

# Gospel Meetings s.h.c.- 12 Except

by Stan Ford

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance, regeneration, and abiding in Christ for salvation and a new life in Christ.*

**Duration:** 42:32

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:6, Matthew 6:33, Luke 13:3, John 3:3, John 15:4, Acts 2:38, Romans 6:23

**Topics:** "Personal Transformation", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

In this sermon, Christmas Evans tells a story about a man who was once chained and broken, but through the power of God, he was transformed and became a new person. The man's wife and children are initially afraid when they see him approaching their home, but they soon realize that he has been changed for the better. Christmas Evans emphasizes that the Lord has the power to change and transform anyone who is willing to accept Him. He urges the listeners to make a decision to follow Jesus and references three Bible verses that he believes can lead people to that decision.

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## Transcript

Again, thank you for coming on Friday. You know, they told me that Friday was Grocery Night, and so there wouldn't be many here, but you've come. Thank you very much indeed.

Appreciate it. I'm not sure what time it is, but we had a rather interesting interview on that radio program. What station did you say it was? Yes, well, what he said.

And I'm not quite sure what time. I think it's being played back tomorrow afternoon sometime. And you might be able to get some of your friends to listen.

I enjoyed it anyway, and that's half way, isn't it, when the preacher enjoys his own preaching. As a matter of fact, I nearly got myself converted, so there we are. So, tomorrow afternoon.

Have valued your presence, and have valued your prayers. You know, I'm just beginning to feel a wee bit tired, but we've only got another month, and so I'll be home then. And we'll value your prayers for the next day.

I want to read, if I may please, just a few verses from the Gospel of Luke, the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. And then I would like to take you, if I may, into a few verses in the Gospel of John. But first, the Gospel according to Luke, and chapter 13.

There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and flew them.

Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. John chapter 3, please. John chapter 3, verse 3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Nicodemus, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John chapter 15, please. And now you know, of course, what's on my heart, don't you? John chapter 15, please. Verse 4. Abide in me, and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.

No more can ye, except ye abide in me. Now may the Lord just add his blessing to these three portions of his word, and speak to our heart as we consider them in a moment. Dear Lord, we're not calling on thy name because it's just our custom to do it at this time.

But we're calling on thy name because we realize we need your help. Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it by word's help. And we've learned that in experience.

We've been told that if a pool should plant, or an apollo should water, thou alone can skimp the increase. And we've neither pool nor apollo with us tonight, but thou art here. So wilt thou, we pray thee, by thy Spirit, speak as thou didst in days that are past.

Just as man heard thy voice as thou didst move amongst them, may they hear thy voice tonight. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Those of you--and I presume it is most of the young men here who have ever had a desire to serve the Lord-- those of you who are familiar with Charles Haddon Spurgeon's lectures to his students will no doubt remember one story that he tells. He tells the story of a young man who was preaching an acceptance sermon. I know not if that's what they call them here in America, but that's what they call them in my country.

He was preaching an acceptance sermon in a little chapel away in the country. The old and dignified and very godly deacons were sitting in what we call the big seats. And they were listening to this young man preach with all his heart, that he might be invited, he was hoping, to take the charge of this chapel.

He chose for his text a very simple one. It was one word. And he chose the one word--a conjunction--he chose the one word out of the familiar story of Naaman the Leper.

And you know the conjunction that he chose to speak from. And for forty-five minutes he howled it forth on, but, but, but, he was a leper. After the first ten minutes he lost his congregation.

They were there, but half of them were half asleep. At the end of the sermon, he goes into the deacon's vestry to see these godly men. And the leading deacon looked at him and said, Young man, we thought you gave us a very good sermon on one word.

There's something we have to tell you, though. That having discussed your sermon and thought of you, we want to tell you it was a good sermon, but you're not the man for this place. With a fear that you might say something like that to me, not that, you know, not those words, but that afterwards you may come and be a little critical.

With that fear, I want to confess right at the beginning of the address tonight, I want to talk to you about one word. It's not a conjunction. It's not the word but, but it's just one word.

We read that word together on three occasions, and so you know what it is, don't you? I want to talk with you tonight about the one word, except. Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish. Except you're born again, you will not see the kingdom of God.

Except you abide in the void. Nope, nope. There are some things that are imperative.

It isn't indeed, please, that you can repent if you like. It isn't that you can be born again if you like. It isn't that you can abide in the vine if you like.

It is except you are born again, and except you abide in the vine, and except you repent, you'll never enter into the blessing of God. And so this evening, with your permission, I want to talk, I trust lovingly, and yet I trust firmly, about this one word. I want to talk about the except of repentance.

I want to talk about the except of regeneration. I want to speak about the except of relationship. First, the except of repentance.

The portion that we read together away in the 13th chapter of Luke is a striking portion, isn't it? The Lord Jesus reminds them of the story of the Tower of Siloam. He says, you know those people there. The tower fell on them, and eighteen of them were killed.

Now, were those people any worse sinners than the other people that live in that district? Were they? Was it because they were sinners that upon them the tower fell? There were other people just like them, and the tower never fell on them? Oh no, oh no, it's not, because they were just more vile than anyone else. I want you to understand this, that they needed to repent, and the people that weren't slain need to repent, and you need to repent, except you repent. You likewise will repent.

The tower may not fall on you. It may not happen to you as it happened to them, but oh, remember this, there is such a thing as life, and there is such a thing as perishing. And every one of us need to realize, and realize early in our experience, that there is one thing required of us, that we shall repent.

Now sir, if words mean anything, and by the way, please, please, I didn't say this. Don't you go on this service tonight saying Stan Ford said, please don't. I didn't say it.

All I'm doing is repeating the actual words of Jesus. He said, there are some things that I say that you have every right to say. Well, I don't think they're very important.

It was only Stan Ford who said them. But not one of us would talk like that about the Lord Jesus, would we? And we will not forget that the one who tells us that we must repent, or we will perish, is the one who in loving tones ministered to the needs of men and women wherever he went. Was there a person in need? There was a Savior who would draw near to that person and bless them.

Was there a person who needed a word of encouragement? There was a Savior who drew near with arms outstretched to encourage them. Whatever you will say of the Lord Jesus, there is not a man or a woman here, whoever you may be, who would think for one moment that he would use words like these unless they were true. If these words are not true, then the person who said them must be the ugliest person you and I can meet in his character to try and frighten someone about something that's not true.

You don't believe Jesus would do that, do you? I meet men and women who tell me, No, they're not saved. No, they've never asked Christ to come into their life. But when I ask them about the person of Christ, they say, I believe he was a wonderful man.

I believe he was a great moral teacher. I want to remind you, very simply, sir, that if Jesus used these words, unless you repent ye shall likewise perish, if Jesus used those words and they weren't true, then Jesus is not a moral teacher. Please don't shut up.

Please don't shut up. But if he used those words and they weren't true, he was a liar. And if he was a liar, he couldn't be God.

Because the Bible tells me there's one thing God can't do. He can't tell a lie. And if he wasn't God, there's no salvation for any one of us.

For one man can't die for the sins of millions. So you see, it's important for us to realize who said it. And then to consider what he said.

Except ye repent. Ye repent. You see, when we've said all we've got to say, the fact that we need to repent proves the Bible to be true when it says there's no difference, we've all sinned.

Now, I do not mean that men and women have sinned in the same way. Of course they have. I meet men and women who I look at them and they're lovely of character.

They're honorable. They are Corneliuses. Good folk.

And you will not forget of Cornelius, as I was pointing out on the radio the other day, of Cornelius that he said that such was his testimony, such was his character, such was his manner of life, that it rose to God. And God took notice of him. God blessed him because he lived a good, honest life.

But you won't forget how God blessed him. God blessed him by making sure someone took the gospel to him. That's how God's blessing is.

He's making sure that you know the way of salvation. For we all need to repent, don't we? To use the words of other beloved Christians, we've left undone the things we ought to have done, and we've done the things we ought not to have done, and there's no helping it. And repentance is simply turning our back on that which we know to be wrong that separates us from God, and turning our face to God to bring it down to things we can understand.

What would you think of me if, after this service, I came up to speak to you and then turned my back on you? You'd say, what a rude person. The very fact that I talk to you is the fact that I will come to you and face you. And never let us forget that we've got our back to God if we know not Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

And God says, I want you to repent, I want you to turn your face to me. Turn away from those things that have kept you from me. Turn to me.

Repent. And if we don't repent, if we don't turn to God, He says, likewise, you shall perish. He then gives us another except.

It is not the except of repentance, but when we have turned our back upon sin and faced the Lord Jesus, then there is the except of regeneration. To Mr. Nicodemus, you know I often say of him, if he was alive today, we would introduce him, would we not, as the right reverend Nicodemus, D.D., and all the rest of the letters after his name. What a fearful theologian he was.

What ability he had with words. How accepted he was by the other members of the Sanhedrin council. They had heard so many things about the Lord Jesus.

They'd heard that the Lord Jesus had healed the sick. They'd heard that the Lord Jesus had given sight to the blind. They'd heard the Lord Jesus had preached great sermons about God.

And they wanted to inquire more about him. And they got together and he was the appointed spokesman of the Sanhedrin council. For he came to the Lord and he said, we know that thou art a teacher come from God.

Not I know. We know. They'd talked it over.

They'd spoken about Jesus. They'd done what many of you folk have done. There may be a man and his wife here tonight.

Maybe a young couple here tonight. And you've gone home from some of the services and you've talked over some of the things that you've heard our brethren preach over the past months and years. You've talked it over.

That's what Nicodemus did with the members of the Sanhedrin council. And in the darkness of the night he came to see Jesus. I believe he came to see the Lord Jesus for the very simple reason that if he'd have gone during the daytime there would have been so many people around him he could not have had a quiet conversation.

I've heard all sorts of reasons given as to why he came at night. But I think the simplest one is always nearest the truth. You know, it's like that business of that woman at the well, isn't it? They say she came in the middle of the day because she was a wicked sinner.

You know, didn't want to mix with anyone. I don't believe that at all. What a nonsense that is.

I'll tell you why she came in the middle of the day. With her picture to the well, she came because she'd run out of water. That's why she came.

And I don't want to read into this story what's not there. He came, he came at night, and he came to speak with Jesus. If he'd have gone in the daytime he'd have had a job to have got near him.

Jesus was so busy. The Lord looked at Nicodemus and said, Nicodemus, except you're born again, you'll never see, you'll never enter the kingdom of God, except you're born again. And old Nicodemus' plan is really making it.

Many of us would have just listened and said to ourselves, I don't know what he's talking about. No more. And Nicodemus wanted to know.

He said, how can a man be born when he's old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? He's a fossil, I want the answer. And he wasn't too engaged, and he wasn't too knowledgeable to contest the fact that he didn't understand. One of the things I find, there are so many men and women who are not prepared to understand what they don't understand.

They imagine that if they say, I don't know what you mean, that other people are sick very well. Nicodemus didn't think that at all. He didn't understand any of it.

How can a man be born when he's old? Jesus, you remember, takes him right back. The member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leader and teacher, he said, you know the stories of Moses? Let me remind you of the things you know. Back he goes to the story of the wanderings in the wilderness.

The story of a people who, behind their deliverer, began to complain and grumble. No, no, no, no, no. Don't suppose you that.

Maybe not in that tone of voice, but they do it. You remember God has always looked upon complaints and grumbling of sin, sent amongst them the fiery serpent. You remember how some were strung and were perishing because of their sin, the result of their sin.

Moses spoke to God, and God told him to lift up that serpent out of all and tell the people to look, to look. Jesus said, Nicodemus, you know that, don't you? I'm not talking about something that's peculiar. I'm talking about something you know, you understand.

The people looked, and instead of perishing, they had a new life, they lived. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of Man. That's why I've come into this city.

That's why I'm here. That because of your sin, I've come to die on Calvary's cross, to be lifted up as a spectacle to men and angels. Sir, please! I'm not saying this because you haven't heard before, have I? What I'm reminding you of tonight is what Jesus reminded Nicodemus of, something he'd known ever since he was a child.

I suggest we live in a place of passion, and cherishing the way of salvation that you've never heard before, I tell it from daily living in my church. What I'm telling you tonight is what great deadly ages have been for, and told for. I'm reminding you of a God who loved you, of a Christ who came, that on Calvary's cross, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquity, might make a way back to God from the dark times of sin.

Nicodemus listened, and Jesus said, remember this, except you are born again. You'll never see! You'll never enter the kingdom of God! And so these two steps happen. The first step is the simple one, repentance.

The second step for you and me is the simple one. Not the step of repentance, but the step of regeneration. That we might come to Him, and take Him as our Savior.

The name of Christmas Evans would not be very familiar, of course, in America. Unless Mrs. Hunt is here. Is she here? I can't see her.

She'll tell you all about Christmas Evans. Christmas Evans was a great Welsh preacher. A great one-eyed Welsh preacher.

It is said that no one ever preached finer than Christmas Evans. He had a wonderful sermon. It's been translated into the English, because Christmas Evans was a Welsh preacher.

It's been translated into the English, and so many preachers quote him. May I quote him? He had a sermon on the demoniac, and he tells of the day when, amidst the tombs, with broken chains on his legs, he roamed, cutting himself with stones, and biting everyone else. One day Jesus came.

And this man, naked, bruised, terrifying to everyone else, this man came running to Jesus, and Jesus cast the demons over him. Suddenly we see this man sitting, and clothed. By the way, never let us forget, that's the first thing Jesus always does.

He clothes people. Say no more than that. I only know that we see him sitting and clothed in his right mind.

And then the man said to Jesus, Can I go with you? I'd like to travel with you. I'd like to be with you. And Jesus said, No, you go home and tell them what great things the Lord has done with you.

And I've had some passion on me. And then Christmas Evans tells the story, as only he can. He pictures this man going home, walking down the little track towards his house.

And as he's walking towards his house, his wife is looking out of the window. Suddenly she sees his head bobbing up and down behind the hedge. She says to the children, Quick, come in, come in, come in.

Lock the door. Yes, come in. Quick.

He's at home many a day with a floating chains on his arms and legs. She gathers her children and covers them with her. Run.

What's going to happen? And still she looks out of the window. And suddenly she says, But it's not that. He's got clothes on.

Oh, but it takes him, look. He's coming through the gap in the hedge like the way he always comes. Suddenly she pictures him as he stands at the door and knocking.

Mother, let me in. I've good news for you. I'll go no further.

But Christmas Evans paints the picture as only he could. A man once mad, but now hallelujah glad. He throws his arms around his wife and the children, half frightened, still holding on to her skirt, wondering what's going to happen.

She tells us of a man born again. Changed. All the world could do to that man was to chain him, says Christmas Evans.

But the Lord could change him. That's what he's willing to do for you and me tonight. Oh, Isaiah.

They restrained him. Christ removes it and takes him away from the tomb, back to his home. My friend, don't you tell me that it doesn't mean something to be born again.

To suddenly find yourself not only being the person who's asked Christ to save you and being assured of salvation, but being assured of regeneration, that you've got a new life. A new heart will I give thee. A new spirit put within thee.

I will take away the stony heart of thy flesh and give thee a heart of flesh. Oh, this is what one can't do. Except you're born again.

Do you remember that story I told you last time? Do you remember it? Comes to my mind again. Can I tell it again? The story of the man who always reads the newspaper the same way as Mary does, you know. Always starts in the same column.

Birth, death and marriage. There he was looking through, you remember I told you, he was looking through the birth, death and marriage column. Oh, that's very nice of him.

Little boy, oh very nice. Oh, little girl, well that's not bad. You know, the sort of comments you make.

And then he looked for marriage. Oh, about time too. Yes, there it is, you know.

And then he came to the death column. As he looked at it. We regret to announce the death of.

There was his name. Suddenly asked. And there was his address.

But he wasn't there. You know what you do. Ouchy went, bought another newspaper.

Opened it up. We regret to announce the death of. Suddenly asked.

And there was his name and address. Don't do that, newspaper. What, you would, wouldn't you? You'd let them know, wouldn't you? Bang on the table, I want to see someone.

After a while they brought down the assistant editor, who had been informed what had happened. And the assistant editor said, Sir, I'm very sorry, I don't know how it's happened. We printed it in good faith.

Actually, we have the notice from the funeral director. We're very sorry. But don't you worry, sir.

We'll put it right. Put it right? How are you going to put it right? We'll put your name in the birth column tomorrow night. Okay.

That's what Jesus does. That's what Jesus does. Dead in trespasses and sins.

But he'll write your name in the land book of life. Born again. Accept your born again.

And let you have your name written there. You'll never see or enter the kingdom of God. But if there is the accept of repentance, and if there is the accept of regeneration, never let us forget, there is the accept of relationship.

Accept ye, abide in the vine. Let me read the verse. Abide in me, says Jesus, and I in you.

As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, accept it, abide in the vine. No more can ye except ye abide in me. Isn't it wonderful that it isn't just a matter of having the path forgiven.

Hallelujah, the path can be forgiven. Isn't it wonderful that we can abide in Christ day by day. That it's possible to have a relationship that never, never, never.

Oh, I say. When nearly 40 years ago, I stood next to the girl that's my wife now, and I heard the good man said, say, wilt thou? Of course, I wilted straight away. Never let.

When he said, wilt thou? And I said, yes. I will. I will.

I was linked with a girl that I loved then, and I love her more now than I loved her then. I want to tell you something. Our marriage has been what it has been.

And to me, anyway, it's been good. And it's been what it's been, because we fellowship one another. One with another.

Mary doesn't do something unless she asks me. At least I don't think so. I hope I don't do something without asking her.

And again, I don't think so. But you know what I mean. We're fellowship.

What sort of life would it be? We're living in a day of broken marriage. We're living in a day of harlots. Much of that is caused because there is no link between a man and his wife when it comes to conversation.

The Lord says, if you abide in me and I in you, then you'll bring forth fruit. Then there's a relationship. Then there's a relationship.

Whether I expect this is true or you, isn't it, sir? Expect this is true or you. Your good lady would say so. I'm sure it's true of all of us that have been married a little while.

Somehow or the other, I might be true of you as well, sir. But I wonder if it is this, that as the years go by, it's remarkable, you don't need to ask your husband what he would think, or ask your wife what she thinks. You sort of get to know just what they think.

And again and again and again, I find this. I'm just going to say, Mary, shall we go? And she says, shall we go? We had it on our mind both together. There's a fellowship.

There's a union. Isn't it wonderful to walk with Christ? And, sir, please, that doesn't happen again. Now, I was married.

Someone asked me the other night, what was the date of our wedding? I'd forgotten. Isn't that awful? I'll have to write Mary home, ask what day I've got to send her a card. I know it's the end of October.

I mean, it's been so good all these years, I've forgotten. Got over that, didn't I? But nevertheless, the point is this, my friends, the point is this, that I married Mary 40 years ago, and she's no more my wife now than she was then. Oh, I've got to know more about her.

I took Jesus Christ as my Saviour 41 years ago. I want to say this to you. He's no more my Saviour today than He was then.

But I know more about Him. What I do. Oh, the wonder of it all.

Abiding in Him, and He abiding in me. That living contact with Him. Except He repents.

Except He regenerated. Except you have a relationship with Christ. You perish.

You'll never see you enter the Kingdom of God. You'll never bear fruit. Now, let me come towards the ground.

Let me ask you this. If Jesus said, except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish, may I ask you the question? Have you repented? Have you? Now, there's only one person who can answer that, and that's you. I can't answer it for you.

You can't answer it for me. But Jesus said it's a necessary thing. Unless you repent, are you prepared to take the consequences? You'll perish.

That's the consequences of not repenting. Don't let's water it down. That's what Jesus said.

Are you prepared for the consequences of not repenting? The second question I want to ask is simply this. Have you been regenerated? Have you been born again? If not, are you ready and prepared for the consequences that you'll never see the Kingdom of God and you'll never enter it? Not you might do one day, but you'll never. That's what the one who is truth says.

How about this matter of relationship? Are you prepared for the alternative? Are you prepared indeed for moral and spiritual bankruptcy and barrenness? Is there no fruit? Are you prepared for that? I don't think there's any one of us here tonight prepared to perish. I don't think there's any one of us here tonight prepared not to see you enter the Kingdom of God. And I'm persuaded there's none of us here tonight who are prepared for moral bankruptcy and spiritual barrenness.

Yes. Will you? Will you take Christ as your saint? Before him? Will you abide in him? And allow him to abide in you? The decision is yours. And I make this suggestion in quotes.

I make this suggestion in quotes that not one of us here tonight could honestly, sincerely read the three portions of the Word of God. Luke 13 and 3, John 3 and 3, John 15 and 4. None of us could read those three portions of the Word of God without coming to this conclusion that the Lord used those words to bring men and women to a decision. Please God, we'll make that decision and make it.

Shall we close with that? Dear Lord, thou seest each one of us performing. We haven't tried to preach tonight. We just tried to speak simply and clearly.

And each one of us will realize that these have not been the preacher's words. They've been the words of Jesus, the text. And we turn our eyes and hearts to thee and we say, Lord Jesus, we believe thou art true.

We don't believe you'd say that unless it was real. Give to each one of us the ability to answer it as you would have us answer it and to repent and to see Christ as our Savior and seek to crown him as our Lord. Grant that it may be so, for Jesus says, Amen.

Amen. Amen. I'm not going to ask you to sing a hymn, I just feel I ought to leave the service as it is, the decision's yours.

I think the words, while I've tried not to be too solemn, but I think the words are so solemn that none of us tonight can escape the consequence of not heartening to. And if tonight there's someone and you are willing to trust the Lord, you know I'm always in the front, I'd love to speak with you. There are others here that you know better than I. They've been your friends and your counselors for years.

Please, avail yourself of them. Sleepers, give us a chance tonight of introducing you to Jesus Christ. We wish you well as we wish you good night.

The Lord bless you.

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