

Discernment - Part 2

by Vance Havner

Vance Havner emphasizes the importance of recognizing both the finished work of Christ and our responsibility in His ongoing mission to spread the Gospel.

Duration: 46:02

Scripture: Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:1

Topics: "Discernment"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of a water wheel in an old mill to illustrate the importance of removing obstacles in order for the work of the Lord to flow smoothly. He emphasizes the need for personalizing the work and not allowing it to become impersonal or mechanical. The speaker also highlights the significance of being excited and passionate about the work of the Lord, comparing it to divine electricity. The sermon concludes with a story of a home missionary who breathed life into a seemingly dead meeting by sharing personal experiences of the impact of missionary work.

Transcript

The first verse of the Book of Acts is, of course, in the pen of Luke, saying the former treatise that I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach. I want you to think with me about the unfinished work of Christ. One of the old spirituals has a line in it, My Lord's a-workin' all the time.

He didn't come just to say something, he came to do something. He was a worker. My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

I must work the works of him that sent me, for the night cometh when no man can work. He came to finish a work, and he came to begin a work. There is a finished work of Christ, and there is an unfinished work of Christ.

He came to die for our sins and give his life a ransom for many, and when he died he said it's finished. Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, that just for the unjust that he might bring us unto God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. Years ago a teenager on a holiday, when the family was away and he had nothing else to do, got into the library and upset a basket of pamphlets, and selected one called The Finished Work of Christ, and read it a little later in a hayloft.

Later on he said this, There domed upon me the joyous conviction that since the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid on the cross, there was nothing for me to do but fall on my knees and accept the Savior and praise him forevermore. That was Hudson Taylor. A lot of dear people are trying to finish something that is already finished.

My Lord came to save his people from their sins, because that's what's the matter with us. We have overlooked that a great deal. We're trying to mop up the floor today and leave the faucet running, trying to sweep out the cobwebs and never touch the spider.

A very prominent English preacher got out a book in which he said that originally at the beginning of his coming to earth, our Lord did not have in mind to die on the cross. That he came to start a movement, and when that failed, he had to die. Quite a prominent preacher.

But when my Lord hung on the cross, the crowd said, Let him come down from the cross, and we'll believe him. And they would. They'd believe him today if he'd leave the cross out of it.

But we're not saved by how he walked in Galilee, we're saved by what he wrought on Golgotha. Our problem is sin. You'll never hear anything about that in Congress, not much, thank the Lord.

It's been mentioned lately by our President, and that's something that hasn't been heard in a long time. You'll not hear it in the U.N., you won't hear it in the universities, or you won't hear it in the scientific centers. Throughout the Old Testament, the prophets and the sacrifices pointed to the Savior's death.

God's Son became our sin. He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. You don't have to add anything to Calvary.

All our tears and prayers and good works and high resolves cannot supplement what was wrought out there. Could my tears forever flow? Could my zeal no languor know? These for sin could not atone. Thou must die, and thou alone.

Thou must save, and thou alone. Thou must come to die and to save, and thou alone. It's a finished work.

Once for all, O sinner, receive it. Once for all, O brother, believe it. Cling to the cross, the burden will fall.

Christ hath redeemed us once for all. But there's an unfinished work of Christ, and that's the greatest piece of unfinished business in history. He's still at it.

Sometimes the book of Acts is called the Acts of the Apostles, and sometimes it's been called the Acts of the Holy Spirit, and it's also the Acts of our Lord, a continuation, as the first verse would indicate, of what he started. You remember when he came to the old hometown, Nazareth, and preached, he said, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. Then he tells us what his work is, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. That's what he came to do. That's the unfinished work.

And then he makes it perfectly clear he came for the brokenhearted, the bound, the blind, and the bruised, and there are a lot of them. He's still at it. Then there came a day when John the Baptist, that rugged preacher, with his leather suit and his grasshopper salad, as Dr. R. G. Lee calls it, stood on the Jordan

and how that man could preach.

And then what a draw! In prison he sends a delegation to Jesus to ask, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Now, that was a tremendous coming down for John the Baptist. The very thing he had preached as an affirmation on the Jordan had become an interrogation in jail. It's one thing to stand on Jordan and give it, it's another thing to stay in jail and take it.

And he was having a little trouble with that. And I'm so glad that Jesus did not reprimand him, didn't send him a curt reply and say, I'm ashamed of you, what kind of forerunner are you to fold up like this? On the day that John the Baptist said the poorest thing he ever said about Jesus, Jesus said the best thing he ever said about John the Baptist. That's just like Jesus.

I'm so glad that he didn't send him a cute little tract on how to be happy in jail. He sent word back to tell John that I'm running on schedule. The blind are seeing, the deaf are hearing, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed, and the poor are having the gospel preached to them.

And then he added what I love to call the forgotten beatitude. We know all the others, but nobody ever seems to know this one. You know the ones in the Sermon on the Mount and the others, but this one escapes us somehow.

Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Do you know what that means? Jesus is saying, blessed is the man who doesn't get upset by the way I run my business. And sometimes we are, and sometimes we fuss a little with the Lord, and we resent it.

And old Jeremiah, even in the Old Testament, said, will you be unto me as a liar? That's an awful thing to say to God, and there's waters that fail. Jesus said, now you go tell him that I'm running on schedule. And blessed is the man who doesn't get upset at me.

My dear wife went on to glory three years and a half ago. She died on September the 2nd at 2.15 in the morning, and I preached at 11. I didn't know whether I could do it or not, and I couldn't have done it by myself.

But I preached about this, and they'd forgotten to be adequate. And I said, I don't understand it. I thought God was going to let her live through old age with me, and we could enjoy it together, and we had a wonderful schedule lined up for that year, and I don't know why.

But I'm not going to start fussing with the Lord about his business. I wonder if I speak to somebody here tonight that felt like sending a delegation to the Lord and said, Lord, haven't you got things mixed up a little bit about me? How come? But I've had the three and a half of the saddest years of my life. We had 33 years all over America together.

But I said, I'm not going to get upset. I've wept more than any other time in my life, but there's a difference between that sort of thing and getting all hot and bothered and upset about what God's doing. There are a great many people puzzled today about this unfinished work of the Lord, and they say, Lord, you sure are carrying it on in a strange way sometimes.

And he is, according to our little yardstick. I don't know what the Lord's up to half the time, and I'm glad I don't. I know one thing.

He's not out to save civilization. It's not going to be saved. I don't say civilization is going to the dogs.

I have too much respect for dogs. I wouldn't want to insult the canine kingdom with any such remark. I heard of a motel the other day.

It got out a sign. They hadn't been taking in dogs, but they said dogs will be welcome. They said we've changed their mind.

After all, no dog ever got drunk here. And no dog ever set the place on fire with a cigarette. No dog ever went out without paying his bill.

No dog ever stole our blankets. You heard about that woman the other day who said, I don't know what this world is coming through. Somebody got in our house and stole all my holiday inn blankets.

And so we're going to let dogs come. And then they had a little footnote for the general public. If you can get your dog to vouch for you, we'll let you come and stay here.

I tell you things in a bad way when you have to get your dog to vouch for you. But God's doing what he meant to do from the beginning. He's taking other people.

Now, there's the twofold character of this work. He came, it says, to do and to teach. He came first to do.

Some people teach and don't do. They talk and walk and don't agree. Their feet never catch up with their tongues.

Dr. Dale said Jesus didn't come to preach the gospel. He came that there might be a gospel to preach. And that's right.

But we must deal first with what he did on the cross and then learn what he has to teach. And he told us what he has to offer in that precious verse coming to me. Oh, you're either laboring or heavy laden.

I'll give you rest. And then in the very next verse it says, take my yoke on you and learn of me and you'll find it. Well, I thought he was going to give it to us.

What does this mean? Well, it's an obtainment and it's an attainment. We get it in him, but we have to go to school and learn it. Both sides.

Obtainment, attainment. Then he gave us two commissions. Preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16, 15. Christ died and rose. That's the finished work.

That's what he did. And then make disciples. Matthew 28, 19, 20.

That's his unfinished work. He taught us to do something. I have, over the country, I have used the great commission.

I've tried out my crowd on it. I won't do that tonight. But I read it and left out on purpose two words.

And then I've asked, who knows what words are left out? And generally only about a half dozen people in the crowd know they left them out. They either weren't listening or their minds were absorbed in something else. And those two words are teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you.

Now, he didn't send them out just to disseminate information, teaching them all things whatsoever I've commanded you. We do that, too. But we're supposed to teach people to do it.

And you haven't learned it if you haven't learned to do it. And you haven't told it to anybody if you haven't taught them to do it. A lot of Bible teaching today is like swimming lessons on dry land.

You never learn how to swim on dry land. You've got to make the plunge. Thy word is a light to my path, and that light is not to look at but to walk in, if we walk in the light.

There's such a thing as being blinded by an excess of light. Over across the sea and many lands, they're blind because they haven't had the light. And over here, plenty of people are blind because they've had too much.

Blinded by too much light. They've heard so many sermons and they've done nothing about it until sort of a paralysis sets in. Old John McNeill, the Scottish preacher, used to say that when Jesus sent that blind man to the pool of Siloam to wash off that mud that my Lord had put on his eyes, he said, I, but so many people have heard it and they've had the mud applied and the mud applied and the mud applied and have never gone to Siloam, and the mud has caked and hardened.

And they're in worse condition than they ever were. I think it's a dangerous thing to go to church. There's one thing worse than not going to church, and that's going to church and not doing anything about what you hear.

Because James says, if you hear it and don't do it, and I never hear anybody quote all that verse. Everybody says, now, the Bible says, be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, period. That's not where the period is.

Deceiving your own selves. Now, you may think that I can go to church and do as I please about this thing, take it or leave it. No, no, you can't go out of there tonight like you came in to save your life.

Because you've had another exposure to the word of God. And like the sun that melts ice and hardens clay, the word of God does something to you every time you hear it. It'll humble or harden your heart.

You don't go out the same. So we are to proclaim his finished work and we're to perform his unfinished work. We're his witnesses.

He didn't say we're to bear witness. He said you're to be witnesses. A witness is not just something you bear, it's something you are.

Now, back to that Nazareth sermon. He said, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, is sent me, as my Father has sent me, even so send I you. We've got a job to perform.

There was the anointing of the Spirit for his work and there must be the anointing of the Spirit for our work. We're all his missionaries, either across the sea or across the street. You're living in a mission field right now.

And we're all called to full-time Christian service. So many of your people think that means preachers and missionaries. Everybody's called to it.

Aren't you supposed to live for the Lord every hour of the day, every day of the week, every week of the month, every month of the year? What's that with full-time Christian service? The other day a fellow said to me, I'm an ordained plumber. Well, I never had heard of that, but he's right. He hadn't been before any church committee and been ordained, but God had called him to be a witness and he made a living as a plumber.

That's all right. He's out telling folks. I was in my own church service some time ago, and when Dr. McEachin was closing his service, he called on me to lead him in prayer.

And they had just sung, We've a story to tell to the nations. That's all very wonderful, but I'll declare, I almost got mischievous. And so when my time came to pray, I said, Lord, help us to remember we not only have a story to tell to the nations, we have a story to tell to the neighbors.

Now, that's where the shoe pinches a little. It's easier to send \$100 to Africa to tell it to the nations than it is to get across the street and tell it to some of the neighbors. Abiding in his finished work, the anointing for the unfinished work, the abounding in that.

And in 1 Corinthians 15, all about death and the resurrection and the resurrection. That's part of the finished work, but it ends, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. For as much as you know your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

That's the unfinished work. There's always a danger that the work of the Lord becomes impersonal big business. It becomes like these slot machines, so much for home missions, so much for foreign missions, so much for local expenses.

After a while, it's mechanical and very impersonal. You have to personalize this thing. I remember that years ago I went to an associational meeting one time, where, well, we have to have associational meetings, but don't tell anybody.

But some of them can be awfully dry. And I landed right in the middle of them. I sat all morning and listened to reports, reports.

And each one was a little drier than the one before. And I felt like that little boy in church that was bored to death with the sermon. And the preacher was through, but he wouldn't quit.

You know what I mean? And this little fellow had drawn all the pictures he could think of, and he looked through the hymn book, and that's not very exciting. And he finally said, Mama, what's that flag up there in the pulpit? Well, son, that's the American flag. And what's that one? Well, that's the Christian flag.

And what's that little one with the stars in it? Well, that's the service flag for those who have died in the service. He said, the morning service or the evening service. I don't blame that kid.

I felt like that myself sometimes. We ought to get excited about what we're doing. We're dealing in divine electricity.

I don't like these dry meetings. I believe that everybody that comes ought to get a charge or a shock, one of the two. If you get charged, you'll go out feeling better.

If you get shocked, you may go out mad, but anything's better than nothing. I'd rather go out mad. They may come back to see, well, now we'll try him one more time and see what he's going to say.

So it went on like that in this report meeting. Finally, noon came. I thought it never would, but he finally got there.

And I took a long walk around the place to sort of get the taste out of my mouth. And then I came back in and started some more reports. And one brother even had an appendix to the report, and I was in favor of an appendectomy without examination right then.

And then, finally, a home missionary got up, and he didn't look like he was going to stir and stimulate as much, but bless his heart, he began to speak and tell us about missionary work in a neglected part of the country. Homes reunited, little churches built, drunkards converted, he fought mosquitoes and liquor and the devil. What a story.

And when he sat down, the Lord through him had breathed a breath of life into that meeting, and the thing lived. I thought it was dead, but it came to a resurrection. Now, what he did was he personalized that program.

I can't get much excited over a missionary program or any other kind of a program, just to be fair with you, but a live missionary, that's another story. And so we need to get this personalizing thing going in our lives and in our testimony. I read that Andrew brought Peter to Jesus.

Talk about personal. He brought him to Jesus. Now, that's a lot of personal contact in a few short words.

He brought him to Jesus. See, that's personal business. It begins and ends with the person himself.

All authority is given unto me, lo, I am with you. Go ye, I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age. Evangelism is to Christianity what our veins are to our bodies.

You cut Christianity anywhere and it will bleed evangelism, because evangelism is vascular. It's the veins of Christianity. All this talk about the church majoring on evangelism, that's ridiculous.

That's like talking about a doctor majoring on healing. Well, that's his business. And the business of the church is evangelism.

We sing, Jesus paid it all, and forget that the next word's all. All to him I owe. We're debtors to the Greek and the barbarian, to the wise and the unwise.

We owe it to him. We owe it to them to get the gospel out, to pray it out, take it out, send it out, by person and prayer and provision and by proxy. You remember that during the Second World War, when Hitler's Air Force was really giving London the works, not a little handful of the British airmen rose to meet him.

And old Churchill said, never did so many owe so much to so few, because they faced completely outnumbered, but they fought it out. And when I look at the lost millions of the world around and how few real Christians there are, I have to change that a little bit and say, never did so few owe so much to so many as we do today. Now, because this is a finished work doesn't mean that we're just to celebrate it at Easter and Christmas and enjoy it.

And James Anthony Friar criticized Henson Taylor because he said, Taylor set a premium on indolence. If it's all finished, you don't have anything to sit around and enjoy. That's not what Henson Taylor did.

All you have to do is read the life of Henson Taylor, whoever was a more prodigious worker for Jesus Christ. And Paul, who believed and preached the finished work, but whoever labored more in the unfinished work. I tell you, God didn't save us to put us in a coin collection.

He saved us to make us his spending money, to spend and be spent for him. When Oliver Cromwell ran out of money over there one time, he sent some of his men to see if they could find any silver and gold to turn into coin. Some of them came back and said, the only silver we can find is in the statues of the saints standing around in the churches.

Cromwell said, good, we'll melt down the saints and put them in circulation. That's what the saints need to do, to be melted down and put into circulation. Now, I've said all that to say this.

The business of the Church is evangelism. But evangelism merely perpetuates whatever kind of Christianity the Church that's doing evangelism happens to have. Now, if it's a worldly church, you'll just get more worldly members.

If it's a church with unsound doctrine, you'll get some more of the same. If it's a church operating in the energy of the flesh, you'll get some more of the same. One of my favorite writers is A. W. Tozer of the Christian Missionary Alliance, now with the Lord, I've bought everything I can get that he ever wrote.

He said the first obligation of the Church to spread the gospel to the uttermost end of the earth is false. The first obligation is to be spiritually worthy to do that. Now, you can think that one over.

I have been saying all through these years that we must have revival, generally speaking. Now, individuals, I know, are doing evangelism, and sometimes churches are doing it well. But the Church is a whole body today.

We must have revival before we can ever have real evangelism. David said, Restoring to me the joy of thy salvation, uphold me of thy free spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted. You get me right, and I'll go after the other fellow.

The last thing Jesus said to the Church was not the Great Commission. We get the impression it was. The last thing my Lord said to the Church was repent, and that's the last thing the average church will ever do.

And that's what he said. And his last word is the lost word today. We're trying to have the effect without the cause, and the fruit without the tree, and the stream without the spring.

I think that word revival has been worn out. Every time Baptists have a week of preaching, they call it a revival, and sometimes it's anything on earth but a revival. It's generally a drive for more Church members.

Now, that's not a revival. A revival hasn't got anything to do with sinners. A revival is a work of the Spirit of God among Christians to get them right with God and right with each other.

Now, evangelism is preaching the gospel to sinners to get them saved. I say what we need, and I hadn't invented another word to do that. Not revival, we need Bible.

Just normal New Testament Christianity. If we had Bible, we wouldn't need revival all the time. I hear some people say, our church has revival every Sunday.

Well, I wouldn't want to belong to that. You mean it dies down every week and they have to fire it up every Sunday? Who wants to live in a church like that? And now spring's coming, and you're going to have a rash of sermons about springtime as a symbol of revival. It's no such thing, of the Christian life at least.

Because the Christian experience and the joy of the Lord is not seasonal. It's perennial, and it ought to get better all the time. It'll never go back into autumn and winter.

It does, though, and you have to bring a preacher in to wake up the Saints every six months, because they've got the idea that the thing's seasonal, which it isn't. Archbishop William Temple said, The presupposition of effective evangelism and the first step toward achieving it is a truly dedicated church. Now, if you try to have evangelism without revival, you won't have either.

But if you have revival first, you'll have evangelism. Calling on the church to repent is not popular. You won't get any flack when you preach evangelism, because everybody's in favor of that.

But you start preaching repent, and as Joseph Parker, that colossus of a preacher in England, said years ago, If you preach repentance, there'll only be one response for you, off with his head. He said, The man who preaches repentance sets himself against the age in which he lives and will be battered mercilessly by all those whose moral tone he challenges. I've stood many a time before a Sunday morning smiling congregation there to pay their respects to the Lord, a lot of them, some to close the eyes and some to eye the clothes, and there they sit.

And they don't mind as long as I preach evangelism. But if I start calling folks to repentance, you just let a preacher stand in the pulpit and get down to where we live. Some deacon whose business practices won't stand the light of day, some soloist whose family life won't bear examination, you odier and synthety having a fuss, and they usually are.

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Some of you folks know what I'm talking about. They won't be back. Evangelism is positive, and repentance calls for some negatives.

And they tell us now the preacher should never do any negative preaching. I don't believe that. I believe it's double battle.

The Bible's full of both. I ought to do both. I believe in homiletics, but I never did let it interfere with my preaching.

What is revival? Dr. Jarrett said it is not by spasmodic revival, however grace-blessed that may be, that we shall excite the wonder of the world, but by the abiding miracle of a God-filled and glorious church. It's not a spasmodic thing. And Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones said, I'm never tired of saying that what the church needs to do is not to organize evangelistic campaigns to attract outside people, but to live herself the Christian life.

If she did that, men and women would be crowding our churches and saying, what is the secret of this? Now, we may not agree with all that. I think we ought to have the crusades. But I see his point.

And Griffith Thomas says that it's rather strange that in the New Testament evangelism is only spoken of once, that Timothy did the work of an evangelist. On the other hand, the Christian life, with its provisions and possibilities, its secrets and methods, its duties and responsibilities emphasized everywhere, may it not be a reminder that when the Christian life's what it ought to be, the duty of evangelization at home and abroad will be the natural and necessary outcome. Now, that's right.

Some time ago, Christianity Today said we can't bring about what happened in England in the Great Revival by putting evangelism first. Revival must come, and this has to do with the people of God, not with unbelievers. There can be no revival unless there's repentance, and there can be no repentance until the people of God get down on their knees.

This is not popular preaching. I think one reason the Lord lets me keep on doing it is because somebody has to overdo it for those who don't do it at all. Some years ago at the convention in Kansas City, I was at the pastor's conference.

Only time I ever spoke of anything like that three times in one day to that host of preachers who are going to be in Kansas City, I believe, again this next time. And I've been preaching this ever since, that what we need is some kindling wood. You don't start a fire with the backlog.

Now, this convention in Texas a few weeks ago, they had, if God's people will, if my people will, I will, was their text. And that's good. That's 2 Chronicles.

But I said over against it what Jesus said in Revelation, if anyone will, I will. You see, you've come down from the body to the individual. Laodicea didn't repent.

And so Laodicea was spewed out of his mouth. But Jesus said, I'll give you one more proposition. Campbell Morgan says he excommunicated the whole church and started over with one man.

If anyone will hear my voice and open the door, I'll come in and sit with him and he with me. I think that's where God's operating now. I know some people get tired of hearing me sound this note, but I'm like that dear preacher who preached on the same text for weeks and weeks, and finally the deacon said, Brother, why don't you preach on something else? He said, you've never done what I told you the first time yet.

And that's been my contention. Some people say, well, which comes first, revival or evangelism? It's a chicken or egg question. You can't say that either.

Oh, yes, you can. God says, if my people. God begins with his people.

And the answer is not in activism. If you can get everybody busy doing something, that won't do it. You can't make a sick man well by telling him to go out and act like a well man.

Because there's something wrong with a sick man, you have to deal with what's the matter with him. Then he will naturally and normally do what a well man will do. Jostle away after the defeated AI, fell on his face before God, and that's a good posture.

But God said, get up. No time for a prayer meeting. Israel has sinned.

We have to deal with that. The church has to deal with sin today. Paul could have said, well, I know we've got some trouble at Corinth.

We've got one man living with the wrong woman. And we've got folks going to law. And we've got disorders at the Lord's table and so on.

But I like to look on the bright side. We've got a lot of good people here. So I'm going to major on the positive.

But Campbell Morgan says, the first half of 1 Corinthians dealt with the carnalities in the church. And the last half with the spirituality. Some people say, all you have to do is just preach love.

Well, if all you have to do is preach love, why didn't Paul start with the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians? He got halfway through the book before he ever got around to love, because there was too much sin in the church. When Jesus talked to the woman at Jacob's well, he talked about the water of life. And he talked about where is the best place to worship.

And those are good subjects. But she did not get under conviction until he named the trouble. Go, call thy husband.

And she'd had too many of them already. Charles G. Finney used to have a sermon on how to preach so as to convert nobody. And he said, preach on sin, but never preach on the sins of your congregation.

Preach on sin? That's abstract. They're all shaking their heads and saying sin is mighty bad. But you name something, somebody will go out mad, but somebody will get under conviction.

We must deal with the trouble. And I believe God has told him, like my Lord did in Laodicea, for a corporal's guard to begin with. If you're a preacher here from some other church tonight and wondering what in the world to do, start with your kindling wood.

You don't build a fire with a backlog. Start off with it. That backlog of unconverted and undedicated members, that Christmas and Easter crowd, the holly and lilies out there, you're not going to start any revival with them.

Start with the best people in the church. I grew up in the country. I know what it means to build a fire.

I don't have to now. Push a button and get heat. But we didn't have any buttons to push around when I was a boy.

I was the woodchopper and the woodbringer in there, and my daddy always went to bed when everybody wanted to stay up and got up when everybody wanted to stay in bed. And he'd wake me up at what seemed about 3 o'clock in the morning and say, Make a fire. And he meant that.

We had an understanding. We didn't do much dialoguing back in those days. And I got over in that old kitchen and put my bare feet down and didn't even have any slippers on that old hearthstone and wondered whether I'd ever pull them loose after.

And I had my kindling wood. I had my backlog. I had my middle-sized wood.

And I scraped off the ashes and hoped there'd be some coals underneath and I'd lay the kindling wood on the coals. And then I blew and blew until I was blue. And the flame came up, and I put on my middle-sized wood, and we had a fire.

Now, if I had started to put that backlog on fire first, I'd still be sitting in that kitchen trying to start a fire. You can't do it that way. The way the Shantung Revival started, Ask Bertha Smith and others who were over there, it started with Dr. Culpepper and others.

And he was one of the godliest men who ever went to a mission field. And when God got through with him, you'd have thought he was the worst sinner who ever went to a mission field. And I was preaching in Greenville, South Carolina.

I told about one missionary who went over there and got saved in that revival. She'd gone all the way to China to be a missionary and didn't know she was in the crowd. An old lady came up and said, I'm that missionary.

I said, won't you tell about it tonight? It started with the best folks. And that's where revival begins. And there's enough sin in even us best folks.

Do something about it. And so, beloved, God does say, If my people will, I will. But Jesus says, If my people won't, I'll take whoever I can get.

And you can be one of God's anyones. So I'm trying to gather today the assembly of the anyones. I'm gathering Kenwood.

For the Lord. And he said, I'm standing at the door knocking. Now, knocking is disturbing.

Did you ever settle down some evening in your robe and slippers and easy chair for a quiet evening and came a knock at the door and away went your quiet evening? The church is in her robe and slippers and easy chair today. And one can almost read across the faces of most of the crowd what one sees on motel room doors so often. Please do not disturb.

But my Lord wants to disturb us. He said, I want to come in and take over. He comes in as the guest, but he takes over as the host.

At Cana of Galilee, he was the guest, and he took over and he became the host. At Emmaus, he was the guest, and he broke bread and became the host. You've let Jesus into your heart, maybe, but have you got him shut up in the back room? You bring him out on Sunday.

Is he running the place? Does he have charge of it? I used to hear Roy Angel tell a story of S.D. Gordons. He was riding down through the south in the old days, through the cotton fields, horse and buggy days. Sat as a road down through those rows of cotton.

There was a little cabin over here, and an old black woman was sitting on the porch, as fine a picture of contentment as you could ever imagine. And I drew up the reins and called across the rows and said, Do you live here all alone? She answered, No, sir, just me and Jesus. He said, That got me.

And I drove down the road a little further, and I stopped the horse and took off my hat and got on my knees in the buggy. And I said, Lord, help me to live so that when folks come by my place, they'll say, Here's where S.D. Gordon lives and Jesus. Do they say that about your place? Does anybody know Jesus lives there? Do the children really know it? The word will get around if he does.

They'll find it out. You can't live a sure enough Christian life and there'll be any doubt whatever about the thing. He wants to be the host.

Now, some things may have to go out, and some things may have to come in before that happens, but he wants to be the host. Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole, and I want thee forever to reign, not just live merrily, but reign in my soul. Break down every idol.

Throw them out. I'll throw them out if you have to cooperate. God's not going to... A lot of folks want God to forgive their sins and take them away, but he's not going to do it until you confess your sins and put them away.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. You've got to put them away. I remember that when I was a boy, my father used to take me to an old mill out in the countries operated by a water wheel.

And I looked to see the water pour on the big wheel, and the big wheel turned over the other wheel. Now, what if the miller had come down some morning and there wasn't enough water to turn the wheel? How foolish he would be to get down there and try to turn it. Call in the neighbors and try to turn the wheel.

But I tell you what he could do. He could go up the creek and get the debris out of the way and deepen the channel, and then the water would flow and the wheel would turn. He'd be back in business.

I'm wearing myself out going up and down this country with pastors and education men, music men, Sunday school superintendents in the churches, and they're puffing and blowing and reddening their face trying to make the wheels go round. And they're not going around much. I think we ought to go up the creek.

All the wonderful things you read about in the Acts of the Apostles were simply the outflow and the overflow of the inflow of the Spirit of God. Just that. But you've got to get the channel clear.

And when it is, He will fill your heart and life. Jesus said, If you drink of this water, from within you shall flow rivers of living water. Now that's revival, whatever you want to call it.

It's Bible. That's New Testament Christianity. And we'll have sure enough evangelism when we have that sort of getting right with God and getting right with me.

Are you right with God? Are you right with people? That's what the cross means. There's the vertical beam. That's you and God.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God. But it also says, Thou shalt love thy neighbors. I said that's the horizontal beam.

I'm not a Catholic, but I don't carry a crucifix. But many times as I walk, and I do a lot of walking, I find myself sometimes saying, Lord, how am I doing? Is everything alright between us? Is everything alright between me and folks? And there was a little preacher a long time ago who stood before a governor and said, Herein do I exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward me. I was a man who faced the cross.

And when you really face the cross, you get right. Jesus said, If you know that somebody's mad at you and you can't get along with somebody, don't bring your envelope to church and put it on the plate. Get right first.

That sure would ruin a lot of orphans on Sunday morning. Get right. But that is the path.

And that's the way to revival and to redemption. Our Father, we pray that Thou would help us tonight as we think about this to do something about it. We've heard the Word.

And doing it sometimes is difficult. Oh, by the Holy Spirit, wilt Thou cause us to face the cross tonight and see whether there's something between our souls and the Savior so that His blessed face is not seen? And then ask ourselves, Is there anything between me and somebody that needs to be straightened out no matter whose fault it is? I must make an effort. I may not be able to do it, but I must make the effort.

Speak to me.

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