

Spiritual Famine

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the importance of inquiring of the Lord to discover the cause of spiritual famine and seeking His guidance to restore spiritual nourishment.

Duration: 57:15

Scripture: 2 Samuel 21:1

Topics: "Spiritual Famine"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of revival and how it is seen throughout the Bible. He uses the story of David as an example of a time when God revived his people. The preacher emphasizes the importance of repentance and forgiveness in experiencing revival. He also highlights the power of Jesus' sacrifice in freeing us from the burden of sin and bringing about revival. The sermon concludes with a call to rely on the power of Jesus' blood and to seek revival in our own lives.

Transcript

For these days, I get to know lots of you, if only your smiling faces, from this end. It's amazing how accustomed one becomes to the same group of people, smiling back at one and responding to the message of grace. And one only knows how much one has appreciated and come to enjoy, let alone love, that group.

When one goes to the next church, we've got nine churches to go to on this tour, this is but five or six. We only know how much we've come to enjoy and love those people when we go to the next church and we find another group looking up at it. And it doesn't seem right.

That there should be occupied by the face we've been looking at for a whole week and so on. And we have to begin again to get used to another bunch of the Lord's people. And we do trust, I'm sure you will be coming as much as possible.

Make it every night if you possibly can. We're going to make it every night. We promise you we're not going to stay home and look at any television program, we're going to be here.

And for more reasons than one we suggest that. I suppose the most important one is that whereas we do not come with themes selected and prepared beforehand, but rather take each day as it comes and allow the Lord to guide us to the next theme, we do find, however, that at the end of a series there's been a

sequence. God has led us in a sequence and obviously those who've come through most of the series will get the most complete picture which God has been giving us.

And some nights can be tremendously important to your understanding of the message of grace for us Christians. And we do trust then you won't be too disappointed. Well, however put it, you know what I mean.

We want your help. And I know you don't need much persuasion. And another pin-off from these meetings, if you come to the whole series, at the end you may be speaking with an English accent yourself.

And people will say, where'd you learn that? Oh, I was at those meetings. Or it may be, of course, by the end of our two-month trip over here, we shall be speaking with an American accent, which is quite likely. Of course, you wouldn't call it an American accent.

You would still call it English. But when we go home, we have been told you're speaking a little differently and it lasts for a week or two. And we pick up, no, not the full accent, but some of the intonation that every accent has and some of the very pungent good expressions that you use.

I like them. They put it much more pungently than we do in our more sober English. Amen.

Now let's bow our heads for a word of prayer. Lord Jesus, we come to Thee with open hearts and open Bibles and we thank Thee for that open heaven from which the Holy Spirit has come, from Thee on the throne. May He take of the things that are Thine, Lord Jesus, and proudly reveal them to us.

We ask it in His name. Now I want to turn you this evening to the second book of Samuel, chapter 21. The second book of Samuel, chapter 21.

Perhaps it's a guess that we shall read an Old Testament incident which is fairly unfamiliar to you and that you haven't perhaps seldom heard referred to, even, or expounded. But this incident is a wonderful illustration of the ways of God in revival. It's a strange thing that for myself I find more stories, incidents, that illustrate revival than I do in the Old Testament than I do in the New.

In the New you have the doctrines of the Gospel in all its fullness. But as you look at God's deep dealings with His ancient people and how often they're in great need and in need of renewal, we see in it a wonderful picture of God's people today. And there are seasons when there's been decline and when the fire has gone low, when God needs to revive His people again.

And this is one of those incidents which can be taken as a great picture of the ways of God in revival. It's an incident in the days of David. David at this point, at long last, has come to the throne.

Paul, his predecessor, has been slain in battle and at last he's on the throne. And at last God has got a man on the throne whose ear He knows He can catch. It wasn't much use God trying to talk to Saul.

He was dead. He'd got right away going His own way. But here was a man whose ear God could catch.

And there were certain matters about which the Lord wanted to catch His ear. All right, then, here it is. Just quietly listen, take it in, and see if you can see the main emphasis for us in this passage, even before I try to explain something of it.

Then there was a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year. And David inquired of the Lord. Yes, invariably that's what David did when there was something that puzzled him.

When he needed instruction, he inquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, it is for Saul and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites and said unto them, now the Gibeonites, you remember that incident in the book of Joshua, now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites.

And the children of Israel had sworn unto them. And Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah. Do you remember the story of the Gibeonites? When under Joshua Israel were coming in so victoriously into the land, and all the nations in their immediate path knew that they were doomed, those were far, well Israel might well make some treaty with them, but not those in their path, they were destined to destruction.

And a little nation, a little tribe I suppose, we ought to give them that, living around those parts, right in Israel's path, thought of the route of sending messengers with old clothes and broken down shoes, and food that they were supposed to have been taking with them for the journey, all dry and mouldy, as if they'd come from a far distance, asking for some sort of a treaty. And Israel did not inquire of the Lord, they just took them at their face value and said, well there's no reason why we shouldn't make a treaty with them, they're a long way away, they're going to be no threat to us at all. And so they did.

And they discovered they were their neighbours. And because they'd made that treaty, and given that little group an oath that they would spare them, they didn't kill them. They did however make them hewers of wood and draughts of water, you remember that incident.

And the people murmured at their leaders, they'd been so foolish, but they said, we swore unto them by the Lord and we'll stand by that. That was at least honourable. And that's how it continued.

But apparently, we're not told anywhere else what happened, Saul, when he was king, in his zeal for the children of Israel, had massacred a whole number of those people, and doubtless taken their farm for Israel. And the incident had passed. They were powerless to do anything about it, but they'd suffered a deep wrong.

And not even God did anything about it, for the simple reason he knew he'd got a king on the throne who wouldn't listen if he did speak. But now that Saul's gone, and David is on the throne, God speaks to David, and does so, by sending a strange, unaccountable famine. The rain fails.

The crops fail. It happened one year. Well, it does happen, you know, it's David sometimes, it's how it is.

It happened a second year, the rain fails. It's strange, we'd have it two years running, just like that. And then, if you please, it happened a third year.

And David realized this was God. And this explains what he did. Realizing here was a situation that had come from God, it was God speaking.

He inquires of the Lord, the reason for this famine. And the Lord tells him, it is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites. And the king called the Gibeonites and said unto them, Wherefore, verse 3, David said unto the Gibeonites, What shall I do for you? And wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord? Because of that wrong done before.

And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house, neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, that will I do for you. And they answered the king, the man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us.

And we will hang them up unto the Lord, in Gibeon of Saul, whom the Lord did choose. And the king said, I will give them. It really is a bit gory, this story.

Terrible. But that's the story, this is what happened. And David had little to know.

Options. They just couldn't go on. With the heavens as brass.

And if this act of restitution was the only way by which then legitimate grievance could be met, by which God himself could be imprisoned, then he had to do it. So he took seven of Saul's descendants to give to the Gibeonites. But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul.

But the king took the two sons of Rister, the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of Michael, the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel, the son of Baal-zilei, the meholophite. And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites. And they hanged them in the hill before the Lord.

And they fell all seven together and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest. And Rister, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and spread it for her upon the rock from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night. They were hung up on trees before the Lord.

And it was told David what Rister, the concubine of Saul, had done. And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan, his son, from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, where the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa. And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan, his son.

And they gathered the bones of them that were hanged. While he was dealing with the burial of those that were hanged, he reminded himself of Saul and Jonathan, who hadn't been given a proper burial either. But the main purpose at this time was to deal with those bodies of those seven men hanging on the tree.

And the bones of Saul and his son, Jonathan, buried they in the country of Benjamin, in Zila, in the sepulchre of Kish, his father. And they performed all that the king commanded and their incest. After that, after that, God was entreated for the land.

So there's our incident, and I take it to be an amazing picture of how things can happen amongst the children of God, of how us children of God may have a time of famine, even as David. As I suggested, the fact that there was a famine for one year didn't disturb David too much. He accounted for it on natural grounds.

But when it happened three years in a row, David began to take this seriously and to ask for what reason this might have happened. And he inquired of the Lord. I suppose the reason why God spoke to his people in the Old Testament often by sending them famine, which he did, was because they were never led to

expect famine in that land.

It was a land of milk and honey, they were promised. A land of mountains, valleys and rivers, where they would eat bread, they were told, without scarcity. And when they came into that promised land, they found it even so.

But there were occasions when God, for reasons best known to himself, shut up heaven, that there was no rain. And there became a terrible famine in that land which normally produced food without any scarcity. And the reason for which God would shut up heaven was when his people departed from the law and turned to other gods or infringed his holy, beneficent commandments, as in this case.

And then it might well be that if he shut up heaven that there wasn't any rain, then if his people who were called by his name would humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked way, he would hear their prayer, he would forgive their sin and he would heal their land. And so this is really quite Old Testament, quite usual in the history of God's people in the Old Testament. But I mean to say we're really in an atmosphere, this is something extraordinary.

They were dependent on heaven's rain and it wasn't unusual for God to speak to his people through withholding that rain. Now with us, with regard to ourselves, we were told, promised by the Lord himself, that he that came to him would never hunger, that he that believed on him would never thirst. Our experience in Christ was to be an experience of a land that flowed with milk and honey.

We were promised that the water that he would give us, if we drank of it we'd never thirst, it would become in us a spring of water leaping up into everlasting life. And frankly, if you've been born of God's Spirit, I'm suggesting to you that you found that to be exactly the case. You have found that the blessings of the Gospel have not been overstated.

In those moments of proximity to Jesus which you've known, you've found the hunger of your soul satisfied. You've found yourself rejoicing in him. But there are times when perhaps you've discovered that there seems to be a famine in the land.

A famine that isn't just a matter of your emotions changing. Oh dear me, I had a late night the other night, but I'm not rejoicing much today. Maybe after a good night's rest I'll feel different.

But this is persistent. And you may well have found there's a famine in your soul. You may well have found yourself in an experience where the Bible hasn't been speaking to you very vividly.

If you've been reading your portion, whatever system of daily Bible reading you have, you've been doing it very much as a chore. It hasn't meant very much to you. You haven't heard from heaven lately.

And the chances are that you will very soon quit spending time over a book that isn't living to you. And maybe naturally there's been a famine in your soul. Amos talks about the famine that God would send.

Even in Old Testament times. Not a famine of want of water or want of bread, but a famine, he says, of hearing the words of the Lord. And that's a famine indeed.

You may come to church. You may partake of the means of grace, but be unmoved by them. Others are praising.

Others are melting. There might be a tear or two that others are shedding, but you are untouched. And I've known experiences like that.

When my heart is cold and it's dry, and when the word of God is not living to me and I'm not being touched. It may be that we've been finding prayer not meaningful. It has been worse.

And as a result, you've largely become prayerless. It isn't merely that you are negligent in keeping up with these important matters, but it is that when you did pray, you didn't get anywhere. You tried again and got nowhere, and you began bit by bit to quit.

And once again, it was because of this famine that had come and settled down in your soul. It may be in the matter of witness and concern for others. We haven't really been sharing Jesus with other people.

We haven't really been looking for opportunities, so to speak. And I believe it's because we feel we've got so little to give. We know the way of salvation.

We can mouth the words, but there's nothing of reality there. But this hasn't always been our... There's been a famine in our hearts, and as persistent as was that in the days of David. It could be a famine in David's case for three years, year after year.

It could be as long as that. Or it could be a famine for three months, month after month. Or it could be a famine for three weeks, week after week.

Or it could be a famine for three days, year after... day after day. And I ask you, are we prepared to tolerate famine if only for three days in our souls? Well, David was not prepared for this state of things to continue. And bless his dear heart, he did this sweet thing that was characteristic of him.

You can't help but love David for all his failures and faults. I love him. And when he was in this state, and in other situations he did it, he inquired of the Lord.

And you know, quick as night, he got the answer back. It is the Saul. And for his bloody house, because he slew the Yiddish.

That little minority tribe had suffered a wrong at the hands of David's predecessor. Out of zeal for the children of Israel, he put some of them to the sword and appropriated their land. The incident had passed into history, but it had not been forgotten by God.

And now that David, that God had got a king, whose heir he could get, he spoke to him. Spoke to him by sending the famine, knowing that he had inquired of him, and sending him the answer. And very often, it's much the same with us.

I wonder, however, if we're really concerned enough at the famine to inquire of the Lord. It could be that that goes on so long that you think, well that's the normal Christian life, there's nothing more to it than that. So you do sometimes feel as if Jesus paid rather too much for our salvation, which is so thin and lacking as what you're experiencing.

If you could get to the safe, you're so useless. But others of us are. God help us not to do this.

And we need to do what David did. We need to inquire of the Lord. For what cause is there this famine? The famine may take all sorts of further cause.

It may be difficult situations blow up. And God's trying to get our attention through those. We may have some hard times with relationships with others.

And my, we're not at all in a happy state because of this, that and the other. And oh, happy the dear child of God who knows in that situation to be humble enough to inquire of the Lord. And I want to tell you, you'll be surprised at the rapidity with which he would tell you for what cause it sends the famine.

Now it's quite impossible to be dogmatic what it'll be. All I know it may well be something that'll be an absolute stunning revelation to you. Something you've never seen as likely to cause any such famine.

It may be not some tremendous, dramatic sin. It may be something that's much too subtle that you would never guess it. You've been rationalizing something in your life for so long.

It'll only be the Holy Spirit himself who'll be able to point it to us. And so we need to inquire of the Lord even as David did. And the Lord will show us in his own way and time, sometimes much quicker than we think.

And very often it could be rather of this order someone who's been wronged. They've got a complaint against you. And when there's a situation like that I sometimes say we complain of the antagonistic attitude of another.

Tell me, if they were here on their own and I asked them about you what would they say? Oh, you may not think they're right. They're true. But what would you say? What do you think they'd say? Tell me.

And so slowly I encourage them to tell me what they think their opponents, whoever it is, would say. Well, I suppose you'd say this and that. Is there any truth in that? Come on.

Any truth? And you may well know that someone's attitude to you is all due to something in which they feel themselves to have been wronged. To have been hurt. As did these people in us.

You know the Lord's very compassionate towards and he's called the Lamb disposition. He's always called the Lamb. It speaks of his humility.

His willingness to come down and not to insist upon his life. A Lamb, you know, is a meekest of preachers. You can do what you like for a Lamb.

You can kick it, but it won't turn round and snap at you. It's meek, so to speak, and lowly in heart. That's why Jesus bears this wonderful title.

There's another reason, too, because he is the Lamb is the antitype of that Lamb that was slain on the Passover night. But I think mainly because this describes his character. But there's a very strange phrase in the book of Revelation.

It talks about the wrath of the Lamb. If he's so meek and hewry, if he humbled himself, if this name speaks of his beneficence to all and his gentleness towards sinners, how come do you have this phrase the wrath of the Lamb? It looks like a contradiction. Oh, no, it isn't.

It's because he is the Lamb that there is wrath. Because he is concerned for the poor and the needy that he takes up an attitude of judgment towards those who oppress the poor and needy and make them poor and needy. It's just because he is the Lamb he cannot but censure and deal with and have, so to speak,

on the carpet before him any child of his who wrongs another.

And thus it says you have this extraordinary phrase the wrath of the Lamb. It's because he is loved for that one who cannot but have dealings and talk to you when you are dealing with them harshly, wrongly, giving them cause for pain and cause for... And, oh, maybe many people never thought it didn't matter about those gibbonites. They were an alien group in any case.

We never should have made that promise to them way back and their lands are very desirable. This is how Paul reasons. And so he slew them and took their land.

And people didn't think too much of it. But God had heard their cries. The voice of their blood was crying unto him from the ground.

And when at last he got a man who would hear he spoke to David about it. True, David hadn't been involved. True, David wasn't guilty of that deed.

He didn't perpetrate the act but he was now in a position to put it right. And it could be sometimes happened that sometimes God does that sort of thing. Sometimes there's been trouble between families.

It was your dad or your mum who was involved with that other family. You didn't do it. But although perhaps you didn't do it you may be in a position now to put it right.

And sometimes God might speak to us about something like that. And here am I in my time of famine. I'm concerned that God's smile doesn't seem to be upon me these days.

And I inquire of the Lord and he could be very clear and very specific about the reason for which. As I say, it's quite a revelation that reason for which he has seen sin. The reason being to bring you to inquire.

Have no option but to go to the... And he found what about that thing. Days like it all saw in the past. They have forgotten it.

They have done nothing of the sort. He was shocked at the extent how strongly... There's no possibility of doing anything about it. But God had acted on their behalf and here comes... Recognising that a grievous wrong had been done against them.

And they were happy. Perhaps surprised at this turn of events. And he said, what must we do for you? Wherewith shall I make atonement, reconciliation that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord because this wrong has been spoiling our inheritance.

It's been cursing the inheritance of the Lord. What must we do? What will satisfy you? And they said, we will have no silver or gold from Saul. Neither shall they kill any man in Israel except that you give us seven of the sons of the man who perpetrated this thing for us and we will hang them up before the Lord in Gibeah where Saul used to live.

And he selected the sons from the descendants with a big thing and these seven prisoners. It's almost like a western. When men were hung up on trees even in those days, western.

And it's a picture to us that God will... wants us to inquire with Him and we've got to be willing to repent. In our case, to admit that the other person was right and you were wrong. That's very costly.

You lose your righteousness. It's a death to die. Even over small matters.

Day to day things that we need to call sin and acknowledge. Especially is the fact that these men were hung up on trees in Gibeah. That it was only after they were ultimately buried that they were regarded as bringing our sins.

It seems to note that whereas normally Jesus is said to have been crucified on a cross in five places at least in the New Testament Jesus is said to have been put on a tree. A cross was a Roman punishment for criminals. But the tree was something peculiarly for the Hebrews.

As we shall see in a moment I'll turn you to the passage. It says Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree. And a man who was hung on a tree was seen to be a curse of God.

And so whereas the Romans saw one whom they regarded as a criminal on a cross the Hebrews saw one who inasmuch as he was hung on a tree according to the book of Deuteronomy was a curse of God and therefore is a much awesome thing a much more shameful thing to the Hebrews than to the Romans. And these men were hung on trees. And it pictures the fact that Jesus was hung on a tree who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.

Now I want to turn you to Deuteronomy 21 where this passage is referred to. Deuteronomy chapter 21 So that Jesus said to be hung on a tree is based entirely on these two verses. And the Hebrews took it very seriously.

And if a man hath committed a sin worthy of death and he be put to death and thou hang him on the tree his body shall not remain all night upon the tree but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day. For he that is hanged is a curse of God that thy land be not defiled which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. Now it says there if there is a criminal put to death and you hang him on a tree presumably as a warning to others there his body hangs dangling from the tree.

And these seven men were hung on seven trees. And if you do that as a warning to others his body is not to remain all night upon the tree. It's right to hang that body on the tree.

It's a warning. But that hanging on the tree means according to the law of Moses that that man, that criminal is a curse to God. But in hanging him on the tree that curse has been pronounced of God and has been finished.

Don't let that body remain on the tree beyond the day. That crime needs to be exposed. It needs to be seen as being under the curse of God.

But that expose is enough. And by the going down of the sun you must bring down that body and give that body a decent burial. And it's over.

Now this is lies back of something very interesting in this passage. But first of all let us see how it applies to Jesus. Will you turn to 1 Peter 2, 24.

There are sins in his own body on the tree. Just those phrases. Who? His own self.

There are sins in his body on the tree. Now literally and the revised I think helps us one of the revisions does it is this way who his own self carried up our sins in his own body to the tree. Our sins needed to be exposed to the curse of God to be shown what they were.

That's right. That's proper. And that's what Jesus did.

He carried up our sins to that tree as a symbolic act of showing that our sins were under the curse. But the beautiful thing is this. It says who his own self did it.

It wasn't some angelic garbage man that took this foul mess to the garbage pile and had it exposed to the curse of God. It might well have been given this distasteful task to someone less than the son of God who carried up our sins, his own self to the tree. And then it says he didn't only do it as something outside of himself but who his own self who his own self in his own body carried up our sins to the tree.

He allowed himself to be made an effigy of this thing that God is nothing but judgment. And he became an effigy of this thing and he carried up his own self in his own body our sins to that place. And he was made a curse for us that you might never bear that curse.

Thou hast fulfilled the law and we are justified so to him. Ours is the blessing thine the curse. We live for thou hast done.

It touches me, his own self. And there our sins were given their due exposure to the curse of God. That curse had been fulfilled therefore he had to be brought down.

And that's why the Jews were so concerned that he should be brought down. They knew the Lord of Moses although they were doing a dastardly deed they were scrupulous still about the minutiae of the Lord of Moses. And they were concerned that his body should not be on the tree beyond the setting of the sun.

And it was convenient that Joseph of Arimathea. And this has a great deal of meaning for us when it comes to this matter of revival. Now you would have thought that if they had repented, if David and the nation repented of that for which God sent the famine and they had carried out this solemn act of restitution and the gibbonites were satisfied that that would have been the end of the matter and the rains would have begun to come again.

But they didn't. Day after day those bodies swung from the trees and the mother of one of the boys whose body was there took a rug and she sat on the rock to protect those bodies from the vovs. She was all the time protecting them, protecting them, poor thing.

And it went on and on. And the rains and David knew that there were things still not right. And when he heard the pathetic story of that mother protecting the bodies from the vovs and the birds of prey, he realized what he failed to do.

He had not obeyed the law of men. What had been done after the first... He realized what he failed to do. He had not obeyed.

Now, what does this mean to us? It's not enough. Even to go to that other person and say, brother, I want you to forgive me. And have it dangling over your head.

That sounds very humble. Never to forget it. Always to be chastening yourself.

But that's not revival. You've got to see it. I've got to see that that exposure that was accomplished in Jesus, that exposure of my sins that happened in Jesus at Calvary, and I've got to believe the same.

And I've got to... It's already had its curse. There's no need for it to dangle there any longer. And it's only when that takes place and experience when you come out of by that failure, when you dare to believe that Jesus did it all, it was a finished at then, joy comes and peace.

And when the Lord sees that it caused the famine and rejoicing in His forgiveness, that then, He'll tell you revival isn't merely the saints being broken or the saints repenting. Oh, they've been honest about it. Oh yes, they've taken humbling steps as the Spirit has shown them a relationship which wasn't right, a thing that wasn't straight.

Because even after you've asked another to forgive you, you can still be taking a stick to yourself. And you still haven't got a testimony. You daren't really give it to the others.

You daren't say anything. You say if I really told the truth, what would people think? And we've not got through to that place. The old bodies are still dangling from their trees.

But in Jesus, they've been cut down, they have been. What's that lovely gospel hymn? Living He loved me, dying He saved me, buried He carried my sins far away. And it's when I come into the good of that, I begin to rejoice.

And then God is intrigued for the land and the blessing returns. I just want to backtrack a little bit. Pam is going to add something from her testimony in a moment.

But I want to backtrack on something about these things that have caused God to shut up Heaven, that there isn't any rest. Of some matter in which the believer has deliberately sinned and indulged and enjoyed in doing it. Well, there may be cases like that, which need confession and forgiveness intended.

It isn't quite as obvious that a person is getting on with their business, minding their own affairs, and they've got certain desires, certain ambitions, and to get those ambitions fulfilled they may not be illegitimate. He does something. He doesn't enjoy the doing of it, but it's that that he wants.

But in the process to get that he has to do a dirty tricky business. One's child's progress at school. I don't quite understand.

Every country has a different system. But there may be some, you'll have to see if this identifies this. Could there be that parents have to make certain declarations about certain things, and they're so anxious for the best for their children that a student is so anxious to get through that exam? That's the sort of thing I believe.

Although Saul did this, maybe he wasn't all that bloodthirsty. Didn't do it because he liked to have a nice day slaughtered, don't you know what? Not a bit. How easily I would say, I could have done something, so to speak, on the side.

I don't know whether I'm explaining myself very clearly, but I think you're getting it. You will understand when I tell you the story of publishing a book. And I had a book, a manuscript, that I didn't think that the publisher that I would have liked to have had it, would want it.

The greatest, they were the most important publishers, but I hadn't got the faith to offer it to them. And so I offered it to a minor publisher, and sent it to him, and didn't hear. It took them some time to read the manuscript.

But I was so anxious to get an opinion on this manuscript that I thought, well, I will show this manuscript to the other publisher. Now, in sending it in the first place to the smaller publisher, I'd said, now, I'm offering it to you, I'm not really seriously offering it anywhere else. And I virtually gave them what we call first refusal.

But because I was anxious to get an opinion, I did go to the friend of mine, who was the head of this larger publisher, for an opinion. And to my surprise, it was so well received that in a few days I received a letter accepting it and offering a contract with very favourable terms, more favourable than I had known before. But I'd already offered a first refusal to the other man.

But he hadn't answered three weeks, hadn't got a line. You can wait longer than that, I can assure you, to get a manuscript read. And here I was, a clear cut offer, but I'd already offered to a man, and I don't think he'd even registered.

And oh, I didn't want to regret that. Oh, I'd made up my mind I'd like to do that. And so I called that smaller publisher.

I said, have you read that manuscript yet? No, not yet. Well, I said, I've already had a very unexpected offer from the other. I'd really rather like to take it.

He said, this is no way to do this. Offer, put a more favourable one later on. In the realm of real estate in Britain, we call that gazumping, about to buy that property and then someone else.

He would have seen a wrong was done. And in any case, he gave me that word about one of the psalms. Psalm 8 is it? It talks about who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord.

And one of the qualifications is, he that swears to his own mad sword. Yes, it appeared to my own hurt. We may not get the point.

You see, it's these sort of things you might almost say done in ignorance, not really. Not because you said, now let me really have a chance to tell some lies and break some promises. Although, you can get away with it.

He whom thou now have regarded that woman as rather promiscuous, indulging that side of life without regard to right. But I realised that I had a first man, she was sure she could have a husband. And there was another man.

Each time she wanted only and all five had left. And he whom thou now have, he's somebody else's husband. And to get that bit of happiness, you have wronged another.

They were straight marriages, they were good takers. He played the game of fraud. Really should have brought those illustrations, those budders on the tree.

It came when he saw that the curse has power in the blood of Jesus. Would you be free from your sin? New life, revival for me and for others. The usual story, there's no part of God's word.

Now we're going to sing 46. Would you be free then from your burden of sin? There's power in the blood. We'll sing the first verse and the last one.

Would you be free from your burden of sin?

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