

(The Ark of the Covenant) 5. Entering Jerusalem

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the importance of allowing Jesus to influence our lives and challenge sin in our homes, and warns against shutting Him away in a back room.

Duration: 53:25

Scripture: Exodus 25:14, 2 Samuel 6:1-2, 2 Samuel 6:12, 2 Samuel 6:14, 2 Samuel 6:17, 1 Chronicles 15:13, Psalm 132:3-5

Topics: "Ark Of The Covenant"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how often Christians rely on worldly methods and strategies to promote their faith and achieve success. He emphasizes that these methods are often poor copies of what the world does and ultimately lead to non-results or even disaster. The speaker highlights the importance of seeking a more excellent way, which involves relying on God and His grace rather than human methods. He also emphasizes the significance of having a personal relationship with Jesus and constantly seeking His presence in our lives.

Transcript

We're going to consider the Ark of the Covenant brought by David to Jerusalem, which was the centre of the nation's life. This was the very first thing, almost, that David did when at last he was crowned king. He had such a burden that this Ark of the Covenant, symbol of the presence of Jehovah who had done so much for him, to be brought right into the centre of the nation's life.

He pitched a temporary tabernacle for it in Jerusalem. And we're going to read the story of how he brought it up. Yes, he had such a burden for this, that he vowed a vow, he says in Psalm 133.

Don't look at it for the moment. Saying, surely I will not come up to the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed. I will not give sleep to mine eyelids, or slumber to my eyes, until I find out a place for the Lord, and habitation for the God of Jacob.

So this is a very important part of our study, very important to David. It was the great burden of his heart. And we're going to read the story of how that Ark of the Covenant was indeed brought up into Jerusalem.

Will you turn to the second book of Samuel, chapter 6. Now this story is given us in two places. First in the book of Samuel, and then in the book of Chronicles. And to get the whole story you have to compound the two incidents.

So, opening it to Samuel, chapter 6, put your finger in 1 Chronicles, chapter 15. And we'll combine the two records. Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000.

And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Beale of Judah, to bring up from thence the Ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth between the cherubim. And they set the Ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, that was in Gibeah, and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was at Gibeah, accompanying the Ark of God.

And Ahio, Major Domer of the proceedings, went before the Ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of firwood, even on hearts, and psalteries, timbrels, cornets, and cymbals. There was special music for the occasion.

And when they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah, with the best intention in the world, put forth his hand to the Ark of God, and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error. And there he died, by the Ark of God.

And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah, and he called the name of the place Perez-Uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the Ark of the Lord come to me? So David would not remove the Ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David. But David carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite, who wasn't an Israelite at all.

And the Ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite, three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household. And it was told, King David saying, The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the Ark of God.

Keep your finger there, turn over to 1 Chronicles, chapter 15, verse 2. Then David said, None ought to carry the Ark of God but the Levites. For them hath the Lord chosen to carry the Ark of God and to minister unto him forever. And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the Lord unto his place which he had prepared for it.

And David assembled the children of Aaron, the Levites, verse 12, and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites. Sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the new order.

So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bear the Ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord. Back to the second book of Samuel, chapter 6, verse 13.

And it was so that when they that bear the Ark of the Lord had gone six places, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings. And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was girded with a linen ephod.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord by shouting and with the trumpet, the sound of the trumpet. And as the Ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michael, Saul's daughter,

looked through a window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord and she despised him in her heart. And they brought in the Ark of the Lord and set it in his place in the midst of a tabernacle that David had pitched for it.

And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. Now the special interest in this story is that there were two attempts to bring up the Ark of the Lord into Jerusalem. The first one was aborted and ended in disaster.

The second was crowned with success. And both of these attempts emanated strangely from two different homes, which we shall see is very significant and has a special application for ourselves. Now before we look at this particular incident, just a look at the prior incidents that we might get the picture.

The incidents that immediately preceded this. Yesterday, we heard the Lords of the Philistines saying, send away the Ark of the God of Israel. It was too hot to hold.

It spelt death wherever it was when it was among the Philistines. And they decided they would send it back in this way. They would have a special new cart built, beautiful cart, very shiny, everything just fine.

And they hitched to the new cart a cow, which had newly had calves. Now naturally that cow, if left to itself, would return to its calves. But they said we will leave it to itself.

And if it should happen that it doesn't return to its calves, but does the unnatural thing and goes on its way back to Israel, then we'll know that the severe troubles we've had, were from the hand of the Lord. If however she acts differently, then we will know it was only a chance that happened to us. And sure enough, I believe there was more than one cow, or two, I don't know.

Those cows went on their way, away from their calves, back to Israel to a place called Beth Shemesh. And so they knew that the Lord himself had been amongst them. And so all unsought, the Israelites suddenly saw the ark coming back to them again.

And it entered Israel's territory at a place called Beth Shemesh. And there's a very interesting incident, a terrible incident recorded there. The men of Beth Shemesh took down the ark from off the cart.

And do you know what they did? They lifted the mercy seat to look inside. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh. Lifting the mercy seat to look inside! That mercy seat was that which covered the law, which so often and so grievously they had broken.

And all they saw was the law which they'd broken. And you know, death came to those men who looked, even the whole area. And can you believe it? We have to take these numbers literally.

In the Old Testament, no less than 50,000 people died in that area. Because they presumed to lift the mercy seat and look inside the ark. They didn't realize the only thing that covered that law that they'd broken.

And permitted God himself to dwell among them was the blood-sprinkled mercy seat. When they lifted it, death came to them. The lesson for us is simply this, it is doom and death.

Ever to set aside the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to seek to come to God, other than by repentance and faith, in the mercy seat, in Jesus and his blood. And there is a tendency so to set aside the blood of Jesus Christ. And not only among liberal theologians, even amongst Bible-believing people,

we seem to have lost the sight of the meaning and the utter necessity of the blood of the Son of God.

For that mercy seat is the only thing that covers the law of God that we've all so broken it. And to seek to set it aside and come some other way is to court doom and disaster. Only the mercy seat makes God accessible to men.

And there's going to be doom and death for many who seek to dispense with the mercy seat. You and I know how little we owe every day that the law is covered by the mercy seat. We would all be but dead men.

Certainly we would have forfeited the blessings we've had long since. But for the mercy seat that covers the law of God for us. But for that one in heaven who ever makes intercession for us by spreading his hands and showing his will.

And so, this was such a terrible thing that they thought we can't have the Ark just here in the fields. And so they took it into the house of a man called Abinadab. And he was to become the custodian of it.

And his son Eliezer was sanctified to be virtual priest to look after it. And that Ark of the Covenant remained for twenty long years all the reign of Saul on the periphery of the nation's life in a little house, the house of Abinadab. Very interesting to note the effect of the Ark of God upon that house.

Actually it had no effect at all. How different was the effect or non-effect in the house of Obed-Edom compared with the tremendous things that happened in that later house in which it was lost. There was no effect.

It is not recorded that the Lord blessed the house of Abinadab because of the Ark as is recorded of that later house. I can only infer that when the Ark came in well they didn't quite know what to do with it and I'm suggesting that they possibly put it in the back room and shut it away. I mean theirs was a busy home, they couldn't have the thing in the way.

And they had a back room that was empty and they put that Ark of the Covenant in that back room and could it be that they put dust sheets over it? And I believe I'm right in inferring that they didn't allow that Ark to interfere with their busy daily life. Well they knew a lot about the Ark, everyone knows something about it, they'd often seen it and they could give you a well I don't suppose they had tourists to see it but they could certainly expatiate on the Ark. But nonetheless it was not allowed I suggest to interfere with their lives and nothing good came to that house because although they'd received the Ark they'd shut it away and it wasn't permitted to challenge anything that went on in that home.

Now we, many of us, perhaps most of us are those who have received the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour and you can say you have, you belong to a Bible-believing church and you're involved with it and all the rest but it could well be said of some of us that we've not permitted the Lord Jesus whom we've received to have any real influence in our homes. The needs that have arisen in our family are not related to Him. We face them on our own and He is not permitted to challenge sin in our homes.

We behave largely as we like to one another and to anybody else that we're in touch with and we're never heard to repent. In Jeremiah 8, God says, I hearkened and heard and they spake not aright. No man repented himself saying, What have I done? We've virtually shut Jesus largely away in a back room making our profession, taking our place in our church but in practical matters.

He doesn't, isn't allowed to influence things. He's not allowed to scrutinize perhaps some of the things we read nor some of the programs we permit ourselves to look at. We argue, we behave this way and that way to the children and they to us and between man and wife terrible things can sometimes be said behind shut doors.

All we know all about the mercy seat may be. We can even be preachers, pastors. We know about the blood.

Sometimes I've heard people say, Our preacher, our pastor doesn't preach the blood. It isn't preaching the blood that matters, it's applying it. And we aren't doing it so often in the intimacy of our homes and things are not put right.

A dear girl told me last week how she's married into a family of people who know Jesus deeply. When she was engaged to her young, the man who's now her husband she went to stay with those who would have been mother and father-in-law. And she was astonished, never seen it before, just as she was to see mum and dad in tears at the breakfast table over their Bibles putting things right with one another.

It hadn't been of that sort in her home. And I think it hadn't been like that in the house of Abinadi. And with what result? Well first there was a negative result.

You can only say this by comparing it with the second home. It is not said concerning this house that the Lord blessed the house of Abinadi because of the ark. There was no new blessing.

Blessing in the Old Testament, of course, is always physical, material blessing. When the Lord is said to bless a man, it invariably means that his farm prospers and the calves ride or whatever they do. And there is a touch of prosperity about the place.

That's how it was in the other house because of the ark, but not this. There was no new touch of prosperity that came to that farm and that family. And when Jesus is not brought into the centre and shut away and not permitted to deal with things and challenge things in our homes there's no new blessing.

No great songs of joy. No one walks through the rooms and says, Praise the Lord, He's here with us. No, no, that's not said in our homes.

And those who come into our homes, we're not blessed. I know one home, and you know someone had been saved in every chair in the downstairs rooms of that home. This man was born there and that man was born here.

But not so in the house of Abinadab. No one gets help. People hardly come to seek help.

How different it could be. Not so in this house. The second result was almost more serious because it was from that unrevived home that there emanated that abortive attempt to bring back the Ark of God.

David had this concern in his heart, bless him. Who was he to consult more than the house of Abinadab they knew all about? The Ark. They were the ones to consult as to how it should be brought up to Jerusalem.

And of course they said, Oh, well, if that's it, we think we know. Now what do you think we suggest we do? Why, make a new cart and put it on it. They were really rather taken with this cart which they'd seen the Philistines use.

I mean, a cart's an extraordinarily wonderful invention. Who in the world was the first man to invent a wheel? I mean, the whole of civilization rests on that invention. And it was the early days.

And so they suggested this new cart and perhaps they helped build it, a beautiful cart, shiny with varnish, everything just fine. But we know how that first attempt was aborted. Everything was laid on.

King and principal people were there. Uzzah and Ahio were driving the cart, really in charge of things. And as it went over a rough place, the Ark shook.

And Uzzah, with good intentions, was fearful lest the Ark might tumble off. And so he put forth his hand to steady the Ark. And God smote him, and he died there and then beside the Ark.

And the whole project had to be called off. And what a lesson this has for us. How shall we bring the Ark of the Lord back into the Church? How shall it be blessed? How shall we get outreach? And someone thinks up a new cart.

Human methods. And I believe this is the day of human methodology in the Church. It's begun in America long since.

America is the home of evangelical methodology. I love America. And I want to tell you, there are many of my dearest friends who see something deeper than mere methods.

But we've taken them on. And we don't need to take them on from somewhere else. We're capable of dreaming up our own schemes.

For outreach. For spiritual success. For getting the old chariot moving along.

For getting people in. But you know, it's all human methods. Maybe human methods for even living a Christian life.

How to have a quiet time. How to witness. And so on.

God is gracious and uses these things. But they're less than the highest. And so often, the methods that even God's people use are copied, as was this one from the Philistines, from the world.

We know how they do things. They know how they promote things. The obvious thing is that we must do the same.

And some of them are little more than rather poor copies of what the world does. We're all involved. I'm sure I've done it in one way or another.

Not seeing that there is a more excellent way. And they invariably end in disaster. Or at least in non-result.

And we find the scheme that we've got involved in begins to wobble. And we have to put forth our hand to hold it up. You see, don't you see, what is of us has to be through us.

And if successful, it is for us. Very gratifying. The opposite is this of him.

And through him. And for him are all things. End of one of the chapters in Romans.

But so often it's of us. And what begins with us, what we've initiated, we've got to carry through and things aren't always easy. And we have to run to stop God from falling down.

We've got to hold the Ark of God. He ought to be holding us, as we heard the other night. Instead of which, we are pathetically trying to hold him.

And such attitudes, I can't tell you now how they can express itself, what it means in practice. But Joan Hart will remind you of how it is. Such attitudes are positive blasphemy.

And the blight of God cannot rest on them ultimately. Though in his mercy he does permit some measure of blessing to come by them. But they are a long way short of the blessed, the best.

John and Muriel, Pam and I were together on a parish retreat. And John gave a message there in the heat of his heart. About, of his experience of the new castes.

Maybe you don't think John can speak in the heat of his heart. He can. And it was a great utterance.

And he detailed to that parish all the things he tried in his parish. Quite innocent things. But they were new castes.

You have to ask John. He'll detail them, all the things they tried. Suppers and men's dues and all sorts of things.

All sorts of things to bring the ark back and get things moving. And how none of them succeeded. All had to be utterly abandoned.

And they had to embark on God's more excellent way. About which we'll speak in a moment. And so the whole affair, the whole thing had to be called on.

And David was afraid of the Lord. How shall I bring the ark home to me? We hardly dare touch it. Wherever it goes it seems to spell death.

This that I longed for has come to nothing. And so he had the ark carried into the nearest house by the highway. And it was the house of a man called Obededim.

And the story of the ark and the house of Obededim is a most interesting one. Please turn the cassette over now. Do not fast wind it in either direction.

This is the continuation from side one. And the story of the ark and the house of Obededim is a most interesting one. We have to use a little imagination.

I hope you think I'm not going beyond proper bounds. Now Obededim was a Gittite. And the Gittites was that band of loyal men whom David brought back from the Philistines when he'd been in exile there.

Philistines, or a Philistine extraction that they were, their hearts were united to David. And the Gittites became his bodyguard. But they weren't Jews.

And I don't suppose they were well instructed in the worship of Jehovah. So Obededim suddenly finds coming up the garden path men carrying this ark. He says, David says you've got to bring this and put it in your house.

He said, what is it? They looked at it, it's all gold and those cherubims and that mercy seat. They said it's the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth. And David says it's got to be in your house.

He didn't welcome the prospect. The Lord of all the ark, earth, and his ark had to be in my house? And I think they put that ark in the sitting room. Right in the middle, and the family circled it.

And when they heard a man had died on the highway because of it, they didn't know what to make of it. And they had to go on living with this ark in the middle of their home. He said I must know something about this ark.

So he called for one of the Levites to explain. Who is it inside? There are the ten commandments. One of those, said Obed-Edom.

And then he began to recite them. Thou shalt, thou shalt not. Thou shalt, thou shalt not.

And you know I like to think that a deep unease, we would call it conviction of sin, settled on Obed-Edom and his wife and the children. He'd been far from blameless. Some of those commandments he'd very definitely done.

And she, she felt so at ease. You know she'd had other men in her life possibly. And there it was, thou shalt not commit.

Adalbert, he knew nothing of it. And as I say, he hadn't been blamed as either. And the youngsters, they didn't feel very easy when they heard that word thou shalt not steal.

They said we've got to live with that in the midst. Wait a minute, wait a minute, don't you see the top? Well, what's that? We call that the mercy seat. And what's that? Well, don't you see those, can you see those bloodstains? Yes.

Well, we sprinkle that once a year with atoning blood. And that makes it bearable. Indeed, it means, and it could mean, tremendous peace for you.

For although you have infringed the divine law, there is mercy for those who acknowledge it because of the blood that's sprinkled there. And then they left them. Am I imagining it a bit when suddenly Herbert Eden's wife knelt down before that ark and began to weep? And out it all came? It wasn't the law that made her repent.

It was the fact that there was mercy for lawbreakers. Ah, there was hope. This Jehovah wasn't merely a God of judgment.

He was supremely a God of grace shown by the blood upon the mercy seat. And then he too came out with things that had to be put right with him. And he was on his knees and the children were on their knees.

And as they lifted their eyes and looked at those bloodstains and remembered what the Levite had told them, a sort of strange holy peace seemed to possess their souls. Did you know they began to feel happier than they'd ever felt in their lives? And somehow they were quite content to relive with the Ark of the Covenant in the middle of their sitting room. And what an influence it did have.

There were times when he could shout to the other members of the family but he found he had to shout to cross the mercy seat and somehow he couldn't quite do it. And he was stopped in his tracks. And a strange spirit possessed them.

They were all the time not accusing one another as it had been. They were all the time asking one another to forgive them. This was something quite new because of that sweet, precious, gracious mercy seat in the middle.

Well that's a little bit of imagination but after all something must have happened. What was it like for that house to remain for three months, that's all, in the house of Obedidu? And more than that, they discovered there was a new prosperity on the farm. Things went right, splendid crops, not every farm had the crops that they had and the cattle, everything just sweet.

There was a divine hand on all their affairs and it was quite a household. And you know, 68 members of that extensive household were so deeply affected in their relationship to the God of Israel, Gittites that they were, that when ultimately that ark was brought into Jerusalem they were permitted to be doorkeepers around the ark. They weren't Bavarians, but they had a testimony.

What, what blessing! And the Lord blessed the house of Obedidu because of the ark. Well, do we need to apply it when we bring Jesus into the centre? When we permit Him to challenge self and sin and our attitudes. And when we see the blood, the mercy seat for all that's wrong and know there's peace and cleansing and victory for everything we call sin.

Oh, what a wonderful change. There's love in the home. Instead of accusing, we're asking one another to forgive us, asking God to do so.

Many a time we're found kneeling before the mercy seat, receiving grace to help in time of need. Things that are difficult, that happen circumstantially to us as a family are immediately related to that one who's now in the centre. He's the one who's in control.

We don't seek to explain them away by some other cause. It's the Lord in the midst. It's a wonderful thing.

I thank God I'm blessed with a wife who beats me invariably to the cross. She gets there first. Some say she's begun to repent before I've known there's anything wrong.

And it isn't very long before I'm joining her there. And the blessing of the Lord is upon the home. Just peace, just love.

Not because things don't never go wrong. Oh yes, we're human. They do sometimes.

But because the Lord has shown us there's the mercy seat for what goes wrong. And that sight of Jesus in the midst available to us helps us, provokes us to come down to that cross. And it matters not how deep and grievous those things are.

Maybe some of the things have been hidden away in the past. You've never told your wife about that. A brother last week gave his testimony.

He was a salesman. And he told us about the sexual pressures on salesmen. And how in a certain matter he'd given in.

And how the mercy seat had been none the less there. And grace had reached him. And cleansed him and restored him.

And he agreed with the brother who was counselling him. Dear Jeff Jones, yes of course I've got to put this right with my wife. There they were.

Mutually forgiven one another in our conference. Happy and praising the children. Blessed.

And a man went up to him afterwards. He said, I too am a salesman. And I too have something to share with my wife.

This may be grievous. What I want to tell you. Such is the mighty efficacy of the blood of Jesus.

Whatever has gone wrong. Jesus is an adept at restoring things. And the blood's enough to put you right with God.

This is where Jesus is at his best. When things are in a mess. It may be the day-to-day rubber.

It may be bad things such as I've mentioned. Or it may be all sorts of hidden attitudes, phobias and fears and inferiority, conflicts with one another. Sometimes you please jealousy of one another.

You can be jealous of the other person's spirituality. There was a deep time in my life with my first wife, Rebel, when I became jealous of her. It was the biggest thing that ever came between us.

I thought I was going to have a nervous breakdown. But it was very simple. Because I didn't truly repent.

I was out in India when this thing came to a head. And she was in England. I had had phone calls from India to try and get it right.

And we couldn't get it right. And the problem was I said, I know I'm not right. But she's wrong.

And I never got anywhere until there was only one sinner in the situation. That was me. And such was the mighty power of the blood of Jesus, the mercy seed.

That we were reunited in a deeper way than never before. This is characteristic of our Jesus. This is revival in the home.

Jesus brought into the center. Allowed to scrutinize everything. Permitted to put things right where they're wrong.

Attitudes to the children. It's a wonderful thing when mercy and grace reaches the children too. And sometimes I've known some homes where the children beat the parents to the cross.

And what's the result? The Lord blessed that house. Only three months. But the results were quite phenomenal.

And the Lord's going to bless our homes. Because of the art. Because of the mercy seed.

Because of Jesus brought into the center. Blessings abound where He reigns. The prisoner leaps to loose his chains.

The weary find eternal rest and all the sons of want are blessed. And right in the middle is the mercy seed. And those dear ones in that home have constant recourse to it.

They haven't grown wings. They're just like anybody else. But they don't know what to do with sin.

They want to know where to go when things aren't quite right. When harmony is disturbed. And love and blessing is restored.

You walk around the house and every room seems full of Jesus. That's how it should be. Revival in the house.

A bit of Dad's home is a picture of an unrevived home. And after that unrevived home came that abortive attempt. And talking about that, you see very often you have these wonderful schemes of the committees set up.

And it could be that nearly everybody in that house, in that committee, has a home like a Benedict's. They haven't got a testimony. Nothing much is happening at home.

They're just busy Christian workers. They might be even neglecting their home because of their busyness. Little wonder when they get going they only produce a new cart.

Very much like the world's new carts. But not so in this case. Do you know, I'm sure I'm right in interpreting, that the successful, ultimate restoration of the Ark of Jerusalem, it emanated from that home because we read, and it was told King David, the Lord has blessed the house of Obadiah because of the Ark.

Really, he said? As far as I know that Ark's only spelled death. Well it hasn't in this case. For three months they had the time of their lives.

Everything is just blossoming there. And am I right when I suggest that David went down to the whole house of Obadiah, and he said, Obadiah, give me your testimony. And I think Obadiah, his wife, gave them their testimony.

Oh, it encouraged David. So it isn't all death. There is blessing.

This is Jehovah, that's the Jehovah I've always known. Why in the world did that first attempt go wrong? And he went back to the scriptures. And there he found it.

Moses had laid it down that the Ark was to be carried on those staves, on the shoulders only of the Levites, his select godly tribe. Not on new carts. So he called them all together.

He said, boys, I know I've seen what we did wrong. We used a wretched new cart of man's devising. We didn't seek him after the due order, as was commanded in scripture.

Therefore he made a breach upon us. Now you priests and Levites, sanctify yourselves. Get yourselves ready.

Have a good wash up. Get ready. Because you're going to do what God told us.

We're going to put those staves, well in fact they're there already in the Ark. And you're going to bow your shoulders and heads under the load. And you're going to go and bring the Ark up.

So you have this second attempt to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem. Well, David was there. A few people with drums.

They knew now where they'd gone wrong. So they got the Ark on the shoulders of the Levites. You ready? Yes? All right.

Off we go. Stop, said David. They'd gone six spaces.

Stop! Stop. Anybody dead? Everybody feeling okay? Yes? All right. Let's have some sacrifices.

I think it's inferred that nearly every few spaces they said, Stop! How are you feeling? Fine, they said. Just praising. All right.

Let's have another sacrifice. And thus it was with lots of song and praising. And David dancing before the Lord with all his might.

I tell you, that's a big thing. King. His wife just couldn't take the sight of it.

And you know sometimes when the husband's getting exuberant for the Lord, the wives cringe. They say, What were they thinking? And sometimes it's the other way around. Beware lest you despise those that rejoice in the Lord.

They've got good cause for it. Here was the longing of David's heart. And so they went up, up, up.

They were climbing the steep hill of Zion, because that was quite a heavy ark, you know, not only gold and all the rest, but those big tables of the stone, and that mercy seat was solid gold. And I can see the men with their heads and their necks under the load as they walked step by step in God's appointed way up to Jerusalem. And they put it in the tent, the tabernacle, that David had prepared for him.

Well, what does all this mean for us? God's way of bringing the ark back isn't through wonderful new methods and schemes. But he has brought back into the centre of our churches and into the district only through the personal experience of those who have experienced his power. Only the leaver.

And they, bending their necks, under, before the Lord Jesus, not trying to get results, but content to bow their head at Calvary and gratefully to see the blood upon the mercy seat, doing so in fellowship with others, and bringing Jesus more and more into the centre of things. That's the thing. Oh, that in every church there was a company of such people.

That's the secret. It may not bring quick results outwardly, but that company can be added to. They've got a testimony.

They've experienced the real thing. What's the use of trying to give to others an answer which we haven't proved adequate in our own lives? But this group have. They've found there's power in the blood.

They know what's happening in their homes. They know what's happening in their lives. They've got to test them in it again.

They're knowing how to bow before the mercy seat and find release and blessing. You know, as they went on and found all went well, David said, we've got it at last. We've got the answer.

We know the way. And revival, which begins in the home and is carried over to other people and a growing number of people learning the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, seeing the cross, bowing their heads there as He bowed theirs, letting Him take over, letting Him be to them all what they need. That's real revival.

See, revival's got to begin somewhere. Why shouldn't it begin with you? You want the whole church suddenly to move into a new place. It doesn't work that way.

It begins with one man, and then with two, and then three, husband and wife, and their testimony, while others come and say, well, how's it with you? Oh, this is what happened. My, we need the same in our home. And the pastor says, what's been happening to you folks? He says, well, I need the same in my home too.

Not much difference between pastor and people when it comes to this level of things. And Jesus is the answer. Grace abounding to the chief of sinners is the answer.

And thus it is, He's brought right into the center. And so, as I understand it, the meaning of this, these passages, with my own little imaginations, which I trust you don't think have been excessive, have been permissible. Revival, or if you like the more fashionable word, renewal, though I like the old word revival.

Revival in the church begins in the home. What's the use of a revived church which hasn't sprung out of revived homes? And if between you and wife and your young people, you've found a way, you've got the testimony, and you haven't always been married, you may be single, living with some other friend. There, you can breathe with that testimony to the others.

There's the answer. It works. It works out.

If only there's one place where revival really works, that's enough. And people will make a road to your door to get the answer. I'm amazed as I go up and down and I see homes like that.

What a blessing He's made that home. It's costly to be available to others in your home. And we must be willing for that more costly thing to share perhaps the deepest things with others who come to us in order that they too should be encouraged to find Jesus too.

And revival in the home is simply allowing Jesus right into the central place. I cherish my heart with this as much as yours. I don't speak as one who's attained.

Pam and I know we have further to go. And perhaps we've got to tell ourselves that's where it's going to be. Revival in outward ministry begins in the home.

But we do praise the Lord what He has done. And how together the Word lives. We don't... We aren't under law.

Sometimes the program of the day is such we have that time. Comparatively short together. Prayer and the Word and away we go.

But there are other times when we're tarry and able to. My goodness. How beautiful.

How it lives. What insights we get. How full our hearts are.

No, we're all learners here. But that's it. Are you prepared to bring Jesus into the centre of your home at whatever cost? Are you willing to put His finger on anything? Are you open for Him to show you it isn't the other one who's wrong? They may be wrong but that's not your business.

Something wrong in you, your attitude. Very often our wrong is our reaction to their wrong. And the Lord says don't confess their wrong.

Just confess your wrong reaction to their wrong. Leave them with me. You get right.

And as I said, the first one to the cross does more to help the other one come to the cross than all the talk and accusations in the world. At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light and the burden from my heart rolled away it was there by faith I received my sight. And now I'm happy all the day.

Until the next time. Alright? No problem. You know what to do the next time.

And so revival, as someone has said, is a series of new beginnings and beginning in the home. I tell you it's not going to stop in the home. It's going to spill over.

And Jesus is going to come into the centre of a yet wider group and one last thing. This bringing of the ark into the tabernacle which David had temporarily pitched for it in Jerusalem was but the prelude to its final resting place. Under Solomon that gorgeous temple was built which was really the tabernacle but on a much vaster extent.

And eventually when it was completed it wasn't to have had any meaning until the priests took up the ark from the temporary tabernacle and brought it into the Holy of Holies in the temple. And after they got out of the way just in time the glory of the Lord filled the temple the Shekinah blazing glory miraculous that those priests couldn't stand even to minister. And I believe that speaks of the time when Jesus will come when the millennium will be established that thousand years literally a thousand or perhaps just a great elongated period when Jesus shall reign where all the sun doth his successive journeys run.

Meantime it's the tabernacle he's a pilgrim saviour for a pilgrim people but not always so. That day is coming and we're going to share it. And we shall reign with him there when I believe literally Jerusalem will be the seat of divine government for the earth and we shall see the earth filled with the glory of the Lord that the Shekinah as the waters cover the sea to quote scripture in Isaiah.

So that's coming but we don't have to wait till then right now. We can know something Jesus in the centre and the ark in the centre of our church is more and more affecting a wider and wider circle that beginning in the heaven. Let us pray.

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