

Don't Miss Your Miracle

by Vance Havner

The sermon emphasizes the importance of obedience and faith in receiving God's miracles and warns against the dangers of disobedience and make-believe Christianity.

Duration: 39:37

Scripture: 1 Kings 13:1-10, Jeremiah 29:11, Matthew 11:28-29, Matthew 28:20, Acts 1:8, Romans 13:14

Topics: "Miracles"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of surrendering one's life to God and being open to His calling. He shares personal anecdotes of individuals who were impacted by the message of the Gospel and made significant changes in their lives. The preacher encourages the audience to not delay in dedicating their lives to God, regardless of their age or circumstances. He also reminds them that as Christians, they are already miracles and should expect to experience more of God's miraculous power in their lives.

Transcript

I assume that you are sufficiently familiar with the story of Naaman. We will not read the long chapter that gives us the account of his healing from leprosy. But I would have you to note that the Prophet said, Go and dip seven times in Jordan.

Then in John 9, verse 7, the Lord said to the blind man, Go wash in the pool of Siloam. Then in Acts 8, verse 25, the angel said to Philip, Arise, go toward the south, the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. When Naaman came to Canaan, he healed his leprosy.

It was a strange contrast. You know that he was a very able captain of the host of Syria. I'm sure his chest was covered with medals and awards and all of that sort of thing.

But when he took off his uniform at night and looked at that decaying body of his, there wasn't a soldier in the outfit who would have swapped skins with him because he was a leper. And so there are men today in high position, not with this leprosy, but one far worse, the leprosy of the soul. And there was a little girl, a captive girl, staying in the home of Naaman, who said, Oh, would God that he could go to the Prophet and he'd be healed.

And she must have been a fine little girl because they took seriously what she said and they organized the procession, and it was quite an entourage of soldiers and a lot of money and everything else they thought would do the thing. That's the way this poor world always gets ready to try to get through to God. It never does make it that way because that's not the way you get through.

Well, he took off anyhow and got to Elisha's home. Elisha didn't even bother to go out to see him. He said, Go wash in Jordan.

That offended Naaman very much. I'm sure he said, Who does he think he is? Who does he think I am? And deep in Jordan, that muddy creek, when we've got Abana and Farpa up in Samaria, sure enough rivers, and he was about to leave in quite a fury, when the boy said, Well, now, if he'd asked you to do some big thing, you'd have done it. It's worth a try.

So he went down and up and down and up and down and up, and by the time he came up five times, nothing had happened. And the boys were beginning to think, I believe the general's been took. But there were two more dips.

Friend, it's that last dip in Jordan that does it. It's the seventh dip in the Jordan of complete obedience. I don't believe that Naaman would have been healed if he hadn't dipped in Jordan.

That was part of it. That's faith and works. There was faith there, but enough to get going and do something about it.

And then I think about the blind man on whose eyes Jesus put the clay and said, Go wash in the pool of Siloam. Old John McNeill, the great Scottish preacher, contemporary of Moody, had a terrific sermon on this subject. I worked with Archie, his son, on the West Coast in conferences out there before he went on to heaven, and I'm planning to go back to Cannon Beach again, the Lord willing, as his daughter carries on the ministry there.

But the great-grandfather of this girl used to say, I and some of you have had the mud applied, and you've had the mud applied, and you've heard sermons and sermons and sermons, and you've never been to the pool of Siloam, you've never done the next thing, and you're blinder than you ever were. And that's the cumulative effect of hearing so much of it and never making the next move of obedience. My friend Bruce Dunn, who does a great work for God in Peoria, been with him several times in that great church, said that before he was saved he was so stubborn about the thing that he said, I won't walk down a church aisle, I'll take care of that myself.

I don't believe in that. He said he never got saved in that kind of a frame of mind. You're not saved by walking down a church aisle, but as long as you've got that much stubbornness, Samuel said the stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

How many folks have ever compared it with such terrible things as that? But it's terrible in the sight of God. And then finally he said, I got under such conviction one day that I said, Lord, the next church I get to, if necessary, I'll turn somersaults down that aisle to do the right things you want me to do. And he said he didn't have to wait till he got to church, because that wasn't a trouble anyhow, it was a stubbornness, and when he gave that up, he was ready to end.

And so I wonder if there's somebody here this morning who is beset, beset with a stubbornness that sometimes you have other and better names for, but God doesn't have a better name for it. I wonder if

you'd think with me about the tragedy of the miracle that never happens. Now, it happened here at Ceylon, and it happened in Jordan, but it could have missed if there hadn't been old-fashioned obedience.

And God spoke to Philip and said, Now, you've had a great evangelistic campaign over there and made quite a preacher out of you, and he was on the very verge of fame with all that glory from that great working of God. And I said, I want you to take off down this desert road, the most desolate-looking thing on the face of the earth, that I've got arrangements made, and there's some reason for it, but you never would have thought so if you had been like some others have been about taking off such roads. But thank God Philip didn't realize that where there's an evangelist at this end of the road, there's a eunuch at that end of the road waiting to get saved, and so he took off in that direction out of a great meeting.

The miracle down the road. I remember coming here the first time I ever came to Ceylon Bible College, back in the old building, back in the very early 30s. And Katherine Cumming and Dr. McQuilken had invited me to come.

I had a country church then, was writing a few pieces for Barnhouse's Magazine, sort of beginning my ministry, and she didn't know me really. She just took a chance on it. And then after they asked me to come, she had heart failure almost.

She got to thinking, my, what if he isn't what I think he is? And suppose he comes and he embarrasses all of us. Well, I remember that I was a typical hillbilly young preacher. You know, I'm from Hickory, North Carolina, rural free delivery Route 1. I'm not ashamed of it.

And I had been over to Woolworth's and bought a loose-leaf notebook. I mean, this thing was a whopper, and it was about this wide. And I landed there and walked in to speak of this thing under my arm.

And she nearly fainted for sure when she saw that apparatus, wondered what I was liable to project on that assembly. But this was my text, and I've stood by it through the years, and approved it then, and so I'm not afraid of it this morning. But there are many times in the Bible when the miracle almost happened and didn't.

And I want to say to you this morning, God has a miracle for you. And I don't mean something queer and weird and odd, but God wants to do a supernatural thing. Anything that's of Christianity, anything that's of the gospel is supernatural, and it's a miraculous thing.

God has a miracle for you, and don't you miss it. I think about that disobedient prophet in 1 Kings 13. God said, Go down and reprove Jeroboam, and don't you stay over for dinner anywhere.

Don't you be social, but you be antisocial on this trip, and turn around and come back when you get through. Don't listen to anybody. Well, he did pretty well the first round.

The king was brought under conviction, reached out to touch the prophet. God smote him, and the king was broken and invited him to sup with him. And he said, No, I'm under orders.

I've got to get back to my base. Well, so far, so good. And if he had done that well on the next round, we'd at least know what his name was.

He's the one prophet in the Old Testament. Nobody knows what his name was. He never got in, because he turned out to be not much of a prophet after all.

And do you remember, there was an old backslidden prophet living down the street somewhere. I think he'd had better days in the ministry. When the boys came in and said, Say, you ought to have been in town.

We had a revival break out down there today. We had a new man of God there. That, I think, revived memories of better days in his own life.

And he said, Well, let's have him down for dinner. And they asked him. At first he said, No, I'm under orders to go back where I came from.

And then that prophet said, Well, I'm a preacher like you are. And it'll be all right. I've heard from God.

God tells me it'll be all right. Don't you ever listen to somebody else who's heard from God since you have about your business. Because God will tell you if he wants to tell you anything.

So he came and ate. And Alexander White, in his matchless article on that, says, When he sat down, there was an awe all around the place. This man of God and the great revival and so on.

But as they laughed and joked and levity took over, all the awe disappeared. And when he took off for home, the lion got him. And they put him away.

And the last thing I'll read is, Alas, my brother. I've been at the graves of some preachers in this country who, if they'd died a few years earlier, it would have been better. And about all you could think of on that tombstone that would be a fitting epitaph would be, Alas, my brother.

You didn't see it through. Now, you're young, most of you. And I know that.

I know I'm talking to you this morning. But let's get over this idea that, well, when I'm young, I'm going to sort of take it lightly until I'm 21. Maybe then settle down and get out of business for God.

The best you have is none too good to lay at the feet of Jesus Christ early. Remember thy Creator and the days of thy youth right at the very beginning. Then I think of the rich young ruler.

There was another fellow who might have had a miracle. He had manners, he had morals, and he had money. And that's a pretty good combination.

But he said, Now if I can get eternal life yet, I've got it made. But he wouldn't pay the price. He wouldn't set out.

I don't know what became of him, but he went away sad. It's always sad for a man who walks away from Jesus. And when Judas went out to betray him, it says, And Judas went out, and they that were with him, and it was dark.

It's always dark when a man walks away from Jesus because he's headed for the dark. Well, there was Demas. I don't know much about Demas.

I don't know why he wanted to leave Paul. Maybe he didn't like Paul's pattern of living, and it was a pretty rough one. Maybe he'd seen some girl over there somewhere, and I don't know.

But anyhow, he took off. And it may be that the trouble lay in the fact that his very name means popular. That'll take you away from God's plan.

Just as easily. Now, all of these missed the miracle. What is a miracle? I looked it up in the dictionary the other day.

An event that appears unexplainable by the laws of nature is held to be supernatural in origin or an act of God. Well, that's pretty good for Webster. That's a pretty good definition.

Christianity is a miracle. Faith. Jesus was virgin-born, lived a sinless life, died an atoning death, rose from the dead.

He's coming again. Christianity, if you want to call it that, is a miracle. Pentecostal is a miracle.

Eternal life is a miracle. When I got saved, the old song says it took a miracle for God to bring that about, and indeed it does indeed. Nothing weird about all this, but you're the heir of a miraculous life.

But nothing odd. You don't have to go around with a big button saying, I am a Christian carrying a Bible as heavy as a series in Roebuck catalog. You don't have to do that.

Just be one. Just be one. Everybody will catch on.

Your wife will catch on. And when she does, well, that's pretty good evidence. But the word will get around.

The children will catch on. Everybody will find it out. You don't have to advertise it.

Not that way. But today, churches are filled with what ought to be miracle Christians and make-believe Christians. We never can prove the delights of his love.

It's all on the order we lay for the favor he shows and the joy he bestows for those who will trust. And then go to Jordan. And then go to Siloam.

And then take off down that desert road. Have you missed your miracle up to now? Oh, you got saved. Well, that was a miracle.

But what about since then? Is your life whatever point it is? And most of you are old enough that this fits you anyway, too. Is your life a story of something God intended, but it never has begun to come to pass because of your indifference or your disobedience or what have you? I think of King Saul. There's a man who missed his miracle.

He was handsome, good-looking. Paul was the opposite. Paul wasn't much to look at.

I get a lot of encouragement out of that. It's a dangerous thing to be a good-looking preacher because his profile may raise expectations that his preaching won't justify. But Saul, about all he had was looks.

And all the way from Gilgal to Gilboa. Now, next time when you preach on that, that's a good subject. From Gilgal to Gilboa.

And that's the course of a man who was dead set to be stubborn all his life. And you know the tragedy of him dying with a knife in his heart. But I thank God that there was another who wasn't good-looking and who had none of those qualifications.

Only socks and bombs. But the greatest preacher of all time. Jonah almost missed his miracle and got grouchy and there he sat under that tree.

But he had that ride in that fish submarine that brought him back to God and he finally got over it in time, thank the Lord. I think about my father. He had two brothers who were preachers.

One a Methodist, one a Baptist. Dad was called to preach and never did. And all the rest of his life he was not happy about it.

It was pretty rough those days trying to get the family through school in those times. He was faithful in church. Always the first one to get up there and in the wintertime light that little old wood-burning stove.

And he was faithful when he felt like going and when he didn't. And when the preacher was good and when he wasn't. And when the weather was good or whether the weather be good or whether the weather be not.

Whether the weather be cold or whether the weather be hot. Whatever the weather. He weathered the weather whether he liked it or not.

He was there. But all of my boyhood days I had before me the spectacle of a man who was doing second best and missing the main thing. When I started out as a kid to preach he was so happy but he didn't make a preacher out of me.

People said he was just trying to live over in the boyhood and all that sort of thing. And he encouraged me. We didn't have much money.

He bought books he thought might help me. And yet the superintendent sent us to school for years and years. They did the next best thing.

But he missed the main thing. And I almost did it myself. I started out as a boy.

And there came a time later on after World War I when new ideas were sweeping the country and I became infatuated to some extent with some of the new liberal ideas. My heart grew cold. The fire went out of my bones.

And people were asking what became of the boy preacher. And there were several lean, lone years. Oh God forgive and mark them off the book of remembrance.

Times when I ought to have been a blaze and nobody ever shook me up with a sermon that should have done it. And I forgot my first big joke when I sat beside R. A. Torrey on the train and I was brazen enough. I knew who he was.

Went over there and started talking to him. He said, what are you doing? He was like that. Not much fun about R. A. Torrey.

And I tried to think up something right fast that I was doing. I couldn't think anything much. I said, well I'm interested in this a little and that a little bit.

He said, young man make up your mind on one thing and stay with it. That shook me. Never got that out of my mind.

He wanted me to be a soul with one point not like a broom with pointing all directions. And that's what I was. I wanted to do this and I wanted to do that and I wasn't going nowhere fast.

Well, there came a day when after a lot of trial and testing and some much unhappiness God remembered my frame and remembered I was dust. He said, now if you'll get some of these highfalutin notions out of your head and go back and preach like you did when you were a boy I'll take over. And I said, I will.

And I did and he did. And he cleared the track before me. And I've had a marvelous time.

But he put me through a terrific test. I went through two years of insomnia and depression and I wouldn't wish on any poor soul on earth. And yet the Lord said, I want you to travel and preach.

I said, Lord, I can't sleep in my own bed let alone in a different one every week. What in the world does this mean? I can't do it. Still a little bit hesitant, you see.

But I did. And thank God I did. And my very first two dates, though started from El Trotter's Mission in Grand Rapids and got as far as Chicago and took the flu and they put me in the hospital and the devil sat on the foot of the bed and said, now what are you going to do? Haven't got your church and you can't do this.

They'd invited me to Florida Bible Institute to preach and I turned them down. I reconsidered and said I'd come. I went and met two wonderful people.

When a long-legged, good-looking young fella came up to me this evening and said, I'm Billy Graham from Charlotte. Little did I know who I was facing. And I've tried to have respect for youth ever since because every time some youngster comes up, I don't know who's there.

...preacher and decided that she was willing to risk the rest of her days with me over the country and for 33 years we crossed it. And all the time I was aware of the fact that when you go where God says go, he goes along with you. And I began to delight myself in the way of the Lord.

Well, you understand it when I say this morning, some folks have the idea that being a Christian you have to do everything you want to do, like medicine in order to be good for you because it tastes so bad and all that sort of thing. No, indeed. Delight thyself in the Lord and he'll give thee the desires of thy heart.

I used to stand on the top of that little hill in western North Carolina where I grew up and said, Lord, I want to write and I want to preach all over the country. Don't know how to do either one. And God led me to people who did know how to open doors that I couldn't have opened with a crowbar.

But God knew how to do it. You place yourself in the place of his will and do his bidding and something happens. My times are in his hand.

I'm graven on the palms of his hands. Nobody can pluck me out of his hand. Well, you say that's living from hand to mouth.

Yes, his hand and my mouth. Thank God. The devil told me when I started out, if you preach like this, you will starve to death.

And from the way I look, you may think the devil is right. But I'm doing all right. I'm getting along all right.

I've been fed well here this week. Oh, I'm having the time of my life. Now, I call that getting the situation well in hand.

My times are in his hand. You be sure you do that. Oh, that thou wouldst hearken to my commandments.

Then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. We've got a little chorus. I've got peace like a river in my soul.

You know how to get it? Hearken to his commandments. That's the only way to have it. Go where he says go.

I think of Grandpa who frequently took his little grandson on little trips over the neighborhood. One day he said, come and go with me. And the boy said, where are you going, Granddad? And Dad went on without him.

Came back and the kid said, why didn't you take me? Because you asked where you were going. He said, if you had wanted to go, it wouldn't have mattered where I was going. When Jesus calls you, don't you say, now, Lord, what's going to be the retirement benefits in this deal? And am I going to make the front page and so on? Whenever he says, then you start singing anywhere that Jesus I can safely go.

Anywhere he leads me in this world below. It may not be on the mountain height or over the stormy sea. It may not be at the battle's front the Lord will have need of me.

But if by still small voice he calls to paths I do not know, I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in thine. I'll go where you want me to go. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, that great black poet, put it so well.

One day the Lord had a job for me, but I had so much to do. I said, you give somebody else a wait till I get through. I don't know how the Lord made Al seem to get along.

But he said, I felt kind of sneaking like, because I knew that he'd done him wrong. One day I needed the Lord myself, needed him right away. Never answered me at all.

I could hear him say down in my accusing heart, I got too much to do. You go get somebody else a wait till I get through. Now when the Lord has a job for me, I never tries to shirk.

I drops the work I has on hands and does to get the Lord's word. And my affairs can run along a wait till I get through. For nobody else can do the job that God's marked out for you.

If you've missed the miracle in the past, get in the light of it. Do what comes supernaturally. We have a saying, I'm doing what comes naturally.

But I was with Len Turner down in Merritt Island some time ago in this great church in the meeting there. And I preached along this line. He said, I'm going to preach next Sunday morning on doing what comes supernaturally.

But that's what a Christian ought to do. Something you can't do. Only power from on high can do it.

I think of John Bob Riddle. Now he's out in conference work. Quit school.

Fooling around, he said. And he got ahold of a little book of yours that jarred me loose. A Christian lady gave it to me.

And I turned around. And I was a pastor for years in a great church in Birmingham. And now out on the road for Jesus Christ.

If I could stir up somebody here, it's almost out of heart here this morning. Get on your knees and say, Lord of the years that are left to me, I give them to thy hand. Take me and make me and mold me to the pattern that was planned.

When God says go, don't you ever say no. Because if you say no, the next word will be whoa. But if you say I'll go, the next word will be lo.

I am with you. All the days even unto the end of the age. You see, Gideon almost missed it.

Now he was beating out a little wheat and land under a foreign power. And all at once an angel showed up. Now, you don't see angels every day in the week.

But the angel said, I've come to commission you to deliver the people. He said, if God's for us, where be all the miracles that our fathers told us of? He had one standing right in front of him. He was so low he didn't know a miracle when he saw one.

Now, you can get in a fix like that. You say, well, where are the miracles? They're all in the Bible. I don't know much about this miracle business.

Well, if you're a Christian, you're a miracle. Why don't you have some more? Now, this will do for all ages, whether you belong to the Pepsi crowd or the Geritol crowd. It belongs to everybody.

You're all in it. I want to say to you, young people, don't take that attitude, well, I'm going to have my fling, or take it easy and not take too seriously even Christian work. I've got to be young.

Yes, you have. But listen, how much time have you got left? Can you tell me kindly? The graves in the cemetery are all sizes. All kinds are going.

My father spoke to a boy out in the country years ago about his soul. He said, well, Mr. Abner, I'm a young man. I've got a lot of time to go in that.

Dad didn't like that kind of talk, so he answered with something that's not in any books on doing personal work. But it jarred him loose, and he did the work. He said, you sound like a man the Bible God called a fool.

That rich, young ruler, and then the Bible calls him that. And do you know, two weeks later, that fellow came walking down the church aisle to join the church, and they said, what brings you here? He said, it's that man Mr. Abner told me about that became a fool. I guess he decided he didn't want to be the next fool.

And I'm in that procession. So it worked anyhow. Maybe it's a good thing to put it in the personal work book.

And if you're middle-aged, the cares of this life, worldliness. We have a funny idea that worldliness is confined to dancing and smoking and cussing and all these other things that are commonly associated. And preachers' sermons aren't worldliness.

Most of them miss it a mile. They are worldliness, of course. But worldliness is being taken up with this age.

And you may be perfectly hardworking and honest and all the rest of it, and be just as worldly in the sight of the word of God as some young blade on a dance floor at two in the morning, if you're living without God. God doesn't feed you in your life. What did Jesus say would be the signs when he returns? Well, there'd be eating and drinking and marrying and giving and marriage, buying and selling, planting and building.

What's wrong with that? Nothing. Unless it's all you do. And if you do only that and God isn't in it, you are a whirling because that's of this age.

And if there's somebody else here besides myself who belongs to the older category, I get after the old folks sometimes. I'm one of them, you know. I can talk to them pretty much like I please these days.

I can live with my bifocals. My dentures work just fine. I can live with my arthritis, but I sure do miss my mind.

I tell them that. I said, I know you're in that fix, but get over this business of saying, well, nothing for me to do. I'll just wait till the undertaker comes.

Get over that. You're here yet, aren't you? And if you were lying in a bed seat, you could put up a few prayers for somebody else. Don't retire ahead of your time.

Let God tend to that. No preacher's got any business doing his own retiring anyhow. I think of that old man who was getting ready to take a trip around the world, 90 years old.

A friend went over to see him off at the airport and said, I pray you just open and do this or I may never see you again. I tried, he said, you may be dead when I get back. That's the spirit.

We have a man in Greensboro, had a man there who nearly all his life, he almost missed it completely, Dr. Raymond Taylor, head of the drama department at the University of North Carolina across the street from where I live. One of the buildings named for him. A Harvard man, a brilliant man, so versed in literature I like to hear him recite any of it.

But he didn't know Jesus and for 70 odd years he was an infidel. And then one night he got saved in the middle of the night all alone in his room, came down the steps the next morning to his wife who'd been praying for 45 years. He'd be a Christian.

He said, I'm going to church with you tonight. And although she'd prayed for 45 years, to that effect she almost fainted because it was such a shock. But he became a deacon in the First Baptist Church and he made the most of the remainder.

Everywhere he went he went bragging on Jesus. Just simple as a child at heart with all his brilliance. And you know I've often said the happiest fellow in the world is a young preacher before he's met too many Bible scholars.

And he hadn't met too many yet. He just went around believing in God and in Jesus. He had plenty in his head but now he had it in his heart and he was Matthew 18.3. All out except to be converted and become as a little child That was his second childhood, sure enough.

Well, you want to get into that. When Jesus fed the multitude, they had some left over, you remember? I've often wondered what Jesus did with those basketfuls of leftovers. And that doesn't mean the crumbs that fell around on the ground but the original pieces that were used at the start.

The others had used most of it but there was some left over. As his founders reaped it moody, there he goes. And with this great crowd and Torrey Grail to turn the students all over here up and down on the side.

I noticed that most of my crowd was middle-aged. And I thought, well now you're always inspired to talk to youth. But out there I have a feeling we've got a lot of people who never had the miracle.

And I said so to them, I said, some of you I dare say may have been called to the mission field and you didn't go. It's too late now, you can't go, maybe. But you can make him the Lord of what's left.

Maybe you were called to be a preacher, called to something, you didn't do it. Pick up that basket full of leftovers and honor God with it. Don't miss your miracle.

The next miracle may bring some misery with it too but when you walk through the Valley of Baker leave a well for those that follow you. Dick Sumy is the chaplain at Dallas Theological Seminary. He had some fine churches before he was smitten with this kid in the airmen that put him on a machine.

And I wrote a piece in my book some years ago about a town in Alabama where they've actually got a monument to the boll weevil because they were about to go broke raising cotton and the boll weevil came along and ate up the cotton and they had to start something else and I found out it was a blessing in disguise. So they put up a monument to the boll weevil. I've seen it.

And I said in my piece, maybe God has sent a scourge and you've had to change your crop. And Dick Sumy got ahold of it lying flat on his back. He's got out a new book and in it he tells you about it.

And now he's ministering in a very strategic place indeed. So we don't understand why things like this happen. I don't know why Amy Carmichael, that great saint of the Lord, why she had to take a little stroll one night and fall into a pit that had recently been dug and she didn't know it was there.

And for the rest of her life she suffered with pains that could not be alleviated anyway. And agony. Why? I don't know.

My preacher friend, one of the faculty of New Orleans Seminary came to me the other day when I was preaching there. I know him well, our godly man. He said, will you help me this morning, especially considering what I've been through.

He was away holding a meeting. Came home and found out that a fiend had broken into his home and murdered his wife. And they've never found the rascal yet.

Why? I don't know. I'm not preaching peaches and cream. If you take out after Jesus, there'll be a cross to bear and there'll be things you can't account for.

That's all part of his program and he knows what he's doing. Don't be like old John the Baptist in prison. Lord, are you the one or do we start looking for somebody else? Jesus gave him the beatitude of the unoffended.

Blessed is he who doesn't get upset by the way I run my business. When God took my sweetheart home eight years ago, we were just having such a wonderful time in the ministry and things were opening up for us. It looked like next year was going to be so great.

We'd moved to a new apartment. We had a new car, first one I ever had. Didn't buy one until I was 66.

I wanted to thank it over. And then all of a sudden, all of a sudden, we'd taken our trip, we'd had a trip over to Israel and all about getting ready for a wonderful year. And then all of a sudden, and one of the girls here helped wait on her in her last days.

And I've talked with Becky and I remember those eight days. All across the eight years, I remember those days. Can't forget it.

Bev Shea sat beside me the other day. Lost his wife about three years ago. Said, how long does it take to get used to it? I said, you don't.

You learn to live with it. You don't get used to things. But leave all that now.

You're going to start out, some of you, fresh and vegan. The first thing that hits you will be a tornado almost. And you'll say, well, this doesn't fit.

I thought everything was going to get rosy from the beginning. No, it won't sometimes. And sometimes it will.

And right now, I'm having a marvelous time in these years. But loneliness and at the same time, God has blessed us never before. But let the Lord pick out and make the assortment any way he wants to.

But you be sure that you follow faith by obedience, whether youth or middle age or old. And if you're not right with God this morning, the best way to start out is to get right and seek his forgiveness. And please remember, don't get it in your head that God takes away sin by forgiving it if you're not willing to put it away by forsaking it.

Because that same verse says, He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth. And forsaketh them. It does you good to confess something wrong, but you've got a sneaking feeling inside.

Have you given it up? Then you're in line for a blessing. And be sure that you remember that every truth in the word of God has another side to it. There are two sides to every truth in the Bible.

Every coin in the treasury of God's truth is two-sided. You never saw a one-sided quarter in your life, did you? Every coin has two sides. The sovereignty of God and man's free will, how to get it together, I don't.

I accept both of them. They're there. Don't start arguing about that.

Let the Lord run that business. It's like looking down a railroad track. They come together way down yonder, but they don't.

But they will in the providence of God, the things that you can get together down here. Jesus, Son of God. Jesus, Son of Man.

Trust and obey. Come unto me and I'll give you rest. Learn of me and you'll find it.

Well, Lord, I thought you were going to give it to me. Yes, but you've got to go to school, make your grades, and do your homework. There's that in it, too.

We shouldn't have any negative preaching. I'm so tired of that. We've just had a regular blast of that in the last few years from various sources.

We must always be positive. The Bible is double-barreled all the way through. I believe in giving them both barrels of the gun.

Put on the Lord Jesus. That's positive. What's the rest of that verse? Make not provision for the flesh.

Fulfill the lust thereof. That's just a sample. So give them the whole works.

But whenever God says move, you get going. Because faith calls for obedience. Nobody wants obedience.

We took it out of the marriage ceremony the other day. A school principal said to the students, don't ask the students to obey. Tell them to cooperate, maybe, but that's how.

Cooperate's not the word my daddy used when I was growing up. If I hadn't cooperated, he'd often get it straight. It's been great to be with you.

God bless you.

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