

Breaking Faith With God

by Richard Owen Roberts

Richard Owen Roberts emphasizes that age does not shield us from sin and highlights the importance of ongoing faith and responsibility in the Christian life.

Duration: 1:07:53

Scripture: Numbers 20:12

Topics: "Gods Holiness", "Faithfulness Matters"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of maintaining God's holiness and not robbing Him of His glory, using the example of Moses' sin of anger and haste that led to severe consequences. It challenges believers to focus on preserving God's glory in their lives and ministries, rather than just avoiding sin as a passport to hell. The message highlights the need for ongoing faith, obedience, and reverence towards God, regardless of age or circumstances.

Transcript

As I was here in the front participating with you in worship and reflecting before the Lord, the words of Scripture came to mind. My lines have fallen on to me in pleasant places. And how grateful I am that despite the terrible tensions and conflicts of our society, those of us who love the Lord are still able to mingle with others who love the Lord.

And although in one sense I'm a stranger to most of you, you're as close to me and I'm as close to you as to a physical brother. And I was reflecting on the fact, as I sat down after a bit to prepare my own heart, I was reflecting on the fact that here I'm privileged to be among you dear folk tonight in the Seattle area. And a week ago I was preaching at Lake Placid, New York, in another beautiful setting.

And the week before that in Dallas, Texas, in another amazing place of opportunity. And the week before that in Birmingham, Alabama. And the week before that in Charleston, South Carolina.

And in every place, among very different people and certainly very different settings, there was that same sense of oneness in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now I get to go home on Saturday and am scheduled to spend a whole week there. And then, Lord willing, two weeks from tonight I'll be preaching in Cardiff, Wales, that great principality that was once called the land of revival.

Now, if you all went with me and you sang as you sang tonight, those people would topple over in consternation and confusion. They couldn't imagine the instruments or the praise choruses. I once suggested to them that I bring along with me a soloist.

If I had proposed bringing the devil in person, they couldn't have been more astonished. But they loved the preaching of the Word. And while their style of worship is very different from ours, oh, there's a warmth and a tenderness and an eagerness among those dear people.

The week following that, I'm supposed to be preaching in Coventry, England. My lines have fallen in pleasant places. And I thank God that despite the terrible disintegration, morally and spiritually, there are a growing number of heart-hungry people yearning to meet God every day and to experience under the hand of God a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Now, in the providence of God, I'm not as strong as I used to be. I'm not as old as I look nor as old as I feel, but a lot older than I used to be. And it gets harder and harder and harder to keep going.

And in God's grace, in recent weeks, I've had to have the water jug on hand. And I can't get through a sermon without at least a number of sips of water. So while I'll be slow and labored in what I want to say to you tonight, I believe that I have a word from the Lord for your hearts.

And I've been very eager for the opportunity to present it to you. And I want to begin with a question. Is age any preservative against evil? Have you ever thought of that question? Is age any preservative against evil? Now, for some child here, they might not know the word preservative.

They might not be quite sure what I mean by the question, so let me rephrase it for their sake. Do you sin less because you grow older? What is the answer to that question? Well, now, to be perfectly candid, when I was a boy, I never really anticipated growing old, but I did have the notion that as I got older, I would sin less. It's a lovely thing to think, even though it isn't true.

But I want to begin tonight by a very brief look at the passage out of 1 John. It is not our text this evening, but it is very relevant to our text. 1 John, please, at chapter 2. Just a few words that I need to read to you that do deal with the question that I put in front of you.

Look, if you will, please, at verse 15. 1 John, chapter 2, verse 15. Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not from the Father, but from the world. And the world is passing away, and also it's lost, but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

The question I've put in front of you is, does age keep one from evil? Does it grow easier to live a godly Christian life as you grow older? Now, I don't know whether you've ever contemplated the words that we've just read. For a moment, I want you to focus on verse 16, all that's in the world. And he lists three things that are in the world.

The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Do you realize that those great sins are arranged in that verse chronologically, or if you like, sequentially? Has that occurred to you? What is the great sin of youth? What is the first great wave of temptation that strikes a young person? Well, that which not only strikes, but sweeps off their feet millions of young people are sexual urges that they do not know

how to control. And so they begin their life sexually impure.

And that, of course, is a growing problem because discipline and self-control have been so greatly depreciated in recent decades that fewer and fewer and fewer young people handle that great temptation in a way that pleases God. What is the outstanding characteristic of those of middle age? Well, the outstanding sin of the middle age is the accumulation of goods, the focus on gold, the concern about their future, the laying up of mountains of material things that will provide for them for the rest of their life. And what is the great wave of temptation that the elderly face? Well, it doesn't take a careful-minded person to realize that one of the most disgusting experiences that young people have is in visiting their grandparents and having their grandfather tell them for the 427th time the same dumb story, the pride of life.

Now hear me when I make this critical observation. If a young person does not learn how to control the lust of the flesh through the power of the Word and the Spirit, they will be swept into middle age with the uncontrollable lust of youth and then be beset in a powerful and dramatic way by the lust for golden goods. And so while they are busy accumulating and laying aside for the future, they're still in the midst of this terrible first wave of temptation that they haven't learned to deal with.

And for those who fail to deal with the first great wave and the second great wave, they enter into that period of life when pride besets them. They're no longer capable of physical conquest in the realm of sex, and they're no longer able to accumulate at the same rapid rate gold and goods. But they haven't lost either of those two lusts, and they spend their last years on this earth glorying in their past sins and provoking others to evil by their inability, even in their seventy and eighty years of age, to set aside those former great waves of temptation that they're no longer physically capable of even giving in to.

Is age a preservative against evil? The answer, absolutely not. In the conference where I was preaching last week at Lake Placid, New York, one of the dear brothers who shared the pulpit with me stood before the congregation at one point and with tears on his face acknowledged that when his father was sixty-seven years of age, having been married forty-six years and having been in the ministry as long, he suddenly announced that he was tired of his wife, and he went off and married someone else. Sixty-seven years of age, they thought they had a beautiful family life.

They had no notion that such a thing could possibly happen at that juncture, but it did, because as a youth he never conquered the lust of the flesh, and at sixty-seven years of age, that youthful lust gave it last final burst of energy, and he collapsed beneath it and destroyed his life and his ministry. And the grief brought on the head of the wife led to her death shortly thereafter. Is age a preservative against evil? Absolutely not.

Don't any of you dare live in hopes that it will get easier to be a Christian. My mother is ninety-eight years of age. I was with her last week.

She lives in New York. She has been one of the most even-tempered and saintly women that I have ever known. For years and years and years, I could not envision any selfishness in my mother at all.

But now when I call her on the phone, I'm very apt to receive some words of indignation, because it's been so long since I visited or so long since I called. Now, I think she has a right to see more of her son than she does, and to hear from him more frequently than seems possible. But I'm telling you, at ninety-eight years of age, she's demonstrating a proclivity toward selfishness that didn't used to be there.

Now, if ninety-eight isn't old enough to be free of sin, how old do you have to get before age is a preservative against evil? That's the theme that I draw to your attention tonight. The time to conquer sin is every time temptation strikes, and a failure will only make it even more difficult in the future. But there's a second issue that I would draw to your attention now, before we turn to the text of the evening.

And the second issue is this. It's a question, again, that I would put in front of you. I want to ask each of you--I wished I could do so in your own living room, speaking face-to-face--but I want to ask each of you if you have ever come to recognize the difference between sin as a passport to hell and sin as a thief of God's glory.

Think about it, will you? There is a phenomenal difference between those two views of sin. Sin as a passport to hell and sin as a thief of God's glory. You see, part of the reason why we have in the White House not only an extraordinarily evil man, but a man who has done more to promote evil in our society than any man in modern history.

Part of the reason why that's true is because the Church has focused so much upon sin as a passport to hell. And millions of people have been led to believe that if they would accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, sin could no longer send them to hell, that they were freed from the consequence of sin. And while one might find some smattering of truth in that notion, that particular viewpoint leaves unstated the greatest consequence of sin.

The greatest consequence of sin is not its ability to send me or you to hell. The greatest consequence of sin is that it will enable me to steal from God his glory. And I'm asking you tonight two urgent questions.

One, are you living with the superstitious notion that age will be for you a preservative against evil? And two, are you living with the notion that having been saved from the punishment of sin, namely hell, you're scot-free and you have nothing else to concern yourself with? With those preliminary thoughts in mind, I invite you to turn to the Word of God, where we are going to be camping this evening for a spell. The invitation is now for you to turn to the book of Deuteronomy, where we're going to read the small portion from chapter 32. I have not forgotten my prior visit among you and your willingness to hear me as I used Moses as an example of a great prayer warrior.

Utilizing Exodus 32 and 33, a few of you may recall that we pinpointed our thoughts upon the prayer of Moses that's recorded in that extended passage. And in that instance, Moses came across wonderfully, a beautiful, beautiful picture of Moses, who, when God was ready to utterly destroy the people, Moses stood as an intercessor before God. And God wavered his final judgment against the people and imposed upon them a remedial judgment instead.

We're looking now at Moses once again, but a long time later. And we're looking at Moses when he was an old man, indeed much older than the preacher tonight. And we're looking at Moses at the time when he proved to the whole world that age is no preservative against evil.

Look at these words in Deuteronomy 32. We'll begin reading at verse 44, though I'm quick to tell you that we're plunging into the middle of a very consequential matter. I'll not take time to read it or to explain it.

But if you were to go back and read verse 1 through verse 43 of Exodus 32, you would soon discover that it's a song. Indeed, it's called the Song of Moses, and it is a profoundly moving and significant song. But look at these words now at the end of the song, God speaking to Moses, after Moses speaks to the

people.

At verse 44, Moses speaking to the people, Moses came, and he spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. He, with Joshua the son of Nun, when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, he said to them, Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law. For it is not an idle word for you.

Indeed, it is your life. And by this word you shall prolong your days in the land where you are about to cross over the Jordan to possess it. Now, those are powerful words.

They would make quite a sermon were we to focus upon them. But those, as I said, are the words that Moses spoke to the people. But now notice the words that God spoke to Moses.

Verse 48, And the Lord spoke to Moses that very same day, saying, Go up to this mountain of Eberon, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, opposite Jericho, and look at the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the sons of Israel for a possession. Then die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people as Aaron your brother died on Mount Horeb and was gathered to his people, because... Pastor, how old are you? Fifty, just a young man. We were both in the pastor's study before service, and a man came in and he saw me sitting there and he said, Pastor, you've aged.

But now, put pastor's age alongside my age, 67, 117 years, and you still have less than Moses. And catch now what's happening. Die on the mountain where you ascend, and be gathered to your people as Aaron your brother died on Mount Horeb and was gathered to his people, because... now catch these words... because you broke faith with me in the midst of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the wilderness of Zim, because you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel.

For you shall see the land at a distance, but you shall not go there into the land which I'm giving to the sons of Israel. Ever notice those words? You broke faith with me. Let those words lodge themselves deeply into your heart.

You broke faith with me. And without losing track of that passage, turn backward, if you will please, to Numbers chapter 20. We began reading at verse 1 of Numbers 20.

Then the sons of Israel, the whole congregation, came to the wilderness of Zim in the first month, and the people stayed at Meribah Kadesh. Now, Mariam died there and was buried there. And there was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron.

The people thus contended with Moses, who spoke, saying, If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord. Why then have you brought the Lord's assembly into this wilderness for us and our beasts to die here? And why have you made us come up from Egypt to bring us into this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates or is there any water to drink? Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to them, and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Take the rod, and you and your brother Aaron, assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water.

You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock, and let your congregation and their beasts drink. So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as he had commanded him. And Moses and Aaron

gathered the assembly before the rock, and he said to them, And listen now, you rebels! Shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock? Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod, and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank.

But the Lord said to Moses, Because you have not believed me to treat me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them. Those were the walkers of Meribah, because the sons of Israel contended with the Lord, and he proved himself holy among them. Now, if you were used to listening as long as I'm used to preaching, I would read several more passages, and in doing so would give you the composite picture of this matter as it's set forth in Holy Scripture.

Rather than to take longer than mandatory tonight, I will simply name the other passages that some of you who love the study of the Word of God will want to consult. I mention later in this chapter verses 23 and 24. I would ask you privately to read chapter 27 of Numbers, and especially focus upon verses 12 to 14.

And I would urge you to turn again to Deuteronomy and read from the first chapter, once more focusing on verse 37. And then I would commend to you the passage in Deuteronomy 3, verses 23 to 28. And you would discover that all the relevant material on the issues that I set in front of you tonight are found in those several passages.

Issue 1 is age, a preservative against evil. Issue 2, do you recognize that far worse than being sent to hell for your sin is robbing God of His glory? You may not feel that. You may be ready to dispute with me on that subject, but if indeed that's true of you, it demonstrates how little you understand God's purpose for your existence.

God did not bring you into being to save you from hell, nor did He send Jesus Christ to die on the cross merely to save you from hell. He sent Christ so that you could preserve His glory in this wretched world. Now, let me lay in front of you some very elementary and yet immensely consequential issues drawn out of the passages that I've named.

First, if you were to consider all the passages I suggested, you would find that God is making against Moses certain very specific accusations. We've noted some of them in the portions that we've read. In the first passage in Deuteronomy 32, God accused Moses of breaking faith.

Breaking faith. Do you know what that means? Do you feel the consequence of that? If I were to address your heart personally and ask, did you ever break faith with God? How would you answer? Well, many people that I meet acknowledge a season in their life when they broke faith with God. After all, the believer's relationship with God is very much a two-sided thing.

We enter into a personal covenant with our God. We receive from His gracious hand the blessings, and we assume from those same gracious hands the responsibilities of the Christian life. And if the time ever comes when you chuck the responsibilities and yet cling to the privileges, you've broken faith.

It must be understood by all of us that the faith that saves is not something that is exercised in a moment of time. I spoke of this this afternoon. Saving faith is ongoing.

It is never enough to say, I did believe. I must always be able to say at all times, I am a believing man. Some silly people of our acquaintance have been teaching that when a man believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth, he's saved.

And what they mean by confessing with the mouth is that the person once believes and once confesses, and that one-time confession is saving. What nonsense! The author of Hebrews makes it so clear, and again I dealt with this this afternoon, he makes it so clear that the confession that is called for is an ongoing confession, day in, day out, year after year after year. I acknowledge Jesus Christ is Lord.

When it's popular to do so, I make that confession. When it's unpopular to do so, I make that confession. When people applaud me for my confession, I make it.

And when people are standing by with the axe, ready to chop my head off, I make that confession, Jesus Christ is Lord. But one can break that faith, not merely by contrary words, but by action. And we have in front of us passages that teach plainly that as an elder statesman in the kingdom of God, Moses broke faith.

But that's not the only accusation against him. We read in Deuteronomy 32, God's accusation in which Moses was told, you did not treat me as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel. And I want to ask your heart this question.

Have you always treated God as holy in the midst of the sons of Israel? Let me speak to a mother, a mother who secretly acknowledges that once a month she regularly flies off the handle and lets loose with her evil mouth that she blames it on the physical. I can't help myself. This just happens to be my down period this month.

But dear mother, you're called to maintain God's holiness in season and out of season. And many a believing mother has unbelieving children because the children have watched their mother time after time after time fail to maintain God's holiness. And many a pastor has destroyed his ministry because in the midst of great pressure, when unkind and even untruthful things were being said, he lost his temper.

I am thinking of a great and a precious man right now who served the church faithfully for nearly 22 years and had a wonderful ministry. And then someone falsely accused him of a matter and he blew his top. He rose to his own defense.

He did not maintain God's holiness before the people. And his ministry commenced a terrible downward spiral. This is a serious issue.

You have broken faith with me, says God to Moses. You have not maintained my holiness before the people. In the other passages to which I've made reference, Moses is accused of not believing.

You have not believed me, said God. Now let's think about that. Some of you hardly know the passages and it'll be more difficult.

Others of you are well acquainted with these passages that we have in front of us. God says to Moses, you did not believe me. Now is that implying that at some point in his life, Moses reflected and he said to himself, well I've been believing in God for a long time now, more than a century.

I believed in existence. I believed in his creative power. I believed in his providence.

I believed in his love. But honestly now, I just have to get right down to earth and I have to admit it doesn't make sense to go on believing in God. Is that what the Father is accusing Moses of? Having reached that point where unbelief rose up and laid hold of his heart and he denounced the faith? No dear friends, no

indeed.

It is not like that at all. What Moses did was purely and simply disobedience. God said, Moses, speak to the rock.

And Moses took the rod that God himself had given him and with that rod he struck the rock twice. And God said, Moses, you have not believed me. I wonder if you adequately understand that in our Bibles to believe is to obey.

It is nonsense to speak about faith in God that does not embrace obedience. If God speaks to a believer and says, sit down and shut up, the believer sits down and shuts up. And if God says, stand up and speak out, the believer stands up and speaks out.

God gave Moses a very simple command and he didn't keep it. And God says, you've broken faith, you haven't maintained my holiness before the people, and you've demonstrated your unbelief. He also is accused of rebelling against God's command.

Verse 24 of Numbers 20. And then we want to remember that this is not merely a problem with Moses, but it included his brother Aaron. And God says concerning the pair of them, you both disobeyed my command.

Numbers 27 at verse 14. There are the accusations against Moses. Well, let's move from the accusations and contemplate now, as best we can, something of the conduct of Moses.

Let's try to analyze his conduct. Let's focus upon Numbers 20. Will you have your Bible open to Numbers 20? And let's ask ourselves what really is involved now in Moses' conduct.

And let's begin by an observation that you may have passed over in reading this passage. Look at verse 1. My dear friends, that's a significant statement. Miriam, Aaron, Moses were a team.

They had served together. And now Miriam is snatched from their midst. And Moses and Aaron are in the midst of great sorrow.

They've just buried their sister and their co-worker. Does the death of the nearest and dearest to your life excuse you from ill conduct or robbing God of His glory? No, not for a moment. Not for a moment.

But look now at some of the other things that are stated here. This sin of Moses was obviously a sin of anger. Are not the words of verse 10 words of great anger? Listen now, you rebels.

Can you read those words without feeling the anger of Moses? Is not this sin of Moses a sin of great haste? I wonder how many of you have learned when you're angry, don't act. Don't speak. What if, what if, what if Moses recognized that he was angry and when the Lord said to him, Can Moses speak to the rock? Moses said to the Lord, Lord, you know I've lost my temper, a dreadful sin, but would you please give me time to retire to my prayer closet and recover before I say or do anything? You think the Lord would have been offended if Moses had pled for time to bring his anger under control? No, dear friends, no, no, no, no.

But Moses didn't take time. And many of you have destroyed much that God has been doing through your life. Because in a burst of anger brought upon by over hasty action, you have robbed God of his glory.

Now, we need to say in Moses' defense, and yet it's no excuse that this sin was a sin that was provoked by terrible exasperation. If there's any pastor here who thought he had a hard time in life, I assure him it's nothing in comparison with 40 years of these miserable, murmuring people in the wilderness. And notice now, these matters set in front of us.

There was no water, verse 2, for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. This was not an accident. Their murmuring, their complaining, their vicious words at this time was something that they had schemed and connived at.

They assembled together deliberately to give Moses a hard time and to provoke God. And we don't want to lose sight of that tragic fact that there is terrible provocation in this passage. And then I want to add another thought that you may have missed.

This sin of Moses was what we call theologically or technically an aggravated sin. You know that term, aggravated sin? An aggravated sin is a sin made much worse by the extenuating circumstances. Many of you will recall these words out of the book of James, To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

But now, there is a peculiar and a most amazing aggravation to this sin, and this aggravation is described in verse 6. Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to them. Brothers and sisters, you are never in greater danger of robbing God of his glory than when you've just come from some mountaintop experience with the Lord.

I remember as if it happened today, an extraordinary season that my wife had in a distant state where a touch of the Holy Spirit came with immense power upon a congregation. And a meeting that was scheduled for two hours lasted about sixteen hours with an awesome sense of the presence of God. The sort of thing many of you have been praying would happen here and happen with regularity.

The next morning we boarded an airplane and returned to our home. We had barely unlocked the door and entered our home before my wife said something wicked to me and I said something wicked to my wife, or vice versa. I don't know which one of us started it.

I don't even know now what it was we were squabbling about. But after a few moments of vicious words one against the other, we both stopped suddenly and said, Is that not just the way it is? Having been on the mountaintop, we're now robbing God of his glory. Oh, if ever there's a time for caution in the Christian heart, it's at the time of immense blessing from the Lord God.

And here we have Moses sinning an aggravated sin because the very glory of God had appeared. And I have alluded to this already, but let me simply state it as one additional analysis of this sin. Oh, brothers and sisters, face this fact.

This terrible sin of Moses was not the sin of a young man. It was the sin of two elder statesmen, two men of immense experience, two men who robbed God of his glory. But my time is gone, and I've really started, and no more than that.

But I know that many of you are tired, you've had busy days, and you have much to do yet tomorrow, and are not so unkind as to be unmindful of that. But I do want to draw your attention to certain powerful lessons from this hastily dealt-with passage. The first lesson is a practical lesson for all of you who sit in

the pews, who are not the leaders of the Church.

There's something truly terrible about a body of people who provoke an aged saint to such anger that he robs God of his glory. And don't misunderstand, I'm not excusing Moses because he was provoked. But I'm saying to you, when the final reckoning comes, the responsibility of the people in provoking Moses will be seen.

And I would plead with every one of you, don't ever let yourself become a tool in the hand of Satan to provoke one of God's servants. Nobody was ever called to provoke God's servants to sin. But here's the second lesson that I would set in front of you.

God may, in fact, does forgive sin through our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, he can and does impose monstrous penalties upon sinners. Let me show you what I mean from this passage.

I remind you of the first portion we read in Deuteronomy 32. Moses, go up in the mountain, look across and see the land of promise, and lie down and die. And someone here is silly enough to wonder, is Mr. Roberts saying that Moses went to hell? What's that got to do with the issue? If your mind runs in that direction, it demonstrates what a shallow level you live on.

I already debunked being saved from hell as significant. What is significant is when I'm saved to maintain God's glory, and I do so. Now listen to me.

Moses was given a work to do, just as our Lord Jesus Christ was given a work to do. Do you recall that when Christ was approaching the end of his ministry, he met his father in prayer? This is recorded in John 17. And as he bowed before his father, he said, I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do.

And he had. But Moses couldn't pray that prayer, because God called Moses to lead people from the land of Egypt into the land of promise. But because of a colossal sin at the end of his life, he was ordered, go up in the mountain and lie down and die, with your work unfinished, having robbed God of his glory.

You feel the consequence of that. You listen to me, not as old as I look, as I already said, but 67 years of age, having been preaching for more than a half a century, but critically aware of the fact that I could still rob God of his glory and never finish the task that he gave me. What about you? Do you know what God has given you to do? And are you doing it? And will you do it right up until the point where your work is finished? Or will you allow some sin to rob God of his glory that will prevent you from finishing your lifetime assignment? Now, again, I spoke of those people whose only grave concern is, Mr. Roberts, are you saying Moses went to hell? And I'm asking you, do you really care? What an absurd thing to focus upon.

It is a terrible thing to think of sin only as a passport to hell. Now, if we are truly believers, our great concern will be, am I robbing God of his glory? That's why I'm here, to preserve his glory, to maintain his holiness before the people. And if somehow I can allow my thoughts to be drawn aside into the issue of hell and I can worry about sin as a passport to hell and never concern myself with sin as a thief of God's glory, it proves that my heart has never been altered by God.

Because every true convert has the glory of God in his hand. Do you realize that every day you live, you carry God's glory? And what could be more dastardly, what could be more terrible than to break faith with God and not maintain his holiness before the people and end up robbing God of his glory? And I want to say to you that God is much more urgent about our maintaining his glory than he is by any mighty deeds or significant or powerful acts that we perform in his name. I don't get excited about these men who claim

great, miraculous power.

What excites me is when I find a man who carries the glory of God in his hands and that glory is safe in his hands because he knows his calling is to ever bring glory to God. May I state it again? There is something pathetic about any individual who thinks that doing great and mighty things in the name of Christ is where it's at. But I close now with this final thought.

This thought is drawn from Numbers 20 and verse 13. These were, those were the waters of Nazareth because the sons of Israel contended with the Lord and he proved himself holy among them. Have you thought about those words? What do they mean in the context of what I've been saying to you? The accusation we've noted already against Moses was, Moses, you didn't maintain my holiness before the people.

But we read that God proved himself holy among the people. And I want to make a statement that is almost frightening to me to make, a truly troubling statement, and yet 100% accurate biblically. I wished I could speak to your heart on this issue as well and address you in words that you could never forget.

Dear sir, madam, everyone here, if you don't maintain God's holiness, then He will maintain His holiness at your expense. What a sobering word that is. He will maintain His holiness at your expense.

What do you mean, you ask? I'm thinking of poor Moses. In Deuteronomy 7, one of the passages we did not read, Moses is praying and he's pleading with God. And he's asking, Oh God, I'm beginning to recognize what I've done.

I'm beginning to see the justice in what You've done. But, Oh God, couldn't You spare me? Couldn't You allow me, despite my sin, to lead these people into the land of promise? And God shouts at Moses, Enough! Speak to me no more of this matter. Why? Moses was given the privilege, the opportunity, of maintaining God's holiness before the people.

But he didn't do it. But the sheer fact is, God is holy. If you maintain it, He won't have to.

If you won't maintain it, He must maintain it at your expense. And again, I ask you to consider what it cost Moses to rob God of His glory. It cost him the capstone of his life and ministry, the privilege of leading these people into the land of promise.

And if you break faith with God and rob God of His glory, if you don't maintain God's holiness before your own children, He'll maintain it, but at your expense. And I say to you tonight, with deep grief and immense sorrow, that the American church has robbed God of His glory, and now God is maintaining His holiness at our expense. He's made us the laughingstock of the world.

But I thank God that even though Moses pled, Oh, can't you change? And God said, No, it's too late. I don't believe it's too late for us. I don't believe it's too late for America.

I believe the church can recognize why we're here and commit ourselves afresh and in a powerful way to upholding God's glory by setting our hearts in such a fashion that we will never rob Him of His glory. And I believe that when His glory is at the forefront of the life of the church, the nation will be melted to contrition and brought to repentance. But if we won't take this word of God to heart, God's holiness will prevail, but at our expense.

Oh, Father, forgive us for the grievous ways in which we have broken faith with you. And accept from us our heartfelt thanks that despite our terrible sin against you, mercy is yet extended. Oh, gracious God, help this church and others who've gathered with this assembly tonight to lay hold of this precious truth that your glory must be maintained and your holiness preserved.

And may we do everything that your Spirit and your word will enable us to do so that we never ever rob you of the glory that is rightly yours through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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