

Great Men by the Grace of God

by Paul Washer

Paul Washer's sermon highlights the necessity of recognizing God's grace and glory while addressing misconceptions about salvation and the state of the church.

Duration: 44:53

Scripture: Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 64:6, Ezekiel 36:22, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, Philippians 1:6

Topics: "Grace Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the cultural significance of the film 'What Dreams May Come' and how it portrays heaven. He emphasizes that even in our modern culture, there is a recognition of the existence of God. The speaker also shares a personal anecdote about his wife's conversion and highlights the importance of true faith in God. He concludes by reminding the audience of God's sovereignty and the need to continually seek Him in prayer.

Transcript

Chapter 36. It is a great privilege for me to be here this morning, and I always marvel at the grace of God that He could pull a man like myself up from such a dung heap and allow Him to stand before His own people. I've often said that in 1 Corinthians chapter 1, where it says, not many noble, not many wise, but the vial and the vase that are probably the greatest living example of that verse on the face of the earth.

What I'm going to be talking about this week is, so many times people think so much of men that they should not think. There are no great men of God. There never have been, never will be.

There have only been pitiful, weak, sinful, unbelieving men of a great and merciful God. The old Reverend Duncan Campbell, speaking about the great Hebrides revival, anytime he would speak about it, he would always start off by saying, Duncan Campbell did not bring revival to that place. And what are men but corrupt creatures that have been saved by grace, regenerated by the Holy Spirit and kept sustained in that grace by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There's no expert here to teach the needy. There's no teacher in Israel but the one who sits on the throne. I'm as needy of revival and reformation and work of God as anyone in this room.

That is our only hope, to recognize that every one of us in this room is in desperate need of God. We remain that way. Now let's look in Ezekiel chapter 36.

Verse 22, Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Lest saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the nations, which ye have profaned in the midst of them, and the heathen then shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God. When I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes, for I will take you from among the heathen, and I will gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

Then will I sprinkle clean water on you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. Although this passage is found in the Old Testament, as you're quite aware, it is one of the greatest illustrations of regeneration, of what it means to be born again, found in all of Scripture. If you look back into the Great Awakening in Europe, if you look back into most great moves of God, you will find out that they break forth in this context.

There has been, prior to that revival, a reductionism of the gospel, in which in some way the gospel has been reduced down to a ritual or a few set of superstitious laws, that if someone assents to them, they are Christian. In the Great Awakening, one of the greatest things preached, other than simply the cross of Jesus Christ, was a need for men to be born again, and a declaration that the great majority of that which was called the church was not the church at all, but simply unregenerate church members. Now, we have a greater problem today than they had back then, and it is this.

We use the term born again. They did not. They out and out denied it.

They had turned Christ's religion into nothing more than a superstitious ritual, but we've done something more deadly. We have a lot of truth in what we do, but a lot of truth and not all truth is deadly, because there's enough truth to deceive people that the rest of it is not really true. And we have in America today not a country that is gospel-hard not at all.

We have a country ignorant of the gospel, as well as most preachers ignorant of the gospel, and not simply the TV evangelist, but the Baptist conservative. Because we in the same way have taken the gospel of Jesus Christ and reduced it down to nothing, and we've taken regeneration, which is a manifestation of the power of God just as great as creation itself, we have taken that and reduced it down to nothing more than repeating a superstitious prayer. And if you've done that, you're saved.

I'll give you an example. In modern-day evangelism today, we see something like this. Someone walks up to someone and says, Do you realize that you're a sinner? If the person says yes, then they go to the next question.

Do you want to go to heaven? If the person says yes, then they go on to the next question. Would you like to pray right now and ask Jesus to come into your heart? I submit to you that's heresy. And it has led more people to hell than every tavern on the face of the earth.

Because if you look at it from a biblical standpoint and a historically Christian standpoint, especially a historically Baptist standpoint, if you ask someone, Do you know you're a sinner? If they answer yes, that means absolutely nothing. Go ask the devil if he knows he's a sinner or not. See what he tells you.

Of course he is, and he knows it. The question is not, Sir, Do you know you're a sinner? The question is this, after hearing the gospel, Do you hate the sin you once loved? Has there been a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in your heart so that you begin to delight in the things of God and hate the things of the world that you once cherished? So the question is not simply, Do you know you're a sinner? The question is, Do you hate your sin? And the question is not, Do you want to go to heaven? Have you ever had anyone stand up and say, Well, I know I'd rather go to hell. The question is not, Do you want to go to heaven? Everyone wants to go to heaven, they just don't want God to be there when they get there.

That's why I have such a problem, and this will probably get me in a lot of trouble here possibly, but that's why I have such a problem with what you call southern gospel singing. Because it's all about heaven and it's not about God. The carnal man wants heaven.

Why wouldn't he want heaven? Sometimes a book or a film will come out that might have some cultural significance to it, and although we don't use television or do any of that kind of stuff, sometimes I'll grasp a hold of something to understand where my culture's at. Several years ago, there was a film that came out called What Dreams May Come. It was about a doctor, basically agnostic, who dies and goes to heaven.

And of course, Hollywood did a miraculous job on portraying heaven. But something in that film was so important to let us know something about our culture. Because when the doctor gets to heaven, being an agnostic, that ought to tell you something right there.

He's an agnostic, he arrives in heaven, he said, look, I didn't believe there was such a thing as heaven, but here I'm seeing it with my own eyes, so is there a God? And the angel goes, well, yeah, there's a God. And the agnostic says, well, where is He? And the angel goes, He's up there. And the whole point is this.

In our modern-day culture, where is God? He's in heaven. You can't know Him, and you most certainly can't know His laws. How convenient for us as a culture.

But you get to heaven now, and we've kicked Him out of heaven and moved Him one step higher so that we still do not have to deal with Him there. Because men, by and large, do not want God, and unless their hearts have been regenerated, they hate God. And so this is why the teaching of regeneration, almost having to avoid using the term born-again, because we have this thing, born-againism, in America, in which 65% of the country believes itself to be born-again.

The great problem is those 65% or 100% of the preachers believe that 65% of them are born-again. And that is the great problem. That is the tremendous problem.

Now, I want to say one other thing before we get into our text. We hear today the people lamenting, Christian leaders lamenting over the state of the church, that the church is in a horrible condition, that the church is ungodly, that the church is like the world, that there's just as much pornography and abortion and death and divorce and everything else. Homosexuality in the church is outside of the church and the walls of the church.

That is not true. That is not true. Let me submit to you something.

The church in the United States, not just in northern Nigeria where she's being persecuted, the church of Jesus Christ in North America is broken, humble, following her Lord, and even though sinful, she has been cleansed and she is glorious. The problem is today that what they're calling the church is not the church. It's like when you hear some deacon stand up in a congregation and say, Brothers, we're Christians, we

shouldn't be hating one another.

If you're hating one another, you're not Christian. You see, I heard a great famous apologist stood up and I was just so infuriated, I just wanted to scream. He actually stood up and he said, We have to do something to reach our Christian youth, because 75% of them do not believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is important.

And I'm going, if they don't believe the resurrection is important, they're not Christian youth. But where does this all come from? It comes from false belief with regard to the doctrine of regeneration. We believe that salvation is nothing more than repeating a prayer and you're in.

When we talk about assurance of salvation, whether or not a man can be assured of his salvation, we always take him back to a point in time when he prayed a prayer, and if he did it sincerely, we deem him Christian. When the fact of the matter is to discern the state of a man, of a man's soul, you do go back, you talk to him about his conversion. But the emphasis in the New Testament is, if you are not still repenting now unto salvation, you did not repent then.

If you're not believing at this moment unto salvation, you didn't believe then. And that regeneration is a supernatural work of God, whereby, folks, a new creature is created. It is not just jumping, deciding, making a human decision that you want to jump out of the line going to hell in order to jump into the line going to heaven.

It is a supernatural work of God. And when you forget that, you've lost everything. Now, why have we forgotten it? Again, I want to go back.

And like old Leonard Ravenhill used to say, now you're going to understand why I preach in a lot of Baptist churches once. Why is it? Because if our ideas of what it means are carnal, fleshly, wicked, proud ideas of what it means for a man of God to be a man of God, if he has a lot of people, if he has a big building, if there is a huge budget, if he can go around and preach in conferences everywhere, obviously he is a man of God. Obviously not.

And what's going on today is in order to become number one in all our different little denominations, camps and groups and everything else, we are willing to build huge churches on the bones of unconverted church members. And that's what it comes down to. We have to be careful.

And you young men, be especially careful, because you have no idea how powerful this is. So many times I have been approached where if I would drop a few things, I could become great. You drop those few things, you may become great, but then you go to hell.

It is very, very, very, very clever. Now, let's look at this passage. In verse 22, Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, I do not this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake.

You see, everything gets clear. It is like a light just burning through fog when you set in your heart this one thing. Everything God does, He does for His own glory.

Come what may. Then therefore, everything I do in my life and my ministry, I do it for the glory of God. Come what may.

If they bury me under a dung heap, praise the Lord. It is for the glory of God. Because if it is for any other thing, sooner or later you are going to drop your standard to meet your goal.

But it is for the glory of God. Sometimes, and this happens to me, I just think, I don't want to be tried about the attributes of God, but I just got to believe that laughter is in there somewhere and God's vocabulary because He does this to me so often. I'm getting ready to preach on this passage and someone will come up and sing special music and it will be that song that was written a few years ago where it just asks this question, I don't know why God saved someone like me.

What worth did He find in me? What value? Or a song like, I'm just glad God never gave up on me. And I have to get up in the pulpit and go, I know you just asked the question, why did God save you? What did He see in you? Well, He saved you for His own glory. He saw absolutely nothing in you and the only thing you could ever do in your unregenerate state with regard to motivating God is motivating a holy God to condemn you in hell.

And then about God never giving up on you, He has never given up on you because He never put confidence in you in the first place. Everything God has ever done, God has done for His own glory and if it weren't for that fact, He would have saved no one because man gave Him no reason. It has always been about God.

For God to do anything for His own glory, when we say that, it just automatically splits the congregation into the saved and the lost. The saved bow down and rejoice in it and the lost go, well, I thought it was all about me. But He says, I did it for my own glory.

You say, well, what about love? He loves because He is love. And in loving the vile and making a way for their salvation, He gets glory for Himself. To take center stage and do everything so that His attributes might be revealed is the greatest, most kindest, most loving thing He could ever do because the greatest gift that God could ever give you is Himself.

And that's why heaven is heaven. Now, He says here, Therefore say unto the house of Israel. Now, notice this.

It's not like it wasn't said before. There are certain things. You and I, in a sense, the reformers always use the Latin phrase, *semper reformando*, which meant always reforming.

It's though you and I have a left foot that always wants to stray off of the path. We constantly need to be hearing that it's not about us, it's about Him. That it is about His glory.

And our prayer ought to be, Oh God, get glory for Yourself out of these old rags. It is all about Him. But we constantly need to hear it.

Therefore say unto the house of Israel. Say unto the house of Israel. This one truth, because if they grasp this one truth, it will turn absolutely everything else around.

Say unto the house of Israel. Thus says the Lord God, I do not this for Your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whether ye went. I look back, and for the young men who are going to preach here later on someday, I always looked at men, and I thought, that God especially used, and I thought, boy, they reached some level.

They broke into some level that, in order to be used like them, I've got to reach that. And some of them preach as though they like to portray that. If you can get to where I am, God will use you like He uses me.

Well, I would be a liar to deny that God has used me. Just in 22 years of preaching, I have seen many things. I have seen many miraculous things that God has done.

But the only history that could be written on that is, whether I went, I profaned His name, but for His own name's sake, He did work. I am ever astounded at the grace of God. I just... Let me give you an example, young men.

Listen to me. When God truly, truly moves, in a congregation, in a preaching, or whatever, the only thing you're ever going to be able to do is to walk out of the pulpit and find a closet to hide in from everybody. And you're even going to want to argue with God.

And the proof of that is Peter. Remember? Cast the net over, Peter. He casts the net over.

Peter draws in all that fish. What does Peter do? He falls down and says, Depart from me, Lord, I'm a wicked man. When God truly does the miraculous, and He uses a profane man to do it, that man is so overwhelmed with the glory and the grace of God that the only thing he can do is almost argue with God, saying, Lord, You should have never done anything like this out of a man so profane as I. It is always marveling.

Always marveling. Because I don't care what camp you're in, the celebrities abound. Well, I got news for you.

None of them are worthy of anything you would lay at their feet. Now, he goes on. He says, I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them.

And the heathen then shall know that I am the Lord. Sayeth the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. Now, there's a few things here that are extremely important.

Extremely important. I mentioned earlier, God has saved thee. You are saved because of His great desire to glorify His own name.

That is also, I submit to you, the only reason He keeps you saved. Do you remember when God brought Israel out of Egypt and He tested Moses? He said, Moses, now just get away from them. I believe a couple of times this indicates that it happened.

Just maybe now, get away from them. I'm going to destroy them. Moses goes, No, Lord, don't destroy them and don't make a new people out of me.

Don't destroy them. What is the reason why they shall not be destroyed? Because the Egyptians, your enemies, will say that although you were strong enough to bring them out of the land of Egypt, you were not great enough, you were not able to bring them into their own land. And they will blaspheme your name.

Why does God not only save a man but keep him saved? Because this is not about that man. It's about God's reputation and a demonstration of His own power. You see how, I mean, just putting an emphasis on the glory of God will clear up so much bad religion.

And another thing we need to realize, and I would have said this here even if the pastor hadn't said anything this morning, that is one of the greatest. The fact that church discipline is not practiced in probably 95% of anything that calls itself a congregation in America today, that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of pastors who would rather have a big church. And that's just all.

I don't want to be rude. I don't want to sound sarcastic. It is just the truth.

So what do we have? Well, here he says, whenever I do a true work of saving, this is what's going to happen, even the unbelieving heathen are going to look at it and recognize I'm God. Now, let's go back to Egypt again. He said, why are you doing all these plagues? That the Egyptians also may know who God is.

When I deliver my people, Egypt is going to know. And I want you to know that when some Egyptians came out of there with Israel, they figured out the frogs aren't God, the beetles aren't God, the sun's not God, there's a God and we're going to follow Him. Now, let me ask you a question.

Do the heathen and the unbelieving and so on and so forth in this country look at what's called Christianity today and say, we hate it? We hate it? And one of the reasons we hate it is because we cannot deny the supernatural power of it. No, they don't do that. They mock it.

Now, don't get into this idea that if we all lived like Jesus, the country would be converted. No, if we all lived like Jesus, we'd all be in a prison camp somewhere or crucified. But there is a real sense that if the church and what is called church, maybe I should call it churchianity in America today, if the forefront was the glory of God and purity and making His name holy among the nations, if that was at the forefront in every pastor's mind, then there would be a sense that even though the unbelievers would not understand us, nor understand God, nor salvation, there would be something unexplainable that they could not deny.

But because most of those unbelievers are sitting in the congregation and the pastor gives his popish blessing upon them, there's nothing. There's nothing. We're so busy saving the world, we don't even save ourselves.

Like a lot of Christian schools will start up really, really good and then they start taking people in that have been kicked out of high school, been kicked out of every school in the whole country, bring them into our school. You say, well, we need to save them. No, we need to save our children.

We need to build them up and make them strong so they can be warriors. Yes, I am a warrior. I'm 44 years old.

Throw me in the lion's den. Protect my son until he's old enough to fight like his dad. See, there is not this cutting edge.

There's not this just darkness and light. And it all comes down to humanism. All of it can be traced back to humanism.

Every last bit of it to humanism. Some of you will go to the mission field and some of you might go thinking, I'm going to the mission field because there are people that are dying without Christ and they want Christ but they don't know Christ. You're going to go to the mission field and find out they know more about Christ than you do and they don't want Him.

Men are monsters of iniquity. They are not victims groping in the darkness looking for a Savior who doesn't want to be found. And so you go to the mission field.

Why? For His glory. And you go on and he says, verse 24, now we're going to get into a few things that are so very, very important. He says, For I will take you from among the heathen.

I will gather you out of all countries and I will bring you into your own land. Now, the idea, I was, I guess one could make a pun, I was almost mortified to come in the church this morning and find out you were teaching on mortification. I've never been in a church that did that.

This is what it's talking about. I will take you out of that land, of those nations, of the heathen, and I will bring you into your own land. Whenever God does a work of salvation, there will be a tremendous notice.

You will see it. It will be evident practically. It will be evident that there has been a break with your old country, your old people, your old ways, your old traditions, but not just a break because if it stops right there at the break, it's nothing more than pharisaical legalism, but a drawing to Immanuel's lands and Immanuel's table and Immanuel's joy.

Now, here's the question. For years, I have been thinking about preaching and preaching just what is wrong. Now, I don't have to look any farther than myself.

What is wrong with my preaching? And I found a little phrase that has not cured everything, but has really brought something of healing. Every one of you agree with what I've just said. You do.

Just like that lost man who said, yeah, I recognize I'm a sinner. That's not the question, is it? The question is, is it an ongoing reality in your life? Can you point to the ongoing reality in your life as a Christian of God who began a good work in you, perfecting that work in you, and doing what? More and more day by day, year by year, God is working to separate you from all those things He hates and to draw you to all the things in which He delights. Can you see that work going on in your life? Because that's one of the evidences of truly being Christian, of truly being saved.

You know, the Bible is full. The old Baptists, the old Puritans, on and on, back and forth, as far as you want to go, what do you find? You find that pastors were genuinely called soul doctors. It was their job to go to a person who had made a profession of faith, maybe even a sound profession at the beginning, who began to step off the path, begin to go wayward.

Not to go as pastors do today, going and saying, look, you're a Christian. You need to act like one. But going to that person and saying, look, you made the good profession of faith.

You seem to walk in the light, but you have strayed from that path. You can have no assurance right now that you've been born again. And you need to make your calling and your election sure.

You need to repent of your sins and return to the path. It's not that you have lost the salvation that you once gained. It's that you're now showing you never had a salvation to begin with.

You would be amazed, young people, amazed at how many good Christian things can be done in the flesh externally and how deceptive the heart can be. Just call my wife and ask her. My wife was converted last year.

After serving on the mission field, eating things that would make a goat puke, going down rivers with me, grabbing ahold of anacondas, preaching the gospel, everything you can imagine, she was converted. It is amazing how religious we can be and still lost. How finely dressed and even the most theologically has been working in your life.

You might be somewhat under construction. You might be somewhat a mess, but there is an inescapable reality that God is working in your life to separate you from the things that He hates and to draw you unto the things He loves. And you can't even escape it even when your flesh wants to.

He's before you. He's behind you. He's above you, below you, beside you, encircles you.

You're captive. He's got you. And He's going to make you exactly what He wants you to be.

Now, somebody's very, very important. Because I preach in so many different settings, I mean everything from, you would think, old English puritans and churches to wild charismatic... I'll go anywhere. They'll let me have a pulpit, folks.

I won't let them come to mine, but I'll go to theirs. But I'll talk to the more charismatic among us and I'll say, you know, you talk a lot about drawing nigh unto God, drawing near to God, approaching the throne of God and all these things, but you have forgotten that in order to draw near to the throne of God, you've got to separate yourself from the world. Like my little boy when he was learning to walk and he'd stand up and grab a hold of a chair and I'd say, Ian, come! But I was always out of reach.

And he'd have to make his first really moral decision. I want Dad, but in order to get Dad, I've got to let go of the chair. It's the same way.

You want to draw near unto the throne of God? Then separate yourself from the things that are not found by the throne of God. But at the same time, I meet a lot of people more in our circles who talk a great deal about separating, but their separation is an end to itself. I separate because I'm separated and I rejoice in my separation.

Then it's possible you're a lost Pharisee. Because separation from the world is not the goal. Separation from the world is a means in order to reach the goal which is separation unto God.

Separation unto God. Separation unto Him. Most people that I've seen that have been involved in somewhat of separation and speak much of separation are by and large very unhappy people.

Very unhappy people. Why? Because they've only... I mean, just to separate unto nothingness is no good. Here I sit all alone in my room painted white.

Man, I'm bored. But it's separation from and separation unto Him. Now notice I said Him.

Not principles, not wisdoms, not ways of life. Separation unto Him. Because my dear friend, if anything is your goal other than Him, it's idolatry.

It is idolatry. I desire in my life to be God besought. One of the things that I love about the more Celtic, Irish, the old stuff, is before Christianity came into them, they were involved in heavy paganism.

And they worshipped trees and they worshipped creeks and they worshipped everything you could possibly worship except the God who made all that stuff. But here's the thing. When they were born again,

here's what happened.

They saw God in everything. We almost see God in nothing but a building with pews in it. How do you know if you're walking with God? When you come across a mud hole in the middle of the creek and it has tadpoles swimming in it and you don't know how they got there and you fall down on your knees and worship God, then you're walking with God.

When everything is a reality. Everything is a reality of Him. Absolutely everything.

A little boy said, Dad, who painted your top? Because I always ask him, who painted the sky? He said, who painted your top? I didn't say men. I said men that God empowered and taught to paint my top. Because even if they were unbelieving pagans, they only did this by the power of God.

You see, everything. Everything. My goodness.

If you're a Christian, there's no such thing as secular in your life. The pots and pans of your house are holy. Everything you do, you do unto God.

Whether you eat or drink or any other thing, it is for the glory of God. And if it is not for His glory, it's sin, my friend. It is sin.

I always use this illustration when I'm speaking to university people. Because they always talk about the good atheist. You know, someone will always come up to me or stand up in the middle of an auditorium and say, well, what about the good atheist? And I say, oh, I have no problem with him.

He's going to heaven. And all the conservative Christians just get really spooky when I say that until I explain myself. I say, oh, he's going to heaven.

By the way, before you sit down, what's his name? What's whose name? The good atheist guy. I mean, I've been hearing about him at every university I've been speaking at and I've never met this guy, nor does anyone have his name, nor his address. I mean, do you have his telephone number? No, and that's precisely my point.

It's a figment of your own imagination. First of all, a good atheist doesn't exist. Doesn't exist at all.

But here's a point that I always make with him. I said, imagine an atheist in Georgia has a man who hates him in Chicago. But the man in Georgia who's an atheist finds out his enemy in Chicago is dying.

And there's only this one type of tree in Georgia that if you boil it down, you can get a broth out of it and it'll save his life. But the thing costs like a hundred thousand dollars. So the atheist, he sells everything he has and he buys the tree, boils down the broth, and then he walks all the way to Chicago, uphill both ways in a snowstorm, on his knees in broken glass.

And he gets there to Chicago and he gives the bowl to the man and the man drinks it. His enemy drinks it and the man is saved. I say, is that a good thing or is that sin? And everyone says, well, that's a good moral thing.

I said, no, it is sin. And they say, how can it be sin? And I say, because sin is not sin because of what it does to men, but the relationship it has with God. He did not do that for the glory of God.

He did it for his own glory. He's an idolater. As a matter of fact, if he did do anything positive, it was by the common grace that was given him.

And the work that he did was not in his own power, but in God's power. And he's taking credit for what God did. But let's take that back to ourselves.

You know what the Chinese Christians... This Chinese Christian, after he visited America, he said, I'm amazed what you American Christians can do without God. Think about that. But you see, everything... I mean, if God is calling us to fast and to pray, we do it unto His glory.

If God releases us from a fast and we sit down and He puts before us a feast of food, every goblet should be picked up for His glory. Rejoicing in Him. If we're out witnessing or going door to door, this or that, it's for His glory.

My goodness, if we're hunting in a deer stand in the middle of October with a beautiful frost on the ground, it is to look at every sparkle of sunlight off of that frost and worship God. Everything. Everything.

Everything for His glory. And that's something that needs to be asked of you, of a reality. Is your life lived for the glory of God? And is it a reality in your life that you can see God working in you in a way that is inescapable? That there is a real sense in which He has hemmed you in and you don't have a problem with that? As a matter of fact, the greatest sorrow in your heart would be if He ever opened the door and allowed you to run outside then.

Is this a reality? There have been throughout history divine visitations of the Holy Spirit reviving men and promoting godliness among them very, very quickly. And we hope for those times. But I have seen that those times seem to be more frequent among men who have already done what Scripture commanded them to do with regard to separating from the world and drawing near unto God.

If He grants you something like this precious Word, if He grants you something like the ever-present Holy Spirit in the life of every believer, if He grants you the precious promises that are here that could bring you into godliness and yet you do not esteem them as precious, avail yourself of what He has already given. Why should He give more? Are we wanting revival just to deliver ourselves? Or are we wanting glory? Are we wanting glory for God? That is the question. Now, I'm going to say one last thing and it's this.

Understand the way I preach. I am not here to fire up your flesh for a week like a football coach who gets everybody really psyched up, but if he doesn't keep it psyched up, it all dies down. I am here that if God grants a move of His Spirit, absolutely wonderful, but my job here is not to promote that.

It's not to push for it. It's not to try to manipulate it. It is to lay down foundational truths of Scripture so that maybe 20 years down the road these truths are still in your heart, still leading you towards godliness.

You see, it is amazing what you can do with manipulating psychologically people. It is absolutely amazing. But I hate that.

I absolutely hate it. Oftentimes when I've preached and there's been a move of God, I've told people, go home. Go home.

The best thing you can do is go home. Someone told Spurgeon one time, well, I believe in striking while the iron's hot. And Spurgeon said, well, if God's the one who's heated it up, I doubt it's going to cool off

quickly.

If it's a work of God, it'll continue. Now, church, let me share this. Some of you have been praying for revival.

Well, you know what? The true test of whether it was from God is not that revival happened this week. The true test is that after this week you keep praying for revival because either it was not from him from the start all your praying, or secondly, you've become discouraged because he did not grant you revival when you asked for it, and now you're doubting God. You keep crying out to God.

There has never, that I know of, any case in all the history of Christianity where people continued crying out to God and he did not do something. But there are an unspeakable number of cases where men cried out for a time and gave up. There's not a maverick molecule in the universe.

God is sovereign over all things, and yet ye have not because ye ask not. Someone told me to put that together one time. I said, no, you misunderstood me.

I'm not a philosopher, I'm a theologian. Philosophers put them together. Theologians just speak them forth.

Now, let's pray. Father, I come before you in the name of your Son, and I pray. Father, hear the cries of your people.

Lord, you know our frame. You know that we do not last long, Lord, without water. And one cloudy day can make us forget, Lord, 10,000 days of sunshine.

You know, Lord, we are weak. Grant us grace, Lord, to continue on in this thing and to ask. Oh, Lord, teach us to open our mouths wide.

Oh, God, help us, Lord, and we shall be helped. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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