tent store. Maybe he was, maybe he was what? We don't know. But out of 35 years, you can only account for 18 years.

But he was utterly available to Jesus Christ. In his life, he finished the course. This is what I'm trying to press on your house, your heart.

He died to save you from futility of the dead end street, to save you from wasting your life as a victim of attitude and habits. He say died that there might be brought out of your life everything that can glorify him and bless a needy world. He doesn't want any of it to be wasted.

Something else. It's possible for one to have been saved from the fear of hell at the time of dying. To have been saved from habits and attitudes and traits of nature.

To have been saved from blundering through life and groping through time. And still, even being in the right road, walking in the right direction, to go on that trip unprepared. Oh, what a sad thing it's going to be in that day to find, saved from hell, saved perhaps from sin and the tyranny of it, and yet wasted, wasted as far as the matter of walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit is concerned.

And God's great delight and desire is that you should walk not in your own strength or your own energy, but in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. And so it says, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that if you should believe on him, you'd not be wasted. Wasted in the sense of walking on in the energy of human personality, trying to do divine service with natural ability.

But that on the contrary, you could know the fullness of Christ and walk in that fullness. And it would no longer be you, but it would be Christ living in you. Oh, friend, if you can see this, if you can understand this, that this isn't part of it.

God doesn't want you to try to live this life in the energy that is utterly inadequate for it. For the Christ life is utterly unnatural to me, to you, and perfectly natural to Christ. What is he asking us to do? To present our bodies to him and to permit him to fill us with himself and to live in us his own life.

For a person to go through time, forgiven of past sin, victory over trait and temptation, walking even in the way that is, in essence, God's plan and purpose, but failing to walk in the Spirit. Of this, Charles Finney said, God has commanded us to be filled with the Spirit. If we do not walk in the fullness of the Spirit, we're going to be responsible for everything wrong that we did because we weren't filled with the Spirit.

And we're going to be responsible for all the good we didn't do because we weren't filled with the Spirit. And so, he doesn't want you to waste one day, one hour. His desire is that you should not only have the crisis experience of being filled with the Spirit, but that you should walk in the fullness of Christ.

His word is literally, be ye being filled with the Spirit. F. B. Meyer came to George Mueller at Keswick on one occasion and said to him, Father, why is it sometimes I preach with power and sometimes it seems so flat and empty? And the old man said, it's because you breathe out twice when you've only breathed in once. And oh, to breathe out without breathing in is to waste that time.

Dr. Simpson spoke and wrote in his hymn of in-breathing the life of the Lord. And I find so many of God's dear children do not understand the necessity of a secret place alone with God. A place not just of going through Bible reading and prayer, but a place primarily of worship.

A place of breathing out in worship and breathing in, drinking of him who is the living water, breathing of him who is the holy breath. And God doesn't want one day or hour of your life to be wasted, lived merely in the energy of a dedicated human personality. But he wants you to live and walk in the Spirit.

But there must be disciplines if you are to walk in the Spirit's fullness. And one of these disciplines is given in a hymn. Take time to be holy.

Speak oft with thy Lord. Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone. Now we sing it, but do we do it? And do you have a time? And oh, for you that are and have known the fullness of the Holy Spirit, I prescribe for you, even beginning now and going on as long as you live, some moments, minutes, or longer a day.

And I would suggest that you lie down. David said he communed with the Lord in his bed. That scripture verse in the psalm says, Be still and know that I am God.

Literally in the Hebrew it is, Be relaxed and know that I am God. And mothers with children and fathers coming home at night and all of us that want our lives to have some fragrance and radiance for Christ, we've got to understand that it isn't only the crisis of being filled with the Spirit, but it's that process that is prescribed to be being filled with the Spirit. In worship, in adoration, in dwelling in his presence, in drinking of his fullness, in breathing, said Simpson, of the life of the Lord.

How many of us have breathed out twice when we've only breathed in once? And yet that breathing out in service and activity is so empty, if you please waste it. How imperative it is, therefore, for us to take this verse in its larger dimension and its wider implications. This world out here that waits to see Christ in us, this world that says, I don't believe what you say, I only believe what I see, and what I see doesn't impress me.

It was for such as these our Lord prayed when he said, Father, they all may be in union as thou art in union with me, and I am in union with thee. They may be in union with us in order that the world may be able to believe. And for our minds to be taught truth, our hearts committed to his service, our spirits laying hold of victory, assured that if we died our past sins are under the blood and we're forgiven, and yet not to have taken time to worship him, to in-breathe of his life, to drink of his fullness, means that we go out, if you please, with good words given.

In human energy. Now, if you've been born of God, you want to be like Christ, and you want to fulfill it, you want to grow up into Christ. That's the purpose of this convention, not only to lead those who haven't entered into a crisis experience, but those of you that have entered into a crisis relationship, on into a maturing, developing relationship with the Lord.

I say, if you've been born of God, you've partaken of the divine nature, and something within you is crying even while I speak. Oh, to be like him, oh, to be like him, the blessed Redeemer, pure as thou art, come in thy fullness, come in thy pureness, stamp thine own image deep on my heart. We were down in Orlando, Florida, in our home.

My daughter, now fifteen, was then a little over three. I'd come home from a speaking tour, and she was there sitting on the breezeway, my wife was in the kitchen, and Sarah, three, I had seen in there, standing on a stool, helping her mother. Mother, you understand about that.

It only takes twice as long when three-year-old daughter helps, doesn't it? And she came out, so proud, so smug, and she smoothed out her little skirt and dress, and I said, what have you been doing, honey? Oh, Daddy, and her face lighted up, she said, I've been helping Mommy. I said, did you enjoy it? Oh, yes, I like to help Mommy. And then she said, Daddy, do you know something? I said, know what, honey? Daddy, I can hardly wait to be big like Mommy, because she does everything so good.

And she turned and skipped away, and I turned and put my head down on the back of the settee, and tears came to my eyes. And I said, Father, when you made a little girl, you put into her heart a desire to be like Mommy, to do things like Mommy. I said, when you made your children, brought them out of death into life, out of darkness into light, didn't you put into their hearts a desire to be like Jesus? Why are they so indifferent? They seem just to be saved from hell.

It's all they want. But it isn't all they want. Maybe that's all they know about.

But if you've been born of God, it isn't all you want. You want to be like Him. You want to honor Him.

You want to glorify Him. You want your life to count. You don't want it to be wasted in sin, in failure, in defeat, in groping, in powerlessness.

But you want to live every moment of every day in such a way that in that hour when you see Him, your life will have been to the praise of the glory of His grace. Listen, He loved the world. And He gave His Son that if you believe on Him, you wouldn't have to be wasted.

But you could begin to live now in the full meaning of life. Then you could go on living in this glorious salvation.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1184.mp3>
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