

# Feeding the Lost Multitude - Part 2

by Vance Havner

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*The key to a successful ministry is trusting in God's power and intervention, and leaving room for His miracles in our lives.*

**Duration:** 16:02

**Scripture:** Joshua 1:9, Psalm 37:4, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 43:19, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 14:17-21, Luke 14:11

**Topics:** "Lost Souls"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his past experiences and shares a story about a preacher named Vance Havner who had a powerful impact on people. The speaker emphasizes the importance of relying on God's hand rather than statistics or human efforts. He encourages listeners to have faith and expect miracles, reminding them that blessings can come at any moment. The speaker also urges believers to approach worship with reverence and anticipation, as if it were their first and last time, in order to open themselves up to divine blessings.

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## Transcript

And if we'd been picking a man for evangelism a century later, or less, who would have picked Billy Sunday? When Wilbur Chapman went back to the pastorate from evangelism and left this ballplayer with nowhere to go except Garner, Iowa, with a half a dozen sermons, what kind of a chance did he have? But he was on God's program, and it worked. Back in 38, down in Florida Bible Institute, a long, tall, toe-headed youngster came up to me, said, I'm Billy Graham from Charlotte. I didn't know who I was meeting.

And a year or two later, he and I and Charlie Howard, he was still unknown, spoke in some little church in Raleigh, and I can remember Billy standing on his toes as if he weren't high enough anyhow, telling about the Wheaton revival. And I said, God, he's going somewhere. And a couple years later, and he still wasn't famous, but in Minneapolis, the City Auditorium, Youth for Christ Night, Billy was on the platform, but the speaker got up and talked about being rescued on a raft out in the Pacific, and there wasn't much gospel in it, and they called on Billy to give the invitation.

I said, now, friend, if you can hang on an invitation to this, get anybody down the aisle, you're good. And he didn't talk longer than five minutes, and he had people coming from all over the place. And it wasn't long till we began to see why, because God's hand was upon him.

And he left room in his calculations, and people have tried to ascribe it to organization and pulpit appearance and forty different reasons or excuses and on and on. He was here some years ago, and I was talking in this inner conference on Have You Lost the Wonder? And he came to the meeting, and as we walked out to lunch, he walked with me and said, I've tried to get this across all through these years to my team as well as to myself, that whatever else we may have if we ever lose this, the wonder of it all, we might as well fold up. We're out of business.

Nothing else will take the place of it. And when he gives that invitation, there's a split second or two there that if something didn't happen, the whole business would go to nose. If folks didn't come, but they come.

He can be in Hong Kong, but they'll come. And people say, well, a lot of folks want to walk down the aisle just out of curiosity. Oh, my friend.

They do that for any preacher. But if only one-tenth, and that's a ridiculous percentage, if only one-tenth of the crowds that have come down the front in those meetings were born again, you'd need to throw your computer away trying to estimate how many. Because God was in it, and there's some room left for the intervention of God himself.

The Welsh Revival, they didn't have any of the things that you're supposed to have for a revival. They didn't have any choir. Everybody was the choir.

They didn't have songbooks. They didn't take up offerings. They didn't advertise it.

They were their own publicity. And they had a little preacher by the name of Evan Roberts who hadn't been to school. Great preachers came to the meeting.

Campbell Morgan visited it. They didn't need him. General Booth of the Salvation Army was there to look on, but they didn't need him.

F.B. Meyer was there. They didn't need him. They had God.

And Campbell Morgan went back to his church and preached, I think, the best sermon he ever preached in his life. We draw up our plans with a little prayer somewhere in it to add a religious aura and put a halo around human endeavor. Just as today you hear prayers in political campaigns, where they surely need them, and ballgames and everywhere to add a little extra religious flavor to the occasion.

But how many people today are praying for showers of blessing who have taken their umbrellas when they went to the meeting? I heard of a prayer meeting in a church in a drought-stricken area, and they gathered to pray for rain. One old unbeliever was among them, and he sat there, and after it was all over, he said, I don't see any umbrellas. Did you not expect any rain? That may be cynical, but there's a world of truth in it.

What are you expecting? Did it occur to you that maybe something might happen tonight? This could be the night when the blessing would fall. I oftentimes go into the pulpit from the choir, and sometimes they're giggling and laughing, and I'm saying, good Lord, what are we going to do this morning? And then the Lord said, well, you're not so good yourself. How many times have you walked casually into the pulpit? When you ought to go every time as though it were the first time, as though it might be the best time, and as though it could be the last time.

Now, you give me a handful of folks who will go to church like that some night, and something's going to happen, because that opens the channels for the divine blessing. Stonewall Jackson, during the war, gathered his engineers together and said, get a bridge across that river. We've got to get the men over tomorrow.

So they assembled in a tent to study over the bridge. And an old blacksmith overheard his request, and he got some big stones and logs together and everything he could with a little assistance, and built a sort of a, it looked like ramshackle, but he knew what he was doing, a stout bridge across. And he reported it to General Senn and said, General, the bridge is ready.

The General said, well, who are you? He said, I'm a blacksmith, but the bridge is ready, and the men can go across, it'll hold them. The General said, where are the engineers? The blacksmith said, they're still drawing pictures of the bridge up there in the tent. And while the engineers are drawing their designs to build new bridges, we need a blacksmith to get us across the river, it seems to me.

The other day I talked with a fine man, education man in a great church, a man who loves God and who loves that church. He wasn't being critical. We talked a long time, and then he dropped his head.

And he said, but we lack something. There's so much going on, yes, but we lack something. He said, I suppose it's the Holy Spirit.

We've been figuring on the budget, as it were, but we haven't counted much on a miracle. And you wonder what this boy thought about all this. Nothing said about him.

Did he say, well, that's my lunch, and it's barely enough for me? I don't know what he said. It may have been that he said, yes, he's welcome to it. I may speak tonight to some young fellow, some person whatever your age in this place, and the Lord is waiting for what you have, and it may not be much, but this wasn't much.

It may seem preposterous for you to say, Lord, whatever's left. If you're an old person, you can give him what little's left of your days. You'd be surprised what God can do with old folks sometimes.

I'm having the grandest time in all my ministry. I don't understand it. I don't have any organization.

I don't get out any advertisement. I don't have any brochures with my picture on it. I got more sense than that.

And this is the busiest year I've ever had, and God's blessed. Don't--I said it already. Don't sit there and say, there's nothing I can do, Brother Havner, except hear somebody else tell what they're going to do.

Oh, don't ever take that attitude. But maybe there's a youngster, a younger person than I, and say, well, I wouldn't make much difference if I did bring my loaves and fishes. How do you know what difference you might make? What difference--these men I mentioned a while ago, they didn't know what they might do, but you don't have to be famous, because in that great day, there's going to be a big shake-up and a big shake-down among preachers.

Some little preachers who had the church out at Frog Pond, going to be elevated, and some big shots going to sink way low. Some of the big shots are going to become buckshot. You just can't tell who's great in the sight of God.

Get in on the thing! Anyhow, and I like to think that through these years, I'd like to bear testimony. I don't know how much longer I've got to say it, and I'd like to bear testimony. Back to the day when--well, a dear lady asked me yesterday, said, My mother wanted me to ask you if you spoke at Hollis back in 1914.

I said, Yes. I said, It was Fourth of July, and they had a big day, and we met down in a kind of a natural amphitheater, and a big crowd all around. And I had on a white suit, I remember, and stood in the wagon.

And they had advertised it all over the place, and they had three attractions. There was to be free lemonade, a balloon ascension, and Vance Hadner. What do you think about that kind of advertising? I said, Yes, I remember that.

That's been a long road, friend. But I stood on top of that hill that's less than a hundred miles from here where I grew up, and still hold on to that twelve acres of land. I used to say, Lord, I'd like to write some books, and I'd like to preach all over the country, and I don't know how to do either one of them.

Never will forget how the Lord started clearing the track. And I've made so many mistakes and blunders, but the Lord himself knew what he wanted to do. You get in on that.

Now in my apartment sometimes, I'll stand in front of that row of those little books now, thirty-one little soldiers standing there. And then I've got a big map of the country. I've got a red-headed pen every place where I preach.

It looks like the thing's got smallpox. And I said, Thank you, Lord. Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desire of thine heart.

Because I didn't know how to do it. God used certain men in my life that didn't know, from the time that Dr. Torrey, when I went over and sat beside him on the train, he didn't know me from Adam, but I knew that great prophet. What are you doing? And I wasn't doing much.

He said, Young man, make up your mind on one thing and stay with it. Now I never could shake that off. And then Gresham Machen, with his great book on Christianity and liberalism, when I was beginning to wander.

And then Donald Gray Barnhouse, who later on encouraged me. God had men to help me and encourage me. He'll always do that.

And I had a little country church. We had one grocery store in the place and an old-fashioned telephone hanging on the wall over there. One day one of the fellows comes up to me and says, There's a long-distance call to you from Philadelphia.

Nobody had ever called there from Philadelphia. Nobody had ever called me from anywhere long distance to speak. I said, No, no, you're wrong.

It was Schuyler English, the other in the line, said, Barnhouse is in the hospital. The appendicitis wants you to preach for him up there. And he was feeding nickels in the slaughter up there.

And I had to tell him right off what I'd do. I said, This is Thursday. Can you come Sunday? And I shook over and said, Yes, I'll come.

And I borrowed somebody's suitcase and somebody's raincoat. There was an overcoat on the other side, sort of double duty. Took off for Philadelphia.

Got up there and they had daylight time, savings time. I hadn't heard of that. Way off schedule.

And finally on Sunday they got me out to that church. Great big chair, too big for Barnhouse. And some of you know how big he was.

And I sat up there, feet dangling off like a little Lord Fauntleroy. And I said, Lord, how long, why did you ever get me into this? And I did the best I could. And the organist came up afterwards and said, We've had some celebrated preachers here, but your message was like a drink of cold water on a hot day.

That did me a world of good. Then Will Holtens had come over to Moody Institute. And, oh, the Lord was going ahead opening ways.

And W.B. Riley in Minneapolis, that old champion of the faith, baptized my wife, who had been a Quaker and a good Baptist and a good Christian all the time there on. But the Lord was going on ahead of me. And then some years later, Dr. Criswell come out to Dallas and speak at the Evangelistic on the first one.

And just a few months ago, I was in his great church at the graduation of his Bible school. And I thought back across the years, and I didn't have one blessed thing to do with it, except that God said, If you mean business, I'll clear the track. Now, I don't know what track he's got for you, but if you mean business, that part of it's up to him, and he'll make a way for you.

Don't be afraid of it. And so, don't depend on what statistics can do. They have their place, yes.

The 200 penny worth of bread has its place. But leave a place in your calculations for a miracle, because we're needing today not have so much a budget as we need more boys and more everybodies who are willing to say, Lord, I don't have much. But you're welcome to it.

God bless you.

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