

# Doing Something About It

by Vance Havner

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of acting on God's word to experience true joy and spiritual fulfillment.*

**Duration:** 39:22

**Scripture:** Ezekiel 33:31, Matthew 28:20, Luke 11:28, John 13:17, John 14:21, James 1:22-25, James 2:12

**Topics:** "Repentance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the seriousness of being in church and attending Bible conferences. He acknowledges the importance of fun, humor, and relaxation, but warns against the excessive indulgence in worldly pleasures. The speaker references Jim Elliott, a missionary who was convicted by Psalm 100 to turn his eyes from beholding vanity, and encourages the audience to be mindful of what they watch on television. He also criticizes the current generation for being spectators and onlookers, particularly in the realm of religion, where people attend meetings and accumulate knowledge without taking action. The speaker emphasizes the need for the Word of God to convict and stir the hearts of believers, leading to repentance and a transformed life.

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## Transcript

I'll read from Ezekiel 33, beginning with verse 30. Also thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord. They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as thy people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them.

For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear thy words. But they do them not.

And when this cometh to pass, it will come, then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them. That's Old Testament, and in the New Testament from the book of James. And I never have heard anybody ever quote all this verse, unless they're reading it right out of the Bible where they can see it.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. And there they stop. But that's not all of Chapter 122.

The rest of it says, Deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed. And so there they stand from the Old and New Testament like two columns of truth. And for a capstone over both of them, I'd like to put what our Lord said in John 13, 17.

If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them. Two ifs. You reach happiness through two swinging doors, and both of them mark if.

You didn't need a dictionary when you heard Jesus preach. Practically everything he said as it stands in our Bibles is monosyllables, and not very complicated grammatically. You have it all here.

If you know these things, that's the intellect. Happy are ye, that's the emotions. If you do them, that's the will.

If you know these things, that's the head. Happy are ye, that's the heart. If you do them, that's the hand.

If you know them, that's the first if, which isn't the only one. We have an amazing amount of Bible knowledge. We've never had such much taught, if not well taught, congregations as now, what with radio and TV and Bible schools and conferences and churches.

But I don't meet so many happy Christians. Jesus didn't just say, if you know these things, happy are ye, period. Now, the happy here is not the happiness of the world.

It's the joy of the Lord. It's not a slushy sentimental happiness that depends on what happens. It came from a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief who said, my joy, I bring you joy nonetheless.

And it's not the kind that you have to go around with a grin on your face all the time to have. It's a deep and abiding joy, radiant and victorious and triumphant. The early Christians were in trouble most of the time and in jail a good deal of the time, but even out of there they could say, rejoice in the Lord.

And for fear we didn't get it the first time, and again I say, rejoice. Now, I don't see a lot of that today. I get into some churches that are very fundamental.

They know all the footnotes in the Schofield Bible, but sometimes I find spiritual icicles hanging all over the auditorium. Revival is a resurgence of Christian joy, restoring to me the joy of thy salvation. David hadn't lost the salvation, he'd lost the joy.

And when Philip had his great evangelistic campaign, it wasn't a revival. I've always heard about Philip's great revival in Samaria. There wasn't anything down there to revive.

They were all dead in trespasses and in sins, but they had a great evangelistic meeting, and folks got saved. And I read there was great joy in that city. Of course there was.

And then I read, then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord. It doesn't say they were glad when Peter looked at John and Philip looked at Bartholomew. If you want to get miserable, just start looking around at church members.

That won't make you too happy. But when they saw the Lord, now Ezekiel ministered in an evil time. It was his lot to prophesy to a generation that listened after a fashion.

Look at all the verbs there. They talk, they come, they sit, they hear, but the big verb is inactive. They don't do anything about it.

They compared him. They said he has a pleasant voice, like one plays well on an instrument. They invited others out to the meeting, come hear this preacher, but they did not what he said.

Isaiah had just about the same thing to say to his people. They hear it, but they don't do it in that blistering first chapter where he made fun of their religious services. That's actually what it amounts to, these vain oblations and all the rest of it.

James warns about the same evil, and we delude ourselves, beloved, if we don't do what we hear. Now, I say this this morning because the new folks will be coming in. We still have a good many who have been here through the week, and you've heard the God, and it's been preached to you, and all the services, and you heard it before you ever came here, and you know it, but you have a solemn responsibility to do something about it because this word of God will do something to you whether you do anything about it or not.

The same sun that shines on ice and melts it, shines on clay and hardens it, and you go out of the meeting with your heart either humbler or hardened more toward God because you haven't heard Shakespeare this week. It's been the word of God. You can't go out those doors like you came in to save your life.

You can't do it this morning. You don't go out the same. If you came just to size up the priesthood and see whether you liked him or not, oh no.

If you heard the word of God, you are still responsible, and if you don't do it, you'd have been better off you hadn't been there in a way because you fool yourself. That's what one of the translations just about says, and that's what it is. You deceive yourself when you don't do it.

The besetting sin of the saints is hearing without doing, and that's grievous because to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not. To him it is sin. In Ezekiel's day, they complimented the preacher and told him they enjoyed the sermon, and today we say the same thing.

The centuries have gone by, but nothing much happens in our lives all too often. We're a generation of spectators, onlookers. People go to the movies, and they get excited over what they see in this world of make-believe, and they become emotional drunkards, but we have religious drunkards.

We have bible conference drunkards and revival meeting drunkards who go from meeting to meeting, souls fed up, moral muscles flabby, capacities have been aroused, but there's a moral letdown and a sort of a religious hangover. They've got the word, thy word have I hid in my notebook, that I might not sin against thee, but they don't do much about it, and after a while it doesn't have any effect. They have accumulated a profound knowledge of things they've heard in meeting, and it bothers me very much because this old bible is an alarm clock, and it was meant to make you thoroughly miserable until it made you thoroughly happy, and the misery comes through conviction of sin and repentance.

The holy stirring of God's spirit through the word I'd rather play with forked lightning any time. It's dynamite, it's a hammer and a fire and a sword. It's a favor of life unto life and death unto death, and the

man who hears it does nothing about it.

He's the greatest of all fools because he fools himself. He's a spectator. The bible has a lot of spectator-itis in it.

We read that at Carmel when the holy light just said, make up your mind, is it Jehovah or is it Baal? That fifth amendment crowd wouldn't take a stand. They answered him not a word. They said, we're going to see which way the fire falls around here, and then we'll make up our mind.

We still have them, and then the other place, believe it or not, Calvary. Can you imagine? And sitting down, they watched him there, and the religious leaders of his time who read the bible, went to church, prayed in public, tithers, all of them, lived clean moral lives, tried to win others, and went to hell. The religious leaders of his time said, if you're the son of God, come down.

And one old Roman army officer who never had been in a revival meeting got a blessing when they didn't. Must be the son of God. They tell me that in the French Revolution, the French women were at such a low stage in the state that they took their knitting out to the guillotines and knitted while they watched heads being chopped off.

Well, that's frightful, but still worse is to be an onlooker at Calvary, and yet, in a sense, we may be even today. It's so easy now to hear it, not do it. Preaching is so plentiful.

My old daddy loved great preaching, but he didn't get to hear much of it out there in that country place, in a little country church. He didn't get to hear the men of God. He bought books, and he got hold of Spurgeon, and one time he got hold of that sermon about glory, who hath told us unto his eternal glory.

My dad loved that sermon so much that he sat down and wrote it out longhand. I don't know why he had it in a book, but he wrote it out to get it more into his system. That's how much it meant to him, but he didn't get to hear much great preaching.

Now today, you turn on a knob and you get sermons from everywhere. We only had one sermon a month, the old country church where I grew up. Some of them long enough to last a month, but we only had one month, so we appreciated preaching back in those days, and it was the sort of thing that it was scarce, and you didn't get much of it, and therefore you thought you better make better use of it when you didn't hear it.

God expects us to act upon what we hear. Old John McNeill was a great Scottish preacher. He had trouble with his church at one time, and things weren't going too well.

He took a week off and got out alone with God, came back, got up in the pulpit, and said, during this past week, God and John McNeill have come to an understanding. You keep your hands off John McNeill. That's a good way to face your congregation, if you have really spent that first time with God.

You see, when Jesus touched that blind man, made clay and put on his eyes, he said, go wash it off in the pool of Siloam. Well, why didn't he heal him right off? He could have done it. Obedience followed, and it was conditioned on obedience.

I've often told about that fellow going down the street trying to find his way with that mud all over his face, and some of his friends said, well, I knew he'd come to that one day, and they said, where are you going? I'm going to the pool of Siloam. What for? Well, I met Jesus of Nazareth, and he put clay on my eyes and

said, go wash it off. Ridiculous procedures, seems to me.

Some of them said, but it was obedience, and Jesus had said it. When you do what Jesus tells you to do, it may even sound ridiculous sometimes when Jesus said to Philip, go down through that desert and start a meeting down there. He just said, after your great meeting that you've had here, go down in the desert.

And he might have said, what? Why, they need me back here. We've had a great time here. Who wants to go over those sun-parched grounds? Well, there was a man riding in a chariot down there that needed the gospel.

That's why. You never can tell what's behind it all, but when Jesus says, move, you may look very ridiculous sometimes, but go ahead and move, because that's when the blessing comes. If you do these things.

Now, I know salvation is spelled d-o-n-e, somebody said. It's already finished, but there's a lot of doing afterwards. Not in order to be saved, but because you are saved.

You are my friends if you do the things which I command you. He that doeth the will of my fathers, my brother, sister, and mother. Why call you me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, but he that doeth the will of my father.

Sometimes in my meetings in churches, I read the Great Commission, and on purpose I leave out two words, and I ask them what words did I leave out, and I never get more than half a dozen people that ever noticed I left them out. As many times as we've heard the Great Commission. You know what they are? Teaching them to observe.

He didn't say just teaching them all things whatsoever I've commanded you. We must teach them. They have to know what it is before they can do it, but teaching them to observe all things.

You've not taught your class anything till you've taught them to do it. You've not taught the people anything till you've taught them to do it. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.

He that heareth and doeth my wills, like the wise man that built his house on the rock. And one day in Luke 11, Jesus was preaching, and one woman said, oh what a wonderful thing to have been your mother. And Jesus said, yeah, but rather blessed in her they that hear the word of God and keep it.

It's all right to say amen in the meeting, that's fine, but greater still it is to do the will of God. A lot of Bible teaching today reminds me of swimming lessons on dry land. You never learn how to swim on dry land, and unless you make the plunge and go over and start kicking, nothing's going to happen.

You're not going to learn how. Thy word is a light to my path, not just to look at, but to walk in. If you get out here today and stare up at the sun, the same sun that was meant to give you light will take away what light you have.

And if you keep staring at the word of God and doing nothing about it, if you do not walk in the light as he is in the light, you look at it and do nothing about it, and the light will blind you. But if you do what the light tells you to do, you'll be blessed. Some dear people go from church to church and meeting to meeting, preacher to preacher, looking for the light, and presently they are blinded by an excess of light that has not been obeyed.

Over in Africa, they're blind because they've never had it. Over here, there are people who've had too much of it because they've never done it. They've never obeyed.

That old lady who said her rule for reading the Bible was to read the Bible until she came to a commandment, and then lay the Bible down and do the commandment. That's a pretty good rule, after all. That's the meaning of it all.

Do it, and you shall know and be happy. What you know intellectually must be obeyed volitionally, and you will be happy emotionally, but you cannot twist those around any other way. Some dear people make their own knowing.

They go out for doctrine and theology. Some, for feeling, they go out for experience, and some make their own doing. They go into service and Christian activity, and we ought to do every bit of it, but you can't leave out either of these or get them out of their order.

What you know will be felt when you put it into operation. Knowing the word of God and doing the will of God, that's all of it. It's not enough to come to the minister and say, you told us the truth.

Old Finney, after his first meeting in his great career as an ex-lawyer who had become a preacher, and the people heard him, and he said, no, I want to know what you're going to do about it. And he bore down on them heavily, and everybody got up mad and left. His friend said, we'd better pray, maybe they'll be back.

And they came back, mad but back, because they wanted to hear what this man was going to say next, and God sent a gracious revival. From start to finish, beloved, the word of God joins creed with deed. If cursed be he that handleth the word of God deceitfully, I don't know any other way of doing it more completely than to hear it not doing.

There's one thing worse than not coming to church, and that is coming to church and not doing anything you hear from the word of God. Sin will keep you from the book, and the book will keep you from sin. Yes, we all know that, but you can have a head full of scripture and a heart full of sin.

You can backslide with the Bible under your arm, teaching the Sunday school class. Something must be done about the word of God. It won't return void, Ezekiel was told here.

They won't listen to you, but they shall know that a prophet has been among them. That's been my ambition through the years, whatever they do about it. I'm not an evangelist.

I'm not a Bible teacher. I don't know what to call it sometimes. Never have named it yet.

If you can think of something, tell me what it is. I don't know what it is, but I say to the people I want to preach so that when it's all over, whether they've done anything about it or not, they'll have to say we had a prophet among us. That's what he said to Ezekiel.

That's the pale. This word of God, beloved, is not a lollipop to roll under your tongue. The word did not prosper them, did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it.

To obey is better than sacrifice. A Christian trusts God's promises, and to obey is God's commandment. I've always heard about a break in the meeting.

We had a break in the meeting last night, and sometimes they mean they had a lot of excitement. Folks got happy, and that's very lovely. But the break in the meeting comes when people decide to obey God.

That's when the break comes. A lot of folks today are trying that. When I was a boy, they always called it holding the meeting.

Say, you come over here and hold a meeting. We've got too many people holding meetings now. Somebody ought to turn one loose somehow.

We've got too many folks holding a meeting now, keeping it from turning loose. God wants it to turn loose, and the test of it all is obedience and love for Christ. You say, I wish I knew Jesus better.

Well, then read John 14, 21. He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loves me. And my Father will love him, we'll both love him, and I will make myself real to him.

Not through some lovely feeling that comes over you sometimes. How is it? You have his word, all right, do it. I will make myself real to him.

The duty that we omit obscures some truth that we might have known. It's a serious thing to be at church. It's a serious thing to be at a Bible conference.

We've had a good time this week, and there's a place for fun. You know, there's a place for humor. You know I certainly believe in that.

There's a place for relaxation, yes. And you get tired, and you need to come to places like this. But friends, as dear brother Sweeting told you Wednesday night over there, and that was so to the point and so well said, we're in the fun generation.

Don't forget it. Everything's play. This country's gone six, crazy sports, crazy and show crazy.

And in such a generation, you've got to watch it. The thing that you slip about may not be wrong, but after a while it gets to where it does turn wrong. Sports have their place.

I like to watch tennis matches, but they always have the big tournaments on Sunday, Sunday afternoon. I was so disappointed when Jimmy Connors lost out, and that mistress of tennis who has been quoted so often as his close friend. But I had to say to myself some time ago, you're going to face souls tonight that might not hear another sermon after that one.

You'll not be much prepared for that watching the tennis match. So I said, okay, I'll find out in the Monday paper who won the thing anyhow, and what does it matter? I've got a job to do in this world. Oh, I think about Jim Elliott, who was butchered down in Ecuador, and in his diary he said, I went with a friend and watched television last night, and God convicted me with Psalm 100 in 1937.

Turn thou mine eyes from beholding vanity. I suggest you get you a card and write that verse on it and hang it on the set. Now, there's good stuff on TV, but oh my soul, you've got to watch it, beloved, and it's a serious thing to be in the house of God and hear the word of God.

I like old Kipling's Envoy, that immortal poem, when earth's last picture is painted, and the tubes are all twisted and dried, and the oldest colors have faded, and the youngest critic has died. We shall rest, and faith we shall need it. Lie down for an eon or two, till the master of all good workmen shall set us to work

anew.

I like that. I don't know what theology he had. I don't know about that, but he had that right.

I believe we will have a spell of resting when we get to glory, but I don't like to think of glory as a place where I sit on a cloud with a halo over my head plucking a harp for all eternity. I want to do something. His servants shall serve him over there.

We are promised a reward. I don't see many Christians who are working for promotion. So earn that ye may obtain.

The Bible says work for promotion. He said, I'm looking for a crown. Jesus said, I'm going to promote you.

You'll be ruler over all that he has, over the twelve tribes of Israel, the apostles were told. The saints shall judge the world. If we suffer, we'll reign with him.

He that overcometh shall have power over the nations, shall sit with Christ on his throne. The average Christian is rather ignorant as to what we do in the world to come. Well, there's a lot we don't know about it, but it's not just an endless vacation.

And when I sit in some congregations and look at the careless, nonchalant crowds on Sunday morning, some have come to close their eyes and some have come to eye the clothes. Now they say, they couldn't care less. And I say, my soul, do they know what it means that we've only got a few years down here in this boot camp to get ready for service for all eternity over there? Does it never dawn on them? The scriptures indicate degrees of reward.

Certainly. I can't believe that one man who built a cheap life out of wood, hay, and stubble is going to be rewarded equally with a man who built carefully with gold, silver, and precious stones. I believe there's a difference.

Oh, he said, I've been faithful to the faith, faithful to the fight, and faithful to the finish. I'm looking for my crown. Oh, I remember that day that R. A. Torrey said to me, he was an old preacher, and I was a young preacher floundering around, couldn't get myself together very well.

And he said, what are you doing? I said, well, he oughtn't to ask me that. I wasn't doing much. And then he looked at me with those steely eyes of his and said, make up your mind about one thing and stay with it.

And I've never forgotten. I used to go up the Montrose for the conferences, and I'd go climb that hill and look at his grave. And inscription there, I fought a good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith.

And thank God for R. A. Torrey that he would look a preacher in the eye and tell me the truth about what I needed in my own life. We used to have a little song when I was growing up. Some of you old timers remember it.

I'm forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air. They fly so high, nearly reach the sky. Then like my dreams, they fade and die.

Fortune's always hiding. I've looked everywhere. I'm forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles.

Yeah, and that's what a lot of people are doing, maybe some of you. Blowing bubbles. I made up my mind some years ago, Lord, I don't want to blow bubbles.

I want to be a blessing. How about changing your business? God will have to refine you if you're going to be a blessing, of course. And refinement doesn't just mean that you got a Ph.

D. degree, and can speak French, and been abroad, and been through the art shows, and good socializer, to dress, to dine, to call, to break, no canon of the social code, the little laws that lackeys make, the feudal decalogue of mold. How many a soul for these things lives with pious passion, grave intent, and never even in dreams is seen the things which are more excellent. But the Bible says, and Isaiah tells us, and Malachi tells us, and Peter tells us about our faith, much more precious than gold that perishes, it must be refined.

Be thou faithful unto death. That's all that God required of any of us. We have a song, May the Lord Depend on You, and God doesn't require but one thing of all stewards, that you be faithful.

The greatest ability is dependability. Anybody can be faithful. You don't have to be brilliant.

You don't have to have a million dollars. You don't have to be a genius. You don't even have to be successful.

I started out as a little boy preaching. Oh, we were poor. I'm sure I wasn't dressed according to the latest haberdashery.

I remember that I had on a little boy's suit with new trousers, and wore gala suits, not suspenders like I'm wearing now, but gala suits. I went to this town I was to speak, and the First Baptist Church and the preacher's boys saw me, and I heard them snickering, and I figured it was the gala suit. But that night I stood up before 1,200 people to say a good word for Jesus.

And gala suits don't make much difference when you're trying to be faithful to the good Lord. I went to my first boarding school. They put me to room with a town fellow, and he brought in his ties and hung them over here, and then I hung mine over here.

And there was a slight discrepancy somewhere in there. His were dollar ties. In those days a dollar about a necktie, and mine were twenty-five cents.

I went around in humiliation for a couple of days. I realized what status I was in. Then I ran across old Bobby Burns.

What though on homely fare we dine? Where are Hodden, Gray, and all that? Give food to their silks, and knaves their wine. A man's a man for all that. And I said the main thing, the main business.

I made up my mind I wanted to be true to Jesus. He asked me over to Hickory, North Carolina, to preach in First Baptist Church one Sunday night, 1913. We got a fellow to take us in an old Ford of his, thirty horsepower and twenty of them dead.

We started to cross that dirt road, and got over to Hickory. Scared to death, my daddy was with me. Dad said I'll sit back here.

He wasn't used to town churches. And I went down there, and they put me in a chair, and the pastor of the church stood on one side, and the stage evangelist on the other, and did the best he could. And that's what I've been trying to do for 64 years since.

That's all God asked me to do to start with. George Truett says success lies in discerning the will of God, and doing it as best you can. I like that definition.

Anybody can get a hold of that. Oh the Lord will try you out. I remember going to Moody Institute at the Youth Rally one time.

It was over Labor Day. Dr. Houghton used to have them. I was to speak to the kids, and I was foolish enough to get up a sermon on Beirut.

Well, these kids had never heard of Beirut, and I almost wished I hadn't after I got halfway through the sermon. I said, Lord, if I ever get through, I'm going to give Brother Beirut a vacation for the rest of his life. I'm never going to preach on that again.

But you know, a year later, a young lady came up to me and said, Do you remember preaching in Chicago on Beirut one night? I dropped my head and said, Yes, ma'am, I remember. She said, That was the turning point in my life. And I said, Lord, if you can use that sermon, I'll never get out of heart about it.

A couple of years ago, you see, you just be faithful. God will take care of all these embarrassing circumstances you get into. I belong to First Baptist Church of Greensboro.

We had Howard Budd of Texas there in meeting some years ago, and he had to go home and let me just preach there. The pastor asked me to take the last night. That's hard to do.

And they had a crowd because, not because of me, but that was the night that Miss America was to be there. Now, if you could have seen me in Miss America in the parlor, you ain't seen nothing yet. Talk about beauty and the beast.

Ah, we had it. And I said, Lord, what am I going to do? They've all come here to see this gal. Nobody cares what I'm going to say.

But I got up and preached on the Lordship of Christ the best way I could. And the pastor's young daughter came forward, among others, to get right with God. And Miss America came to me and said, That threw a lot of light on some things.

Just do the best you can. Just be faithful. Anybody can be faithful.

Gaius did faithfully whatsoever he did. I used to walk on top of that old hill where I grew up. I still keep that old place.

Sit on the front porch and see the lights at five pounds at night, and on the west, Grandfather and Table Rock and all the Blue Ridge Mountains. And I used to walk up there and say, Lord, in my own way, I always wanted to do two things. I wanted to preach all over the country, and I wanted to write books, and I didn't know how to do either one.

But delight thyself in the Lord, and he'll give thee the desires of thy heart. We've got the idea of serving Jesus. You've got to do something you don't like to do all the time.

That's nonsense. God wants you to be happy. You know, salvation is not like the little boy said about the medicine.

It must be good for me. It tastes so bad. We don't want to get that view of it.

It's a joy to serve the Lord. And you know, friends, I've seen the desire of my heart fulfilled. I've got a big map in my room at home where I've preached over the country, red-headed pens, and it looks like the thing's got measles or something.

And then I've got a row of the books that I wrote, and I said, thank you, Lord. I tried to do the best I could. That's all that God ever asked.

I don't want to be a bubble chaser. The best pay that I get for what I'm doing today is when dear people come up like many of you have done, and all over this land, somebody will grip my hand, maybe there's a tear in their eye, and they'll say, you've been a blessing. You can be a blessing.

You don't have to be a preacher. You can be a blessing. I was out in Texas just a few weeks ago, out in cowboy country.

Oh, I got with a real one out there, and the preacher said, you wouldn't believe it if I told you how many thousands of acres he owns in this ranch. And the cowboys got together to help a fellow who was sick, had cancer, and wasn't able to get the cows together, and they got them together and loaded them up for him. I spent the whole day with those fellows.

And then I asked the preacher, I said, you tell me your first church is out here, yes? He said, we used to have an old preacher out here before I came named Gus Elrod. He didn't have much education. He couldn't have preached, but he lived Jesus for 17 years among these cowboys.

He said, when I came out here, it was like picking fruit off of a tree. I told him, I've come out here to help you to follow the Jesus that Gus Elrod told you about for 17 years. That's what it's all about.

That's being faithful. And one of these days, you're going to leave your body. The tenant is going to leave the tenement.

You know, it's a strange thing, these bodies. Your eyes don't see. They never have seen.

You see with your eyes. Your ears don't hear. You hear with your ears.

Your tongue doesn't talk. What would a tongue talk about? You talk with your tongue. And one of these days, you'll lay the little machine down.

Now, what happens to the tenant? That's the most important thing. Where's he going? Where's she going? You trust in the grace of God that you will have been faithful. I won't forget that nearly 40 years ago, God called me to undertake this work I'm doing.

I was scared stiff. I was sick. I had two years of nervous exhaustion, insomnia, depression.

I was in a terrible fix and said, Lord, I can't do that. Sleeping in different bed every week and traveling all over the country can't be done. But the doors kept opening.

And I started out. And I got up to Chicago and came down with the flu. I was on my way to Grand Rapids.

They put me in the hospital. The devil said, now what are you going to do? Gave up your church. Can't do this.

I'd been invited down to Florida Bible Institute. I went down there and I met two people that had meant a lot to me. A long-legged, toe-headed fellow came up to me and said, one of the students he was, said, I'm Billy Graham from Charlotte.

And then a lovely little lady took mercy on me. She prepared soup that she thought I could eat. She'd leave it at the door and tap gently and run before I could get the door.

She knew the way to a man's heart. And she had suffered from some of the same problems. And yet she decided to risk her life with this sick preacher.

Didn't have much money and didn't know whether he could even do what he's supposed to do or not. The other day when the old house was sold, we cleaned out the attic. I found about a dozen letters I'd written to her back in 40 with three cent stamps on the envelopes.

And I was trying to brace her up because she was, you'd have thought we were getting ready for a funeral instead of a wedding. I was trying to brace her up. She didn't know I was trying to brace myself up.

I said, I believe God's in this thing. Let's try it. It's like an electric eye door.

It's not going to open until we walk in. And we started. And she never flinched for 33 years.

And we found the grace of God's petition. And it always has been and it always will be. And sometimes when the going gets a little hard and I get that old lump in my throat, I read this little word out of one of her letters.

You've been faithful as a husband, faithful in your Christian living and faithful in your preaching. And sometimes when I hit a rough spot, I said, Lord, that's what she said. She was with me 33 years.

But Lord, I want something greater than that yet. I want to be faithful so that one of these days, well done, now good and brilliant, now successful, no. Faithful, sure.

You've been faithful. Enter into the joy of the Lord. Let's do something about it, dear friend.

Lord, we thank thee for the privilege of hearing the word of God, but make us aware of the deep responsibility that goes with it. And help us to remember that you've been so reasonable with the soul that you ask this faithfulness. But it is required, Lord.

She said so. It's required. It's not take it or leave it and do as you like about it.

You're required it. Lord, help us to live up to the divine requirements and just be faithful in Jesus' name. Amen.

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