

Not in Vain - is.45

by Paul Ravenhill

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's purpose in creation and the call for believers to actively participate in His kingdom work.

Duration: 49:28

Scripture: Genesis 1:2, Proverbs 29:18, Isaiah 26:18, Isaiah 45:18, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Faith And Perseverance", "Gods Calling"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man who faced numerous challenges and obstacles but persevered with determination. The man's journey involved physical hardships, such as freezing feet and losing essential items like gloves and a compass. Despite these difficulties, the man recognized the strength and capabilities that God has given to mankind. The speaker emphasizes the importance of taking steps in faith and committing oneself to God's purpose and calling. The sermon also highlights the need to look beyond personal feelings and subjective judgments and instead focus on the kingdom of God. The speaker references Isaiah 33, which speaks of seeing a far-off land and dwelling with the everlasting burnings. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that following God's calling may require leaving behind familiar things and embracing the reality and promises of God.

Transcript

I'd like to read a couple of verses in Isaiah, chapter 45. I feel there's a tremendous need, maybe beyond almost any other need in the church, that we be enabled to see things as God sees things. That we be able to find ourselves in the economy of God.

The basis for our thought here, verse 18, Isaiah 45, God speaking to Israel through the prophet, God speaking to the generations of this world through the prophet, God speaking to us through the prophet, for thus saith the Lord that created the heavens. God himself that formed it and made it, he created it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited.

I am the Lord, there is none else. I have not spoken in secret in a dark place of the earth. I said not unto the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain.

I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. The first verse, he created it not in vain. We need revelation.

We're never ever going to reach a goal which is not defined. I had a friend who was leading a meeting once, a place where the Spirit of the Lord moved, and yet he was having a rough time leading the meeting, and he was going from one song to another song, and an older pastor came to him and he said, brother, where are you going? And he said, well, I don't know. He said, yeah, I can tell.

Unless we got our goals defined, then if we don't know where we're going to go, well, we're just going to go there, round and round in circles. And we need to get back, all of us, more and more, to an awareness of the working of God. I'm impressed reading some of the biographies of men of God of bygone ages.

They lived, and they walked, and they operated on this earth. I think it was said of Savonarola, the famous reformer in Italy, Florence. He lived as though hell opened up at his feet, and as though heaven opened up at his right hand.

He lived that way. He lived conscious of the reality of punishment, and the reality of heaven. He lived conscious of that negative world, and he lived conscious of the positive world of God.

But, I don't know, maybe I shouldn't say this, I guess most evangelicals, they live in a limbo. Of course, we don't believe in it, but we live in it. We're not in that one, and we're not in that one.

Thank God we're not in that one, but we're neither in the other world, too. We're in limbo. We're floating.

We're existing. We're daydreaming. God created the earth, created with a purpose.

I think that's the reason behind all our activity in the Church. That's the reason behind missions. God has a fallen world which God desires to restore.

God has a purpose which was, and is, and will be. In the beginning it was in an expression of perfection. In the future it will be, and right now it is in the purposes of God, and we are responsible to bring it to pass.

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, it was, Lord, thy kingdom come. It's the first step in all our activity, should be. Thy name be sanctified, thy name be separate from all other names, from all other influences, from all other power, and thy kingdom come.

God creates it. You know, we've got to see that reality first of all. The world's so far removed from that.

God created it. We look around us. I think many believers live so subject to the things which have come in round the margin of that which God desires.

God created the world. He created everything that exists, the Bible says. He's the author and He's the finisher.

Yet we're living in a world where the enemy has formed a kingdom. And seeing He can't create, He's formed a negative kingdom. He's formed an anti-world, if you like.

He's formed a world of everything which is opposed to the reality and perfection which is in God. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of light. The kingdom of the enemy is a kingdom of darkness.

The kingdom of God is a kingdom of life. The kingdom of the enemy is a kingdom of death. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of peace.

The kingdom of the enemy is a kingdom of unrest, destruction, so on and so forth. Every negative thing, the opposite to every good thing, the enemy brought into his kingdom and formed a similar kingdom to the kingdom of God. And yet everything in that kingdom is destructive.

You know, I think many times it takes us a long, long time to wise up to the fact. Some people never do realize it. We go through mixing the two kingdoms.

We mix the hot and the cold and we end up with something lukewarm. We mix the life and the death and we end up with a mere existence. Jesus said, I am come that they might have life and that they might have life more abundantly.

They might have that quickening, enlarging life. Everything in God starts from a seed, if you like, and goes on and on growing. We are called from faith to faith.

Not just trying to hold on to the faith that we had yesterday when the Lord touched us, saying, if I could only maintain that. You know, if we're in a position of maintaining, we're in a negative position, we're in a defensive position. We're exposed to defeat right there.

We're not called to hold on and defend merely. We're called to go on from faith to faith, from victory to victory, from glory to glory. Not too much glory around, but we're called to reach through to the glory of God.

Go on in an ever-enlarging, ever-increasing expression of that glory within our own lives, our own ministries. God created it. God wants to bring us back as we seek to get a vision of that which He desires to do.

He wants to bring us back beyond every created thing. As we pray, as we come before God, as we seek to find our lives in God, we've got to leave this earth and everything that this earth contains behind us. We've got to find the pure essence of God's purpose.

We cannot make excuses for sin. We can't make excuses for limitation. We all do it.

I do it too. The Lord got us involved in this building project down there in Paraguay. I say the Lord because it wasn't my idea.

We wanted to rent a place. We start out and we looked and looked and looked and looked and looked and looked and, you know, nothing. So then we looked for a lot to build.

Of course, we looked for the smallest lot we could find. We found it. A real nice little lot, pretty well located.

We talked to the people. We talked back and forth and back and forth until at the last moment they were stuck on one price and we were stuck on another price. And the Lord closed that door for us.

And then the Lord led us on and led us to a bigger lot, about two and a half times the size of this lot. And in a location on one of the main avenues in town. And it was next to the corner.

And, cutting a long story short, we ended up buying that lot. We're in the process of buying it. And the corner lot was empty.

And they said, but that guy's never going to sell because somebody's been looking for that lot and he won't sell it. And I had to call that man about something. He said, don't you want to buy my lot? So it ends up we got two lots.

And then another friend of mine, he said, well, I'll look for an architect. He has a furniture factory. He knows all kinds of people that are building.

He works installing kitchen cabinets in new houses, among other things. He said, I'll look for a good architect for you. He said, I want to help you.

He said, I'll look for a good architect and I'll help you with this thing. So he ends up, he finds an Argentine architect that's just come in from Venezuela about a year before on a big contract. And his contract has gone bad on him and he's looking for work.

And so we explained the architect what we want. And then he calls me down to his office and he says, I want you to come and look at this. So I went down with my friend.

He had these, you've seen it out there, all on his drawing board, these spirals. And I said, how am I going to tell this guy that he's crazy? You know, how am I going to tell this guy that this isn't what we want? And yet, as he explained it, it was right. God took us from nothing, saying step by step by step, this is what it's going to be.

And what I start out saying, when I started, as it were, protesting, the Lord says, child, look at this against the backdrop of a nation. You're not building some little church down on the corner. I'm not calling you to build with the resources you've got right now.

I'm not looking at your bank account. If you want to be my child, if you want to do something, and that's what you said, and that's what you've been crying about, and that's what you've been praying about. I said, this is the way it's got to be.

Thy kingdom come and I'm going to organize it. No, the Lord says, thy kingdom go and my kingdom come. I say, Lord, your kingdom come.

He says, OK, your kingdom go. Well, Lord, you know, we've got five loaves and two fishes. We get hung up on those five loaves, at least I do.

We've got five loaves and two fishes. Maybe what we can do is look for the most distinguished people out of the 5,000, call the mayor up, and we'll have Peter take them, sit down behind a bush and have a little picnic, and the rest will go hungry. No, we've got to feed everybody with that.

And God brings him back. He said, listen, it's my reality, it's not your reality. God formed it and he formed it not in vain.

When God calls us, you all know this, his call is unto himself. Not that he wants my little life because of what I can do, because of my possibilities, because of my capabilities, not at all. You know, it's blessed me, as I've read, we've got a book down there called American... No, Women in the History of the Church or something like that, a great big book.

And I look at some of those people. One lady that was born a slave, and God sent her to India, England, Africa. Tremendous ministry.

She started with nothing, with less than nothing. Washing clothes, ironing clothes, and God called her out, God anointed her, God sent her forth, God opened up the doors, God blessed. He doesn't have one plan for one person and another plan for another person, as far as resources are concerned.

There are different administrations, different ways that it works, but the same spirit. The same spirit, the same process of walking on the water, if you like. Your water won't be my water, my water won't be your water, but we're all called to walk by faith and not by sight.

Walk by the substance of the Lord and not by the substance of the natural. God created it not in vain. You know that word in vain means to be a desert place, or a place of death, if you like.

A place where nothing will spring forth. You all with me? You know what that desert is? You know what that place is where nothing will spring forth? Where faith does not function. You plant your faith and it won't spring forth.

But God says He created it. He was the initiator of all this, not us. He created it not in vain.

He created it not to be a desert place. And as His operation is in the physical world, His nature is unchanged when it's dealing with man. And as He formed the earth not in vain, He forms every life not in vain.

As He forms every life not in vain, He forms every day not in vain. There's nothing in vain in God. There never ever can be anything in vain in God.

It would not be compatible with His nature. He formed it. If we could just get back and really see it.

I don't know, sometimes I see myself before the presence of God and my vision is so limited. You know, God wants to enlarge our vision. I used to read about people that pray, you know, three, four, five, six, ten hours a day.

And I think, wow. You know, as years go by, I kind of realize that that's relative too. Because unless we've got an unfolding revelation, we can pray ten hours a day and we just go around.

And on Monday we pray ten hours, and on Tuesday we pray ten hours, and on Wednesday. But we're not reaching through to the Kingdom of God. We're being limited by what we can see.

You know, Lord, bless those people over there in Nigeria. Bless those people over there in Uganda. And the next day we say the same thing, and the next day we say the same thing.

It's not bad, but it's limited. And God wants to take us out beyond the limits. God wants to take us out where faith really operates.

Where faith grows, where faith takes hold, where faith leads the way. Reason follows on behind somewhere, or maybe gets lost in the woods, I don't know. But anyway, faith does get to the destiny, to the destination.

There's one thing that, through many different verses, different passages, the Lord's been bringing to my mind once again. It's that reality of God. I was reading a comment by a pastor imprisoned by the communists in Romania.

On the first chapter of John, and he said, that which is written in our Bible, you know, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He said, really, John wrote in Greek, but John's original language, the original language of Israel was Hebrew. And he said, if we'd take that and translate it instead of from Greek to English, from Greek back to Hebrew, maybe we'd get the true thought that was in John's mind.

He said, if we put it in Hebrew, what it means is, they use the same word for Word and for reality. So what John is saying is, in the beginning was reality. There was no death.

There was no sickness. There was no sin. There was no temptation.

There was no negative thing. There was no confusion. There are no complexes and hang-ups.

If we could start and make a list, we'd be surprised. Like our bodies made up, what is it, 90% water? I think our lives are made up 90% out of negative things. We'd be surprised.

But in the beginning, there was no negative thing. In the beginning was reality, and the reality was with God, and the reality was God. Lies came in afterward.

The kingdom of lies and the prince of lies came afterward. In the beginning, there were no lies. And God, as He seeks to restore this earth, as He seeks to bring in His kingdom, when that kingdom comes, whether it's in a nation, whether it's in a church, or whether it's in a life, when it really comes in its true dimension, it makes us like it was in the beginning.

The new creation is like the original creation, not like the fallen creation. God brings me through to the place where I get beyond. It's not instantaneous, you know, thing from one day to the other, but it's a process throughout life to bring me on beyond the unbelief that works within.

To bring me out beyond the confusion, condemnation, and every other distraction. To bring me out beyond all those negative workings that I can't even begin to decipher and divide and put in order within me. To bring me unto Himself.

And Paul says, looking unto Him, we are changed. Changed from glory to glory, changed into the same image, but we've got to keep that vision constant before us. Many times I say to our people down there, when we get to heaven, we're going to see this, we're going to see that, I think one of the things we're going to see when we get to heaven, the constancy of God in our inconstancy.

There's a tremendous need that our eyes be fixed, that our goals be determined, that our lives start to walk and walk and walk and walk to that goal. I read the story a number of years ago now, a man whose plane came down in the Andes Mountains, a true story. In the wintertime, and nobody would go in to rescue him, the smugglers that crossed over those mountain passes between Argentina and Chile, they didn't want to go, they said to them, the Andes in the wintertime never return anybody that gets in there.

They wouldn't go. His friends, he was a mail pilot, flying the mail in those early days. His friends flew and couldn't find him.

There's mountains upon mountains, uh, tremendously high peaks, went a little bit to the north of that area, 21,000 feet. He's trying to fly over this lower place between the mountains. He came to a place amongst the mountains where there was a low pressure system.

He dropped in among the peaks and couldn't climb out, flew around and around and around until he ran out of fuel in the middle of a storm. He landed on the bottom in a lake bed, got out of the plane, the wind blew him over, and got up again and the wind blew him over again, and got up again, the wind blew him over again. So he crawled back in the plane, he, he stayed there for two days.

And then he walked five days and, well, yeah, five days and four nights, I think it was. He walked out of there. When he came out, he was commenting on his journey.

He said, the thing that saves you is to take a step. And he said, you take that step and you take it again. He said, it's always the same step that you retake.

Step after step. Five days and four nights. He realized his strength was giving out.

He realized his memory was going. He'd stop to cut his shoes because his feet were freezing. More and more he had to cut his shoes to give place for his feet.

Every time he'd stop, he'd lose a glove. He lost his compass in one stop. He lost his knife in another, I think.

He, he realized that his body was getting weaker and weaker. And yet within him was that determination. When he got out, I think his first words to his friend who flew down, landed on the, on the side of the road where he came out, he said, an animal would never have done what I've done.

You know, God has put tremendous capacities in mankind. And I'm afraid that, uh, 99% of mankind lives in a false world, a Lilliputian world, if you like. You remember Gulliver going to Lilliput and all these little men.

We have tiny little battles and tiny little victories, tiny little battles and tiny little defeats. We get all up in the air about some tiny little thing and all down in the dumps about some other tiny little thing. And God wants to bring us once again through to reality.

The powers of the world to come, the new Testament talks about. The world where God rules, the world where the children of God come into the life of God and rule with God. The place where God calls us to affect our generation.

The place where we are. It's not easy. I know it's not easy.

It's not easy to walk on the water. It's not easy to obey God. It's not easy to walk forth with God.

But I wish we could see everything else apart from the purpose of God is false. Thy kingdom come and thy will be done. Everything else won't last.

Everything else somehow is negative. I guess we could say this negative world in a sense as we partake of it. It's like a cancer.

It feeds upon life until finally the man that misses God steps into death. Not eternal death is once again, just another stage of that eternal emptiness. The ultimate stage, the last stage, the falling and never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever reaching the bottom, the ultimate vacuum.

He formed it not in vain. He formed it to be inhabited or he formed it to be possessed. If you like, he formed this earth to be possessed.

I wish we could see the challenge of God. The fact that God calls his children and then God trusts his children to trust him. That God puts the responsibility upon us.

It's all said, it's all provided here. The promises are all here. The purposes are all here.

The revelations all here. The resources are all here. God puts that down before us as it were.

He says, OK, what are you going to do about it? I'll tell you, it's hard on us. It was hard on me when God started speaking to me. For me, one of the saddest verses in the Bible is in Isaiah chapter 26, the end of the chapter there where it says, we've brought no deliverance in the earth.

Many times I look at it and say, Lord, when I come to the end, when everything's finished, when all is tallied up and the totals made, am I going to have brought deliverance on the earth? I mean, it doesn't say, you know, we have not had a sweet time believing Jesus. It doesn't say we haven't enjoyed the fellowship of the church. It's not talking about that.

I think so many times we judge God subjectively, how it affects me, how I feel, if I see or don't see, if I think or don't think it'll work or whatever. God is judged by me instead of me getting out beyond myself and saying, Lord, whether I live or whether I die, whether I feel or don't feel, whether it works out or doesn't work out in the personal, but I commit myself to this kingdom. I commit myself to this purpose.

I commit myself to this calling of God. He created it to be possessed. He created it to be taken by prayer and by faith.

He put a goal there. I like Isaiah again, chapter 33. He said, thine eyes shall see the land that is very far off.

Thine eyes shall see the king and his beauty. The same verse says, and who shall dwell with the everlasting burnings. It's not an easy process.

God calls us to leave everything we've ever known or considered important. God calls us to step forth. I'm going back to Paraguay for a moment.

We have a radio program there around the country, nine different stations, and people call in from that radio program, and as they do time after time, there's a tremendous hurt, there's tremendous wrong, there's tremendous built up power of destruction. There's a heritage of hundreds of years of violence and sin and twistedness, hurt and pain and crying, and we can't isolate ourselves from that. We can't isolate ourselves from the world around.

We can't just kind of seek God on our own, form a little fellowship, sing a few little songs. Their blood is our responsibility. Their life is our responsibility.

If we don't cause the light to shine, then who will? If we don't speak, then who will? If we don't accept the challenges, then who will? We got mission fields of the world. Well, Paraguay will go again. We got over 200 missionaries in that country.

A bunch of them are in administration, a bunch of them are in medicine, a bunch of them are in education, and so on. But the fact is that with 200 missionaries, we've yet to affect the country in the dimension that God wants us to affect that country. We're in a closed country.

We're in a country where the enemy has ruled. There was one of the international evangelists went through Paraguay some time ago, who finished speaking, and a spiritist came up to him, and he said, why do you come here? Why do you bother coming here? He said, don't you know that this is part of the center of South America, this country? And this forms a triangle with the north of Brazil and, sorry, the north of Argentina and Brazil, southern part of Brazil, he said. And this triangle has been dedicated to Satan.

He said, you don't even bother. You might as well not bother. There are places which are dedicated to Satan.

And I believe that, in a sense, God allows it to be so. I don't discard that. But he allows it to be so until somebody else will go and claim that place for God.

So the enemy has had it for 300, 400, 1,000 years. There's never been a real work of God which has risen up. There's never been an accepting of the challenge.

And Goliath has gone forth and said, why do you bother? God says, who's going to believe? Who's going to go forth? Who's going to cry unto me until I bend my heavens and descend? Who's going to cry as Isaiah? Earth, hear the word of the Lord. We've heard man's words. We've heard man's endeavors.

We've seen what man can do. But God calls us to go forth. Put to work that which he has given us.

It was mentioned early in the meeting. So much that we have. So much that we're responsible for.

If the life of God is within us, there is within us an eternal life. A part of that eternal heaven. The resource and the power that operates there in the heavenly realms, that maintains the universe in all its complexity, maintains it in its orbit.

The power that gives life to every blade of grass. The power of God which has moved in the revivals of past generations. The same power that was in the early church in Martin Luther, in John Wesley, in Charles Finney.

That same power, God has not changed. God will not change. He calls us to bring in, once again, his reality.

I like that verse there. I mean, for me, it's one of the most terrible verses in the Bible. But that verse in Isaiah 26, let's see if I find it here.

It says, we've not wrought no deliverance in the earth. 26 is it? Yeah, 26, 18. We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen.

Remember one time God spoke to me about Paraguay. About the kingdoms falling. God saying that this was his purpose, that the kingdoms might fall.

Then verse 19, it says, thy dead men shall live. You know, every work of God, everything that God does through us, first of all, he does it in us. And I like to read some of the allegorical interpretations of the scripture.

Taking the symbolism and applying it to our lives. And I look at this next verse, and that's the way it comes to me. Thy dead men shall live.

And I think, Lord, how many things that were born in my life that have died. Thy dead children, I think, maybe the verse says it there in Spanish. The children of my hopes.

The children of my desires. The children of my vision in God. Those things that I almost possessed in God, and then somehow they died.

The life which started to enlarge, and then all of a sudden ended and fell and stopped. God looks and he says, you've wrought no deliverance, and yet in the mercy of God there's a visitation coming. Yet in the mercy of God there's a stirring within.

God calls us forth once again to take hold of that. To take hold of the reality, to take hold of the promise. God has said, thy dead men shall live.

The children of my hopes. The children of my desires. My yearnings, my longings in God.

The prayers that I presented, Lord, let me go forth. Lord, let me be a light. Lord, give me your word, cause me to speak it.

Lord, give me that compassion and that understanding and that light to see this world as you see it. You know, we're so hard, and it's so easy to become hard. So easy to become indifferent.

So easy that an apathy is a paralyzing force just sweep over our life. God wants to cause us forth and only as life flows and flows and flows and flows within us. Just as a life would, the forces of life take away an infection from the body or combat a disease in the body.

So in that same way, the flow of the life of God might take us out of the natural. Might combat the death which is within us. Might cleanse and empower and enlarge and lead us forth.

For me, it's tremendous to think that God himself looks down. He doesn't judge us for that which is past. He calls us once again to a new opportunity.

He says, child, you've not done anything, but thy dead men shall live. He's looking for a people who will take hold of it. Say, God, it's not because of what I've done.

You know, so many people respond so easily to judgment. Other people respond to a desire for reward. God wants us to respond to mercy.

I look at the greatness of the mercy of God. Look at God coming back when I deserve that he should have left me forever, even after being a believer. God's speaking, saying, child, thy dead men shall live.

I say, oh, God, Lord, how great is your mercy? How great is your life? How can I hold back? I don't give myself because of fear of judgment. I don't give myself to God for hope of a reward. I give myself to God because when I see the mercy of God, and I see what God has given to me, when I see the tremendous privilege that God had called me forth and say, child, I want you to do what you could never do.

I want you to go forth and cry unto me until I form a new creation, until within you and around you, but first of all, within us, that there be that quickening, that we can see for ourselves and hear within ourselves the

Spirit of God saying to us, all things are possible. You know, when we come into the presence of God, when we come into that stillness of his presence, that consciousness of God, we realize everything we have apart from God is dead, totally dead. All that we have, the line of personality and education, all that we have on a human scale, this is nothing.

It's dead. Look at God, the greatness of that life. Whatever I have in relation to that life is insignificant.

That life which is so tremendously vast in its scope, so great in its work, so perfect, and the author of that life is saying, child, thy dead men shall live. And God calls us forth to that, to say to others, thy dead men shall live together with my dead body, shall they arise. Shall they arise.

Arise from the dead. You know, death is the keynote of the kingdom of this earth. And life is the keynote of the kingdom of God.

Shall they arise. Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust. Awake and sing.

The proclamation, the proclamation of God. Sometimes it seems that there's a tremendous undertone, I don't know how to say it exactly, that the Word of God resounds within. The purpose of God, whatever changes around, whatever the ebb and flow of the voices of this world might say, there's something within saying, You remember Paul writing to the Romans, writing to the Corinthians, there we go, talking about the resurrection from the dead, sowing corruptible, sowing in weakness, sowing in failure, and I think it's not just resurrection of the physical body, but it's got to do with spiritual processes.

And then he comes to the end and he says, Brethren, know ye, not that we're hoping, quote, not that we're feeling, but there's something deep within us marked, marked by the Spirit of God, and He says, Know ye that your labor is not in vain, not in vain in the Lord. Every step through the days and through the nights, every step over the hills and through the snows, and every step in the wind and the tempest, not in vain. Every step takes us toward that goal, every step somehow in God is glorified, is magnified, takes us far further than what we know.

I've said many times, I don't think we can be aware of the power of an atmosphere, the influences, tremendous reach, tremendous destructive forces in a negative atmosphere, the world around us, the things we read and hear and listen to. But on the other hand, in the Spirit of God, if we could only see the working of the power of God as we yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, the renewing, the restoration, lifting us up. Isaiah a little further along is saying, there'll be no more darkness.

Speaking of the people of God, he said, The Lord will be thy light. God wants us to live not in spiritual realms, not in vain. He calls us to participate, participate with Him, join with Him.

That it be not our striving, but His same life which is there in heaven. Be not our endeavors, but it be the outworking of His kingdom, the kingdom of God in all its power and in all its glory. He created it.

He created it. If we could only see God as He is, if we could only see that He calls us to a kingdom which can never be shaken. He calls us to powers which can never fail.

Welcome to barnesandnoble.com Find your favorite music. Defeat in the lives of those that follow Him. Paul says He always leads us in triumph.

Always. Whenever we fail, we always fail in the human dimension of our lives. Never in God.

It's never that we step out of the boat and God lets us fail. It's when we start to look around us that we fail. It's never that we trust God and God lets us down.

If you ever hear that our church isn't built, then you can tell me about it. Paul failed, God didn't. But God calls us forth to faith.

And I like how God quickens us and raises us up. There's a verse I've held on to many times there in John 11. He that believeth on me shall live.

No, he that believeth on me though he were dead. Many times I've got to put myself right there, Lord. Here I am.

Lord, though he were dead. Lord, my faith has died. Lord, today is not the same as yesterday or last week.

Lord, but you've said though he were dead. Lord, though he were dead. Though he were dead.

Though he were dead. Somehow, I don't know how, it comes out quickening in the Spirit of God. And God gives life.

God gives life. He doesn't leave us with death. He might cause us to walk through the valley of the shadow and a lot of different realms and a lot of different things.

But He leads us out into life and His purpose is life. If we could see Him, the One whom we follow, the Creator God, high over all things just as it was in the beginning, so now speaking life. Every promise that He gives us participates of the same essence of life as the words with which He formed the creation.

If we could just get a glimpse of God. If we could just let God enlarge us. If we could just start to let our faith out of its fetters.

Back to John 11 again, like Lazarus when he came out, you remember? Loose Him and let Him go. If we could just say, Oh God, Oh God, set me free to see. Set me free to hear.

Set me free to believe. Set me free to walk. Set me free to do.

Set me free to see the God who is. I was talking with our architect a little while ago down there in Paraguay and he's a very devout Catholic and he's a very, very intelligent person. Very intelligent.

A lot of background. And he was talking about the Catholic Church and Peter. And he said, Is the Pope Peter's successor? And was it over Peter? Upon Peter that God was going to build His church? Or was it upon the revelation that Peter had? Of course, I said to him, It's on the revelation that Peter had.

At that moment it came to my mind, I said, Listen, it's like in the Old Testament. I said to him, It's just like in the Old Testament. God called a man and on that man He was going to build a church.

He was going to build a nation of Israel. And when Moses said, Who shall I say has sent me? He said, You tell them, I am has sent you. The very same revelation, Who art thou? Thou art the Christ.

Who shall I say sent me? Tell them, I am. We forget that God is. We confess this doubt is, this fear is, this impossibility is, this lack is, this insufficiency of mine is, but we've got to find that God is.

All these things will pass away. All these things belong to the anti-kingdom. But the kingdom of God is coming forth.

The purpose is of God. It is. And God calls us to step out and take hold and believe it.

God is. All the power of earth and hell cannot defy it. God is.

He built His church on it in the beginning. He built His church on it in the Old Testament. He wants to build His church on it in your life and in my life.

He wants to build His church on it here in Oylton. He wants to build His church on it down there in Paraguay. There will be a people who got hold of this, not this concept, but this revelation.

God is right here with me. Who's sending you? Who's going with you? Whose words are you speaking? I'm speaking the words of the Christ, the Anointed of God. I'm speaking the words of the I Am God.

You know, if we could only see something that in the little bit that I start to see, it starts revolutionizing my life. And I see that we're not called to do a little thing. Down there in Paraguay, we're not called to build a little church on street corner.

When I start thinking like that, God says, child, look at it against a nation. You're called to this nation. Lord, it's a lot of money.

Child, this is a nation. You're going to believe for people who've been bound with hundreds of years of darkness and you can't believe me for a few breaks? It doesn't stack up. Right.

Amen. There's a song we translated down there. Song of Dallas Holmes.

You know it? Rise again. One day it came to me with such a strength as I was praying. Because many times the Lord brings us right to the end of everything.

The battle's not just a theoretical battle, it's a real battle. It's kind of like, Lord, how can we do and how can we keep on going? And life itself is so tenuous and so limited. It's just kind of like from within.

But I'll rise again. Not someday, but now. Paul says, because He lives, we too shall live.

Not just there, but here. I live here, Paul says, by the life of the Son of God. Because He lives, I'll rise again.

There's no power on earth that can keep me down. Rise again. Death can't hold me to the ground.

God will do everything that He said He'll do. God will perform every last detail of that which He has promised. He just calls us forth to cry unto God until our tears wash our eyes, until God gives the revelation we can see, until the light floods deep within us, until we possess, until we can finish our course, and instead of saying, we've wrought no deliverance, say, Lord, we've served you in our generation.

We're not counting the cost and we're not looking at human possibilities, Lord. We're believing. Lord, if you go with us, you remember Moses again? That was his whole security.

God went with him. The same Moses physically as the one that had left 40 years before. In fact, he was a lot older Moses than the one that had left 40 years before.

But God went with him. You look at his life from that aspect. Look at how God was with him in everything he did.

He stretched forth the rod and God was with him. He walked across the sea and God was with him. Went up to the mountain, God was with him.

Prayed for the victory and God was with him. Step by step, leading him on and leading the people on in the purposes of God. The New Testament, Peter, the end of his ministry, fishing there.

Jesus calling to him from the land and Peter bringing in the draft of fishes and it said, for all there were so many, his net didn't break. And I like to think of that as the Lord's object lesson to Peter. And Peter then stepping out into the book of Acts and all the experiences and 3,000 people converted and Peter's net didn't break.

5,000 converted and the net didn't break. And Dorcas raised from the dead and the net didn't break. And going out to the Gentiles and Cornelius' house and the net didn't break.

Step after step out through his life and the net never broke. God calls us to that. He created it.

He didn't create for us a net that's going to break. He didn't create for us a life that is not sufficient to possess the resources of God. He called us to himself.

He calls us to his own life. He calls us to his own abundance. He calls us to possess.

Let's pray. Lord, I want to thank you this morning for your purpose. If we look around us in this earth, among mankind there is no purpose.

And our little purposes are limited to try to avoid the death around us, the purposes of nations, trying to avoid war and trying to avoid destruction. The whole of this universe is in the grip of that negative kingdom of the enemy. Lord, but you've called us to life.

You've called us forth to possess a positive working of the powers of the kingdom of God. Lord, I pray quicken our vision. Lord, somehow that beyond my poor words this morning there might be a seeing, there might be an understanding, there might be a taking hold.

Lord, a tremendous privilege which you've given to your people. Tremendous calling to participate of the eternal purposes of God. That you pour your creative power through us.

And that as your work was not in vain, so our lives be lived not in vain. Lord, lead us on. Lord, enlarge our vision.

Lord, stir up our spirits. Give us that intensity that will motivate us. Lord, give us that vision which will call us forth.

May we possess that which you have put before us to possess. In Jesus name. Amen.

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