

# Something Must Be Done

by Richard Owen Roberts

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*The church is in a state of decline and needs to seek God's presence and power to experience a genuine revival.*

**Duration:** 1:08:20

**Scripture:** Isaiah 63:7

**Topics:** "Revival", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the urgent need for revival in the church, highlighting the decline in spiritual fervor and the importance of seeking the manifest presence of God. It calls for a return to prayer, holiness, and cultivating God's presence to experience His power and transformation. The message stresses the necessity of genuine repentance, earnest seeking of God, and a desperate hunger for His revival.

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## Transcript

I have in my hand a booklet entitled *Something Must Be Done*. Would to God the whole church felt that. But obviously the bulk of the church thinks everything's fine.

Can't see any real difficulty at all. It's been very, very grievous to me that over the years as I've been so often privileged to speak at pastor's conferences, to observe that rarely ever at a serious pastor's conference do you have pastors of the bigger churches. Unless they're speaking.

Almost always those who attend the serious conferences are pastors of churches under 500. And probably the bulk under 200. And by their absence the pastors of the bigger churches are simply acknowledging, we're fine, we don't have any need, we're doing great, all is well.

This particular booklet, *Something Must Be Done*. A New Year's sermon preached on the last day of the old year by Gardner Spring, pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in the city of New York. This was published in the year 1816.

If you had it in your hand you could tell just by a glance that it's the original 1816 publication. It was a sermon preached on New Year's Eve, 1815, published in the following year. Let me read a portion from it.

What is a revival of religion? We have never seen a general revival of the Christian interest in this city that is New York City. In two or three of our congregations there have been some seasons of unusual solemnity, which have from time to time resulted in very hopeful accessions to the number of gods professing people. But we have not been visited with any general outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, we talk about revivals of religion without any definite meaning. And hence, many honest minds are prejudiced against that. Some identify them with the illusions of a disturbed fancy, while others give them a place among the most exceptional extravaganzas and the wildest expressions of enthusiasm.

And I'll interrupt to say that is the increasing attitude of people because the main promoters of revival today are extreme wild enthusiasts in the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Third Wave camps, who have great difficulty discerning between that which a wild imagination accomplishes and that which God himself does. So the interest in revival is very distinctly in decline for the reasons stated. We haven't seen the real thing in most instances, and what we do see that is called revival is so grievously absurd that who wants any part at all of such extravagance? When I speak of revival, I mean none of these things.

It is no illusion, no reverie we present to your view, but those plain exhibitions of the power and the grace of God which commend themselves to reason and to every impartial mind. The showers of divine grace often begin like other showers, with here and there a drop. The revival in the days of Hezekiah arose from a very small beginning.

In the early stages of a work of grace, God is usually pleased to affect the hearts of some of his own people. Here and there, an individual Christian is aroused from his slumber. The objects of faith begin to arouse him from his stupor, and they begin to predominate over the objects of sense and his languishing graces to be in more lively and constant exercise.

In the progress of the work, the quickening power of grace pervades the church, bowed down under a sense of their own stupidity and the impending danger of sinners. The great body of professing Christians are anxious and prayerful. In the meantime, the influences of the Holy Spirit are extended to the world, and the conversion of one or two or a very small number frequently proves the occasion of a very general concern among the whole people.

Everything now begins to put on a new face. Ministers are animated. Christians are solemn.

Sinners are alarmed. The house of God is thronged with anxious worshippers. Opportunities for prayer and religious conference are multiplied.

Breathless silence pervades every seat and the deep solemnity every house. Not an eye wanders. Not a heart is indifferent.

While eternal subjects are brought near, and eternal truth is seen in its widest connections and felt in its quickening and condemning power, the Lord is there. His stately stepplings are seen. His own almighty invisible hand is felt.

His Spirit is passing from heart to heart in His awakening, convincing, regenerating, and sanctifying agency upon the souls of men. Those who have been long careless and indifferent to the concerns of the soul are awakened to their sense of sinfulness, their danger, and their duty. Those who have cast off fear and restrained prayer have become anxious and prayerful.

Those who have been stout-hearted and far from righteous are subdued by the power of God and brought nigh by the blood of Christ. The King of Zion takes away the heart of stone and gives the heart of flesh. He causes the captive exile to hasten that he may be loosed, lest he die in the pit and his bread should fall.

He takes off the tattered garments of the prodigal, clothes him with the best robe, and gives him a cordial welcome to all the magnificence of his grace. He brings those who have been long in bondage out of prison, knocks off the chains that bind them down to sin and death. He bestows the immunity of sons and daughters, and he receives them into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

And is there anything in all of this that is full of mystery, that has no claim to our confidence? Behold, that thoughtless man, year after year, has passed away. He's been adding sin to sin and heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. But the Spirit of all grace suddenly arrests him in his mad career.

The conviction is fastened upon his conscience that he is a sinner. Fallen by his iniquity, he views himself obnoxious to the wrath of an offended God. He sees that he is under the dominion of a carnal mind.

His sins pass in awful review before him, and he's filled with distress and anguish. He is sensible that every day is bringing him nearer to the world of perdition. And he begins to ask if there can be any hope for a wretch like him.

But oh, how his strength withers, and his hope dies. He is as helpless as he is wretched, and he is as culpable as he is helpless. The arrows of the Almighty stick fast within him, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirit.

But behold him now, in his last extremity, as he is cut off from every hope, the arm of sovereign mercy is made bare to his relief. The heart of stone melts. The will that has hitherto resisted the divine spirit and rebelled against the divine sovereignty is subdued.

The lofty looks are brought low. The selfish mind has become benevolent. The proud, humble, the stubborn rebel, the meek child of God, Jesus tells the despairing sinner where to find a beam of hope.

The voice of the Son of God proclaims forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace. The angel of peace invites and sweetly urges the soul, stained with pollution, to repair to the blood of sprinkling, stung with the guilt of sin, to look up to Jesus for healing and life. Is this an idle tale? No, believers, you have felt it all.

And if there's no mystery in this, why should it be thought incredible that instances of the same nature should be multiplied and greatly multiplied in any given period? If there are dispensations of grace above the normal operations of the spirit, they may exist in a very different degree at different times. And then the immediate and special influences of the Holy Ghost are to be expected in the edification of a single saint or the conversion of a single sinner. Why may they not be expected in the edification and conversion of multitudes all at once? It's not above the reach of God's power, nor beyond the limits of His sovereignty.

God can easily send down a shower as He can a single drop. And He can as easily convert two as one, three thousand as one hundred, three hundred thousand as five thousand. And by the grace of God, in the year 1860, in the year of publication, New York City experienced a genuine revival.

When men of God get the issue straight and begin to focus upon that which matters most, then God responds. And we know perfectly well that it would be no harder for God to produce a revival in the year 2012 than it was in the year 1732, or 1792, or 1816, or 1857, 1858, or 2004 and 2005. The problem is surely not with God.

It has to be with us. We were looking yesterday at the passage in Exodus 32 and 33, and I observed the four things that always precede revivals. The terrible moral and spiritual decline.

That's in place. We don't have to do anything to promote that. We only wish we could do something to hinder it.

It's there. The righteous judgments of God that always precede revival. Again, they're there.

God has withdrawn His manifest presence from the church. When I spoke of the manifest presence yesterday, I'm sure I left things dangling in the minds of some of you. That's always the case.

We can never cover fully all of the issues that are involved. Let me take simply a moment to clarify for those of you who have not gained a deep awareness of this. When we speak of the presence of God, we really must be thinking in three realms.

The essential presence of God, the manifest presence of God, and the cultivated presence of God. The language is not the issue. Those are the terms that I use.

Maybe you have better terms to express what I'm speaking of. But let me take a bit of time to elaborate upon that. The scriptures are very, very plain.

God Himself says, I fill heaven and earth. And we know perfectly well, you cannot go anywhere where you could escape the presence of God. In the Psalms, it uses language of this sort, where shall I flee from thy presence? If I descend into the depth of the sea, thou art there.

If I ascend to the height of the highest mountain, thou art there. In our day, we could even think about loading one of our young fellows on a rocket ship and shooting him out into space. If he traveled outward for 10,000 years, he would never pass a place where God is not, because He fills heaven and earth.

And some of us have faced the fact God is no more present in His essential presence in the church on Sunday morning than He is in the deepest dive of iniquity. You can't go anywhere where God is not. But it would be absurd to pretend that the essential presence of God was having any impact upon the moral or the spiritual life of people.

You could not name a single person who was kept from sin by the essential presence of God. You can't even name yourself! Because every day, every moment of your life up until now, God has been in and around you in the sense of His essential presence. We sin regularly in the light of His essential presence.

But when we speak of the manifest presence, then we are in a very different and a remarkably consequential realm. There are two great characteristics of all revivals. Number one, the manifest presence of Christ in the midst of His people.

And number two, the powerful impact of the Word of God as it moves like an incredible tidal wave of blessing. The manifest presence of Christ is not ours by right. It does not come automatically.

It comes to those who seek over and over in Scripture. If you seek me, I will let you find me. If you seek me with all your heart.

If you ever cease to seek me, God said to Solomon and others, I will no longer be with you. And over and over we have examples of those who sought the Lord for a season, ceased to seek Him, and found that

indeed He was no longer with them. Now that's not very acceptable teaching to the bulk of the church.

The bulk of the church likes to believe that if you ever had a single moment of faith, God is with you all the rest of your days. No matter what, you can plunge into the depth of iniquity and live there 72 years, and if you had a moment of faith, you're saved. And as P.T. Barnum, the founder of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus, used to say, men love nothing better than to be deceived.

They will even pay a handsome price for someone to deceive them. And the tragedy of humankind is that the vast majority would rather believe a lie than to believe the truth. And along with that, the tragic truth is that most men in ministry are far more interested in gathering a following than in doing good, and therefore they tell the lies that people love to hear.

And they gather their crowd, and they gain their moment of fame, but they do vast damage to souls, and they violate Scripture. The manifest presence of God is to be sought. And if you seek and you find, you must still go right on seeking.

The problem is in some revival movements, there was an earnest seeking of God, and God did draw near in a remarkable way. But then a presumption sets in. Now we have had God come near.

He will be perpetually near. And it is simply not true. We must go on seeking, and seeking with the same level of fervency.

But now, as I have stated, revivals are preceded by righteous judgments of God. Among the multitude of things that God has at His hand in terms of righteous judgment are frogs, earthquakes, tumultuous rains, sickness, floods, fire. I mean, you could go on and on and on.

But the most common throughout the Scriptures of these righteous judgments of God is the withdrawal of His manifest presence. And God Himself turning. Let me take now a bit of time to read from the incredible portion of Isaiah that describes so profoundly these righteous judgments of God.

Will you turn with me please to Isaiah 63? Some of you will be very familiar with this portion. Others of you may never have given it the kind of consideration it so desperately needs. Isaiah, starting at verse 7 of chapter 63.

Verse 7, chapter 63. I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which He has granted them according to His compassion and according to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses. For He said, surely, these are My people, sons who will not deal falsely.

So He became their Savior. In all their affliction He was afflicted. And the angel of His presence saved them.

In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them, and He lifted them, and He carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit. Therefore, He turned Himself to become their enemy.

He fought against them. The bulk of the church has never paid any attention to those words. In fact, don't even believe in a God who would do such a thing.

You know as well as I do that although the Evangelical Church of North America does not candidly admit it, the Evangelical Church of North America believes there are two Gods. The God of the Old Testament

who one of those liberal Methodist bishops, probably Oxnum, described years ago as a dirty, bloody bully. No, I never heard an Evangelical use those words.

But I know most professed Christians don't believe in the God of the Old Testament. They believe in the God of the New Testament. They either believe that there are two Gods or that there is one God who has grown up, gotten control of his disposition, is no longer an angry God.

He is seeping love and grace out of every pore. Indeed, he is an aged God who can no longer hear very well and cannot see clearly and is unable to maintain his own standards among his people. So that you can get away with anything as long as it had a moment of saying.

I don't hear people talking quite that directly, but that's what they really are believing and saying. But the portion we just read, there it goes. They grieved his Holy Spirit.

Therefore, he turned himself to become their enemy. He fought against them. Now very frequently, we hear people say, If God is for us, who can be against us? I have never heard anybody in all my life, beside myself, say, if God is against us, who does it matter is for us? I mean, that's reality.

That's biblical truth. God is a righteous judge. He hates iniquity.

He absolutely will not tolerate sin in his presence. And as I said yesterday, he's not tardy in his administration of justice. The judgments of God are always on time.

The evidence is overwhelming that God has turned himself and become the enemy of the church of North America. And it doesn't matter what percentage of the church refuses to believe it. The evidence is absolutely clear.

Verse 11, Then his people remembered the days of old of Moses. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put his Holy Spirit in the midst of them, who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name? Who led them through the depths like the horse in the wilderness? They did not stumble. As the cattle which go down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord gave them rest.

So thou didst, past tense, didst lead thy people to make for thyself a glorious name. There is, as is quite common in Scripture, after a profoundly consequential statement is made, a review then of the way it used to be. Further demonstrating that the way it is now, that is in Isaiah's day, is not the way it used to be.

We've got to face the same stark reality. Several of us are older in this room. We don't try to hide it or deny it.

But with age, if by the grace of God your memory is still functioning, there is the awareness of the way it used to be. And I tell you, it is not now the way it used to be. I honestly believe, I hope I can say this in a way that is not displeasing to the Lord, I honestly believe I preach with a whole lot more knowledge and compassion and confidence in Christ than I used to.

But it's still not the same. The hearts are hard. The resistance is strong.

The stubbornness is so stiff-necked in the typical professed Christian and in the average pastor that you almost feel defeated in the face of their unbelief. Thank God it's only almost, not really. Our confidence is still in the Word and in the Spirit.

Verse 15, Look down from heaven and see from thy holy and glorious habitation where are thy zeal and thy mighty deeds. The stirrings of thy heart and thy compassion are restrained toward me. You would have to be out of your mind to think that God is exercising His zeal on behalf of the Church of North America.

Surely we're not seeing His mighty deeds even in those circles that are claiming incredible miracles. Any investigation whatsoever demonstrates the falsity of the claim. And even in our evangelistic circles, just as an illustration, I have a friend who's a missionary in Russia.

An American evangelist came there, preached a lot of gobbledygook, gave a strong invitation, had a thousand converts in a single meeting. My friend determined to follow up every one of those thousand converts that the American evangelist came home bragging on God for this glorious outpouring of the Spirit. My friend never found one single convert out of that thousand.

Yeah, exactly. And essentially what the people said whom he confronted was, Oh, well all we were doing was admitting that communism has failed. That there might very well be a God after all.

God's mighty arm is as mighty as it ever was. His zeal when unleashed upon His people as profoundly consequential as ever in all of history. Imagine what it would be like for the stirrings of God's heart and His compassion to be absolutely unleashed and poured out upon the church.

Instead of held in perpetual restraint and confinement. Is it not reasonable to think that as long as we're blind to the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we're not going to pour any time and energy into seeking God to do what we don't think is needed? It's when you become desperate, it's when you see there is no other hope that indeed the last and the only resort is for God once again to step in with His mighty arm to unleash His zeal, to pour out His compassion, to touch first, as I read from Gardener's Spring, a person here, a person there, a drop here, a drop there, and then suddenly the whole of the area aroused to the fact that they have sinned dreadfully against the only Lord God and that their only hope is repentance, mourning, crying out to God for mercy. Verse 16, Thou art our Father, though Abraham does not know us, Israel does not recognize us, thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer from of old is thy name.

Once again you see the same pattern going back to the facts as they were, not as they are. We have fallen so far, he's saying, that Israel in its glory days, Judah in its prime, they wouldn't even recognize us today as if anything whatsoever in common with that. We have fallen so far.

I don't know if any of you have seen the book that Maggie and I produced a number of years ago called Salvation in Full Color. It's a book of 20 sermons that I gathered from the Great Awakening period. They're 20 sermons all on the subject of salvation, taking salvation as it really is, that wonderful umbrella term that covers this host of glorious New Testament doctrines, including what might choke some of you, spiritual election and effectual calling and conviction and regeneration and repentance.

I'm giving these in order. Regeneration and repentance and faith and justification and adoption and sanctification and glorification. This series of 20 sermons by the greats of the Great Awakening period.

As I was preparing those sermons for publication, I kept saying to my dear wife, Maggie, if what these men preached is Christianity, we don't know anything about it in America today. The tripe, the claptrap, the nonsense that flows out of the pulpits today in comparison with the incredible biblical truth that flowed from

the pulpits years ago, so different that they don't even look as if they belong to the same religion. Sermons where often 200 biblical quotations in a single sermon, but never identified as such.

Nowadays, if we quote something, we make it clear we quoted it. We even put up our fingers for quotation marks or whatever. And if we're able, we even give the reference point.

In those sermons, very rarely ever that. But those men were so full of the word of God that when they preached, it was just an incredible flow of divine truth arranged in such a way that the Holy Spirit could use it in a profound fashion to radically alter the lives of the here. So, Isaiah, faced with a similar situation to ours, is again in verse 16 talking about the way it was.

But now, verse 17, Why, O Lord, dost thou cause us to stray from thy ways and harden our hearts from feeling thee? Now, I am absolutely certain that a high portion of the American church does not for one moment believe God would do such a thing. Cause his own people to stray from his ways? Is Isaiah beside himself? Is he speaking as a ridiculous idiot instead of a prophet of God? Or is he speaking the very heart of God? It appears to me that we're living at a time when God is saying, you are not willing to do things my way. Therefore, I'll push you into doing things your way.

I'll give you a free hand. And I'll let you prove to a lost and dying world how full of nonsense and garbage you are. I'll let you introduce all kinds of new ways of accomplishing the purpose of God.

None of which will work. All of which will prove that you are wrong, that your hearts are not right, that the blessing of God is not upon you. So we have incredible new ways of doing evangelism.

And we're still counting the converts in the millions, none of which will find themselves in the end in the kingdom of God. They've never moved from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. Man's methods don't save.

I'll even harden your hearts When the scriptures describe Pharaoh as hardening his heart, they also describe God in the same passages as hardening his heart. What does God have to do to harden somebody's heart? Yes, exactly. Nothing.

Nothing. He just has to cease softening it. What does he have to do to cause us to stray from his way? Same thing.

Nothing. We are all sinners bent on having our way, going our direction, doing our thing. All he has to do is to withdraw his hand of restraint.

This is what's happening to us today. And what are we doing about it? Inventing some fresh methodology. Creating, in some places, seeker-sensitive churches.

Or evangelism through sports. Or a multitude of other absurdities that in the long term don't do anything to change the hearts of men. Verse 17 at the end.

Return for the sake of thy servants, the tribes of thy heritage. Thy holy people possessed thy sanctuary for a little while. Our adversaries have trodden it down.

We have become like those over whom thou hast never ruled. Like those who are not called by thy name. So that in our public schools and in our universities, blind faculty members can say we were never a Christian nation.

And the bulk of the students are stupid enough to believe the liars who preside in the classroom. We were a people who were orientated toward God. Whose hearts were set on remaining in the position in which they were called by God.

Not departing from it as did Israel first and then Judah. But we have wandered so far and lost so much as a result of the withdrawal of God's manifest presence that now we're not even recognized as having at one time been God's people. Oh, that thou wouldst render heavens and come down.

That the mountains might quake at thy presence as fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries. That the nations might tremble at thy presence. When thou didst awesome things which we did not expect, thou didst come down.

The mountains quaked at thy presence for from of old they had not heard nor perceived by ear. Neither has the eye seen a God beside thee who acts in behalf of the one who waits for him. My dear friends, there is the hard cry for the manifest presence of God render heavens and come down.

I love the words of verse 4. For from of old they have not heard nor perceived by the ear. Neither has the eye seen a God besides thee who acts on behalf of the one who waits for him. I use three terms in regard to the presence of God.

The essential presence, the manifest presence, and the cultivated presence. We live at a time when the essential presence of God is as it always has been and always will be. But also at the time when the manifest presence of God has been removed from the church.

And the evidence is crystal clear. If you're in any way a doubter, I urge you to throw aside your stupidity and face reality. The sin rate in the church is the same as the sin rate in the world.

That proves God is not with us. Now part of what is so troubling is some of our best men, some good and godly men, like Billy Graham, are saying they are still preaching exactly what they preached when they started. Now maybe you think that's commendable.

I believe that's idiotic. When I started preaching, I was preaching in the churches to biblically literate people. I could present a half-truth and the bulk of the people knew enough of true Christianity to fill in the other half.

I'm not justifying doing that. I'm saying it was not as dangerous because the people knew enough of the truth. But now we are living in a biblically illiterate time when the bulk of the people in the churches can't even find an odd book of the Bible like Jude.

They've obviously never read it. Many of our leaders have never even in a single time read through the whole of Scripture. And many of those who have read it only believe portions of it.

Their training in theological seminary shook them to the core in multitudes of cases. I have a faculty member at Fuller Seminary who made the statement one day in class, some of you at the time you graduate will be up in the clouds with all these theoretical issues and that's where you'll remain the rest of your lives. You'll never come back down to earth where God and people are.

And a few of you, after two or three years, will come back to reality and may prove to have some usefulness in the world. And that's the way I observe it. The vast majority are living in a world of

make-believe.

A world that says God is with us as he's always been with his people. If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you'll be saved. But instead of taking that as ongoing every single day the rest of your life, believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth, they've turned it into a singular act that forever saves, as I earlier said this morning.

We have lost the manifest presence of Christ and now the third term that I use is so utterly urgent. We must cultivate the presence of Christ Sir, you have indicated to me that you're a pastor. To what extent have you been cultivating the manifest presence of Christ in your church? That's your duty.

In a typical church that still has a prayer meeting, a small portion of the congregation attend that prayer meeting. And, by and large, the focus of that prayer meeting has nothing to do with the kingdom of God but with the body, with temporal matters that are soon passing. Most pastors don't even have the courage when the prayer requests pour in for broken thumbs and sore toes and heart palpitations to insist God himself brings suffering into the life for the holy purpose of bringing us close to Christ.

We are not going to pray for your healing until we are sure that God's purpose in bringing the affliction upon you has been accomplished. And I beg of you, stop asking people to pray. Ask people instead to seek God's face and to plead with him that instead of your stupidity of the past, you may become genuinely earnest in your relationship to Christ and that every suffering you endure will hasten you into Christ's glorious sense of power and holiness and beauty.

That the purpose of God sending the affliction will actually succeed. What if every man who leads a congregation were to make an agreement in his heart with God, I am not going to pastor a prayerless people. Now, things have gone so bad that we're actually hearing some of our leaders describe persons as having the gift of prayer.

So-and-so has the gift of prayer. They're going to be praying for us. If you have needs, go to so-and-so and have them put you on their prayer list.

I would not pastor a prayerless church. I would set my life under God through the power of the word and the spirit to see that place become a house of prayer. Our Lord Jesus was grievously offended when he cleansed the temple on those two occasions and said, you have turned my father's house, a house of prayer for all the nations, into a place of merchandise.

Well, we're not even serious enough to sell stuff in the church plant line or to make money ourselves off of it. We're just acting like idiots who are leading the church as if all is well when everything is at a terribly low level. Set your heart to turn the church into a praying chair.

Don't be content. And I mean when I say praying church, the whole church, not just a handful of praying people, not even 50% who are willing to pray, but the whole church. Now, obviously, we do this with grace.

As an old man, I think I have a right to say this. It's dangerous for me to drive at night. Fortunately, my wife is still able, so we're able to go to evening services.

If your church does not have people who are willing to bring the agent, then you've got to have some grace. And meet with them, share with them what the church is praying about, get them praying at home if they can't come on their own. And hopefully your church has numerous young families, and most families

these days don't have enough money to hire a babysitter to come week by week to prayer meetings.

So again, we extend grace and we make it clear. Not both of you can come at the same time, but you can alternate. One can come this week, one can come next week.

But make it an absolute. God wants His people to be a praying people, and what we're going to focus on is not temporal, but eternal. What we desperately need is the manifest presence of Christ in our midst, and we are going to commit ourselves to cultivating God's presence.

We're going to do absolutely everything necessary that God may draw near to us. And what a beautiful thing it is when a whole nation of churches is under condemnation and God has withdrawn His manifest presence, your church can cultivate God's presence and experience the nearness of God in every service, in every home, in every individual life. And along with prayer, obviously we've got to get in earnest about holiness.

And we're going to have to take some giant steps forward in disciplining, if necessary, those persons who will not walk in holiness. I believe the time has come when we can go no longer without the presence and the power of Christ. And I believe with all my heart God is ready to respond when His people become desperate.

Charles has indicated in his first day report his experience in the prison last week. I've been five times in the last calendar year and speaking in prisons, never ever thought my life would draw to its close with that ministry. But I rejoice to go because in the prison I find men who are desperate for God.

And if I were a pastor, that's the kind of people I would be willing to pastor, those who are desperate for God. I would change absolutely everything necessary so that the church once again experienced the manifest presence of Christ in its midst. And as Gardner Springs said, if God blesses one sinner with a profound conversion, why not expect two? And if two, why not a hundred? And if a thousand, why not five thousand? If five thousand, why not a hundred thousand? If one church cultivates the presence of God and He comes in great power, why not anticipate that the blessing of God will be so great upon that church that others will discover for themselves what it means to seek the Lord.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/n4YpweqP1bM.mp4>

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