

Home Before Dark

by Vance Havner

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness, standing firm in one's convictions, and humility in the face of adversity.

Duration: 30:55

Scripture: Psalm 37:7, Psalm 66:16-20, Proverbs 3:5-6, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 11:6, Matthew 11:11, John 10:28

Topics: "Personal Testimony", "Sharing Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by sharing a personal testimony about the importance of giving testimonies and sharing one's individual experiences. He references Psalm 66:16-20, where the psalmist declares what God has done for his soul. The speaker then shares a story about Mr. Sanky, who despite having a cracked voice, played a piece on the organ titled 'There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes.' The sermon also touches on the current state of the world and the need for serious thinking. The speaker concludes by reflecting on his own journey of coming to Jesus at a young age and his calling to preach the gospel.

Transcript

Tonight I felt that I wanted to give you a word of personal testimony. I know more about myself than I do about anybody else, and I'm a little slow to do this because it does involve the personal pronoun I, but I was down in Boca Raton, Florida a couple of winters ago, and Dr. Harold John Ockengay sat on the very front seat. He used to be, as you know, in Boston, and after service he came up and said, Vince, don't ever hesitate to give a testimony, because we like to know what's happened to you.

We like to know what one's own individual experience has been. And I don't know of any better passage than Psalm 66, beginning with the 16th verse, Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me, but verily God hath heard me. He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

With your kind indulgence, I'd like to engage in the favorite pastime of old folks anyhow, reminiscing for a bit. At my age, I'm supposed to be retired and in a rocking chair drawing my Social Security, talking about the good old days that weren't so good. After all, somebody wrote to Horace Greeley one time and said, your magazine's not as good as it used to be.

He said, it never has been. And that's the way it is with the old times. Distance lends enchantment to the view.

My memories begin with an old home in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina. I grew up in a community known as Jugtown. My old home sat on top of a hill from which I can see the lights at five towns, like footlights on a stage on the east, and on the west, Grandfather Mountain and Table Rock, and all those peaks like silent sentinels along the western skyline.

I grew up between those two influences, what man had done in one direction and God's mountains on the other. And someone has said that the period between 1900, which was not the first year of the new century. People always get mixed up in that.

1900 was the last year of the other century. Everybody'll get mixed up now when 2000 comes. They'll say that's the first year of the new century.

Ain't no such thing. It's the last year of the other century. But why quibble over that anyhow? But anyhow, from that year on to 1914, when the First World War began, we were having a remarkable period in America.

There's a book out, *The Good Years*, about that period of time. And I remember that the first big joke that we had, things had been going pretty well. We'd won the Spanish-American War, Teddy Roosevelt personified Americanism, and there was peace just about everywhere.

Then Mordecai Hamm used to say that God gave us an object lesson in 1912 with the unforgettable sinking of the Titanic. That's one of the strangest events that's ever happened, because it was supposed to be absolutely unsinkable. The only thing it ever did was sink, and that was on the first trip.

It was as though Almighty God were saying, no, you're not as smart as you think you are. We thought it was guaranteed. I found eight different books in my Greensboro library on the Titanic.

I didn't know they were writing so many things. There's one movie already out about it years ago and another one in process maybe now, I think, and they were looking for it the other day and thought they found the ship that corresponded in size, but they couldn't go deep enough to take the right kind of pictures. But I believe that there was something, even as an eleven-year-old boy, I remember the shock that went over.

This just can't be. Science had done its best. They'd built a master ship, and all it took was a hunk of ice out in the chilly waters of the Atlantic to send it down.

We had only two years to get over that in 1914, and one big preacher in New York City had said, we'll never have another war. We've learned enough not to have wars. Nero Dwight Hill has said that, and then came 1914, and then a Second World War, and Korea, and Vietnam, and all the rest of it.

And the war that we were ashamed, afraid to win, and ashamed to lose. Strange war, indeed. I've heard sermons on it.

I heard just the other day a fine preacher in Birmingham on TV preaching on the sinking of the Titanic. We don't seem to be able to get over it because there's something eerie about it. And there are a lot of strange things happening lately that just don't make sense on our little computers.

And God seems to be almost withdrawing his hand on America in something. We start to rescue the hostages, and of all times for a sandstorm to come up over there and spoil everything. Well, I'm not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but these are times when it behooves us to do some serious thinking.

I started out as a boy. I never knew the day that it didn't feel cold to preach the gospel. Now, I don't know how you work that out theologically, but that's your problem.

I came to Jesus at 10 years of age. I didn't understand all about the plan of salvation. I don't understand all about it now.

If I could understand it, there wouldn't be much to it, if my little brain could take it in. I came to him, and I don't understand all about electricity, but I'm not going to sit around in the dark till I do. And at 12, I stood in that old Corinth Baptist church and asked him to license me to preach the gospel.

I was just plain ignorant. You know, a lot of things besides grass and cabbage grow up green in the country, and I was one of them. Well, I not only didn't know anything, I didn't even suspect anything in those days, and yet the Lord had laid his hands on me.

And these days now, when we're so advanced and a preacher thinks he's cold to preach or decides to preach, sometimes it's about all there is to it, he gets out his pad and pencil and begins figuring, now what bracket will this put me into? What will be the fringe benefits? Will I be appreciated for what I'm worth, which wouldn't call for much. Anyhow, a cold to preach used to settle it. You either did or you didn't.

You said, here am I, Lord, send me. I believe God Almighty is patient with people who make a lot of blunders in following Jesus, but whose hearts are set on following the Lord. Oh, Simon Peter, I'm so glad he's in the Bible, so much like me, that impetuous poor fellow who made more mistakes.

Nearly everything he said in the gospels was a mistake. He hid it one time, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, but the rest of the time, three tabernacles, why sayest thou who touch me, this shall not be unto thee, thou shall never wash my feet, I'll never be offended in thee. No wonder the Bible says, Peter said not knowing what he said.

And yet, when he cursed and swore, imagine that he never knew Jesus, and then my Lord looked at him. He had the right stuff inside, because he went out and wept bitterly. You've never heard of a Pharisee doing that.

Went out and wept bitterly. And Jesus said, Do you love me? And he crumbled up and said, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.

Now, if you can say that from your heart, God knows about it. God will put up with a lot of blunders, and that doesn't excuse the blunders, but I like to think that we have a Father who loves for his children, and even when they stumble, when John the Baptist sent that delegation to Jesus, are you the one who should come, or do we look for another? Now, that was a record low for John the Baptist, the very man who could stand on the Jordan and say, Behold the Lamb of God. Now he's saying, Are you the one, or do we start looking for another one? Imagine that.

But on the same day that John the Baptist said the worst thing he ever said about Jesus, Jesus said the best thing he ever said about John the Baptist. No greater born of women. Said, Go back and tell him I'm running on schedule.

Blind or seeing, deaf or hearing, lame or walking, lepers or cleansed, and then it gave him this beatitude. It was exactly seven years on Sunday, seven years ago, that my dear one went to heaven on at 2 15 on Sunday morning, and I preached at 11 o'clock in Westover Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, and this was my subject, the beatitude of the unoffended. That's the one beatitude nobody seems to know.

You know the ones in the Sermon on the Mount and so on. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Blessed is the person who doesn't get upset by the way I run my business.

And if there's something in your life tonight that's causing you a lot of trouble, and you're saying, Lord, I can't figure it out. Why? Why would this happen to me? Why didn't you come down and help me straighten out this mess? What took place? Blessed is he. I said, Lord, I don't understand it.

We'd hope for old age together. I don't know why, but I'm not going to get upset about the thing. Put that in your program, and it'll help you over many a dark road through this world.

Well, I started out preaching, and I gave my first message in 1913 in the First Baptist Church of Hickory, North Carolina. We didn't have very few Model T Fords in those days. Certainly we didn't have one.

So we borrowed, and we had a friend to take us in his, one of the farmers, 30 horsepower, and 20 of them dead. We started across those old dirt roads to Hickory. That's the only kind of roads we had.

And I've been in bigger towns since, but never been in one that looked as big as Hickory did that night. That First Baptist Church, I've been in bigger churches, but when I look down there, I look like I'm out of the pulpit. And my daddy said, I'll stay back here.

We were both not used to being in town, in town churches. I walked down there, and the pastor of the church put me in a chair. I stood in the chair, and he stood on one side, and the state evangelist on the other.

And I did the best I could. And I've been trying to do that for 67 years. And that's all God ever asks of anybody, just be faithful.

You can do that. There's no way on earth you can get under that, through it, around it, or over it. Just plain faithfulness.

It is required of you, not suggested. It's required of you that you be faithful. That's all God ever asks of anybody.

Well, I started out, I didn't have social security. I didn't have financial security, but bless God I had eternal security. I didn't know much.

Sometimes I think the happiest fellow in the world is a young preacher before he's met too many Bible scholars. Doesn't know any better than to just believe Jesus and believe the Bible. When old Amos went up to Bethel to preach, he was just a country preacher.

Homer Odeheaver used to tell me that he thought my best sermon was on Amos, because Amos was a country preacher. And he went up there into the capital, I'll have you to know, Bethel, the religious capital, the political capital of the country. And no ministerial committee had invited him.

They asked him to leave. But he didn't send his manuscript up to headquarters, where some scribe in a swivel chair who couldn't preach for sour apples anyhow, and had never done any preaching, would take a red pencil and go through to make sure there's nothing in it to disturb the status quo. He didn't know anything about that.

Dr. Carl Yates said his time had not been spent in the divinity school. He was unwilling to be classed as a member of the who made their living by bowing to the wishes of the people and preaching a pleasing message that would guarantee a return engagement. He wasn't looking for a return engagement.

He hadn't been asked the first time anyhow. And he did not take the teeth out of his sermons into Cohen and gum it up at Bethel. He didn't do that.

And when he got up there, Dr. Amos, I. D. D., lit. D, Ph. D., said to him, where are your credentials? What do you mean? You belong in the backwoods, not on the boulevards.

Why are you preaching judgment? We never had it so good as we're having it right now. Go back where you belong. Amos said, I'm not a prophet by parentage.

I'm not the son of a prophet, not by profession. I'm a prophet by providence. The Lord took me.

And that's about the only credentials you need to preach anyhow. He didn't go to Bethel to make the preaching acceptable. He went to make it available.

He didn't go to make them likely. He went to see that they got it. And that's different.

Old Billy Sunday used to say, they tell me I rubbed the fur the wrong way. I don't. Let the cat turn around.

When the cats go in the right direction, you're stroking the cat. It's when the cats go in the wrong way that the sparks fly. When I started out, some critics, it's a strange thing when you start out trying to live for Jesus, some of your worst critics will be folks claiming to be Christians.

I had old sinners, and some of them had a better word to say for me than some church folks. Oh, it won't last. These boy preachers, they don't last.

Well, I think 67 years is long enough to give it a try. There was fire in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I couldn't stay, but I made a lot of mistakes. Learned the hard way.

My first passport was in a country church after World War I. New ideas were going around over the country. The Scopes trial, the monkey trial, Clarence Darrow and William Jennings Bryan. And it's an index to the spiritual temperature of this country today that they still applaud Clarence Darrow and boo William Jennings Bryan.

We never had a better Christian in any cabinet in Washington than William Jennings Bryan. That man knew the Lord. I heard him speak four times.

Harry Truman said never heard another man had a voice like William Jennings Bryan, but he said something with that voice. He believed the old book and died three days after that trying trial. My heart goes out to that man.

Then Harry Emerson Fosdick was just coming into prominence, and I'm telling this thing as it is because I want to drive home a point. I was impressed with him as a speaker because he was a master of pulpit English or some kind of English. He was a master, and I thought, well, maybe we need to adapt the gospel to the modern mind, which I found out later is not very modern, not much mind, but I didn't know that.

But the fire went out of my bones, and I gave up my church, and God closed every door, and I went back to my old home on top of that hill, and folks were saying what became of the boy preacher. One day I came across two lines of a poem, how sad will be the days in store when voice and vision come to more. I couldn't shake that off, but God had called me, and he knew my frame and remembered that I was dead.

Several things started happening. I got hold of a book by Gresham Machen, the great Presbyterian, on Christianity and liberalism, and that jarred me loose. One day I was telling your pastor about it today.

Riding along on a train, I spied a man that I knew from books I had seen his picture in. He was R. A. Torrey. I was brash enough to go over and sit down beside him.

He was a rather stern type, looked like a prophet out of the Old Testament. He looked at me and said, What are you doing? I wasn't doing much right at that time. I thought right quick, tried to think up something I was doing, and I said, Well, I'm interested in this a little bit and he said, Young man, make up your mind on one thing and stay with it.

I've gone back many times to Montrose, Pennsylvania, to preach and stayed in the house where he used to live and climbed that hill where he lies buried, and the epitaph on the tombstone, I fought a good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith. Thank God for a preacher who could look me in the eyes with those steely eyes of his and say, Make up your mind on one thing. He wanted me to be like a sword with one point, not like a broom with straws pointing all directions.

I never got over that. And the Lord made it plain to my soul through all this, if you will get these highfalutin notions out of your head and go back and preach the old gospel that you preached in your boyhood, I'll make a way for you. I took him up on it.

I did and he did. And I had to go back to that church and preach it straight for three years, and he kept his word. And that's the way it began the second time.

It's a sad day for any preacher when he has to say, Voice and vision, come to war. And that doesn't always happen when a man is a failure. A man may have a big church and have a reputation to be popular.

I don't know why exactly. Demas loved this present world, but there may be something to the fact that his very name means popular. That may have helped to ruin him.

Sometimes a preacher may be the pastor of Ichabod Memorial Church. Great big thing, form of godliness, no power, sardis, having a name to be alive but dead. You know, a mortician can make a dead man look better than he ever looked while he was living.

And sometimes a church expert can do that to a church but doesn't give the real life to it. The great awakening in Nineveh didn't start with Nineveh. It started with a runaway preacher.

And many a revival is waiting to begin over this land, not in a place, but in a preacher. But if you think getting into the will of God will solve your problems and it'll be peaches and cream from then on, you better learn right quick that that isn't the way it goes. You make yourself a target for the devil when you take a firm stand for Jesus Christ.

The trouble today is so many of our church members are not giving the devil enough trouble to even get his attention. He doesn't know they're around. But he got them where he wants them.

People say, I don't understand all about spiritual conflict over in the book of Ephesians. I don't feel anything like that. Well, they wouldn't.

The devil's got them right where he wants them. It's the fellow who's going somewhere that stirs up the wrath of the enemy. And I soon found that out.

In 1938, I was preaching through the state of Iowa. I went to stop over and preach at a town next night in next town. And in Creston, I preached and went to bed and couldn't sleep a wink.

Next night, same experience. And for two years, I suffered from insomnia, depression, unforgettable, strangest time of my life. And yet God began to open doors for my ministry.

I couldn't put it together. I said, Lord, I can't sleep in any bed, let alone a different one every week. Well, I can't do this kind of work.

And finally, I said, I better do it. Maybe this is like an electric door. It's not going to open until I step in.

And so I gave up my work and started out in the early part of the next year. My first date was to be in Grand Rapids at the old mail trotter mission. I 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, it seemed to me.

Said, now what are you going to do? Give up your church? Can't preach. I'd had a call to Florida Bible Institute and I turned it down. Any Southerner will go to Grand Rapids in January.

It's not right anyhow. I didn't know that. So I went down there, wired them and said, I'll come.

And I met two wonderful people. One was a student, long toe, toe headed fella, came up to me and said, I'm Billy Graham from Charlotte. I didn't know who I was meeting.

And the other was a charming young lady. I hadn't married yet, 39. I never bought a car till I was 66.

I didn't marry until I was 39. I wanted to think it over. But that young lady took mercy on me.

She would fix soup that I could eat out in bad condition and leave at the door and tap and run. She knew the way to a man's heart. All right.

And she was willing to undertake this traveling ministry. I didn't have much money and didn't even know whether I could do this or not. But we started out in 1940.

So I've been 40 years on the road. And if you think that's a picnic, living and readjusting every week to a new room, water, climate, everything. I've seen rugged preachers give it up and say, I got to get back to my bed.

But God had opened the door and I'm still going on. She changed some of my ideas. Of course, I had one with a saying that you can get married under orange blossoms and get a lemon just the same.

She said, that's out. And I found that she meant business. And of course I gladly dropped it.

But all I can say is beloved tonight, all the way my savior leads me. What about ask beside him? Can I doubt his tender mercy who through life's been my guide. Today, when I watch preachers, sometimes scrambling for seats in the synagogue, degrees, recognition, knowing the right people and politicking, you don't have to put your name in the pot at anybody's headquarters.

You don't have to know key men. If you know the keeper of the keys, he's got all of them key to every situation. You don't have to wait for a talent scout to find you.

Not if you're open to the leading of the Lord, God's got a waiting list and he'll use you if you make yourself usable. My work's kind of low key and simple. We used to have an old song.

You oldsters remembered. I'm forever blowing bubbles, pretty bubbles in the air. They fly so high and 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 in the air. That's what people are doing today. And the bubbles are bursting.

And I said, Lord, I'd want to go in the bubble and business. I want to practice being a blessing. And I said, Lord, there's two things I'd like to do.

As I walk the top of that old hill back there, I would like to write, and I don't know how, and I'd like to preach all over the country. I felt led that this was my preaching territory. Somehow I never felt that the Lord was going to call me to any overseas ministry.

That's the way it worked out. But I didn't know how to go about either one. I operate on a shoestring, no organization, no foundation except how firm a foundation ye say unto the Lord.

I never had a secretary in my life. I wouldn't know how to dictate a letter if I had to. And I don't get out brochures with my picture on it.

I got more sense than that. I just not got anything. I never been on drugs, never been an athlete, never been a halfback, fullback, or drawback on any football.

I don't know, but thank God he takes care of that. And I want to tell you young folks, if you'll take it from this old timer, I've been on the road a long time. I've enjoyed serving Jesus.

I've had my dark days, my lonely days, my rough days, but I've had him. And I sometimes don't believe you really get through to all you want is Jesus to all you've got's Jesus. And he sometimes has to reduce us to that.

I thought my dear one would be healed, but she was not. I read in Daily Light one morning where Jesus said, This sickness is not unto death, but that God may be glorified, speaking of Lazarus. And I thought that was it.

And I told my pastor, Claude Bone, I said, I believe God's going to raise her up. Well, he didn't. I had sat in Billy Graham's home and heard Dr. Bell tell about the miraculous healing of the other daughter in his family, Rosabelle Montgomery, dying of tuberculosis in Albuquerque.

She had never married. She was bitter in spirit. She wasn't right with God.

One lung collapsed, and then she got right with God. And the next thing she said, Maybe God would heal him. I called in some folks who settled at the prayer meeting, she said to the doctor, I'm not taking any more treatment.

And he called up Dr. Bell. Dr. Bell said he called me and said, What do we do? Well, I said, It seems like that if that's what she thinks is the will of God, we'll let her do what she feels is best. She got well.

She married. Katherine Marshall has a chapter in one of her books about it. Now, God does that sometimes.

We must not let extremism drive away from the fact that sometimes God does do these miraculous things. I think sometimes we're so afraid we'll get out on a limb, we never get up the tree. God does sometimes heal folks.

And I came down that mountain on cloud nine that night, thanking God that he does when it pleases him, that's in his hands. We leave it with him and he'll do what's right. But I found out that God had something else in mind that he might be glorified.

And I wrote a little book, though I walked through the valley and it has brought more response than all the other 30 books I've written. And I hardly ever have a day go by that I don't hear from somebody who's been blessed by it. That's God's recompense.

And I found out in Psalm 84.6 about those who walking through the valley of Baca, make it a well, leave it a well. There's a new song out, Leave a Well in the Valley. This means when you go through a dark valley, dig a well for the next traveler so that he'll get a blessing.

Don't sit and moan and cry on everybody's shoulder, but dig a well. Fanny Crosby could have done that. She could have said, Lord, why did I have to be blinded by a poltergeist, put on my eyes the wrong kind of a poltergeist and be blind 90 years? Now, you talk about something to grumble about.

She had it. But she didn't. She started digging wells.

Blessed assurance, redeemed how I love to proclaim it all the way. My Savior leads me. Draw me nearer, Jesus, keep me near the cross.

He hideth my soul. Jesus is tenderly calling, Savior more than life to me. When Jesus comes to reward his servants, rescue the perishing.

Someday the silver cord will break. I shall know him. Pass me not, O gentle Savior.

That's just a few of the wells. And there's not a Sunday goes by but people drink from one or the other of those wells. So leave a well.

God has a way of taking care of you that'll surprise you to death. I had such trouble as I told you about insomnia. And then when this sorrow came into my life, I said, oh, maybe that thing will come back.

And my doctor gave me some Valium. And he said, if you need it, take it. Well, I took three or four.

And then I said, Lord, if you want me to preach, I'm going to have to sleep too. And so I'm going to take you up on it. He giveth his beloved sleep.

And I threw away the Valium. Now it's all right in its place. Don't misunderstand me.

It serves a purpose sometimes. But we've got a nation full of Valiumites today for one thing, living on it. And I got to where I was like the old bishop that couldn't sleep.

And he got up at two in the morning and read, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. He said, Lord, if you're setting up, I'm going to bed. Good night.

Oh, it's, I preached at the Ben Lippin conference one summer. And while I was going through all that, I said, I've been shipwrecked on God and stranded on omnipotence. Billy Graham heard it over there where he lived.

And he wrote me a note next morning, shipwrecked on God, stranded on omnipotence. That's where I want to be when God calls me, Billy Graham. I treasure that note.

It means a lot to my soul. Well, my times are in his hand and I'm graven on the palms of his hands and nobody can pluck me out of his hands. I call that having the situation well in hand.

Well, I'm on my way home. Three or four years ago at Hampton, Virginia, that great black college, they asked me to come up there and preach for three days to between four and 500 black preachers. I nearly preached myself to death.

I tell you, I said, if I could get white folks to back me up like you do, I might turn out to be a pretty fair preacher. Lost one of my cuff links preaching one sermon, never did find it. Oh, we had a time.

And the last night, that crowd, I was the only white person on the place. Those fine people fill that great church and stood and sang, farther along we'll know all about it. And I sat over there and patted one foot and just bawled.

I didn't cry, I bawled so full of joy. I said, Lord, this crowd's going somewhere and I'm going with them. They're headed somewhere.

Oh, I thank God. I'd give anything in this world if I'd had my receiver and said, then I'd take down that thing. I'd play it every day if I had it, but let that one get by.

And I should have had it. Well, I'd like to leave this wish with you in request. Some years ago in Narberth, Pennsylvania, I had a meeting in a Presbyterian church, small church.

That pastor is now pastor of one of the most prestigious Presbyterian churches in the whole world, Fifth Avenue, New York. He wrote a book titled Home Before Dark. I love that title.

And I got to thinking about it. And I said, Lord, if it's all right with you, I'd like to get home before dark, before the darkness settles one way or another. My daddy used to say when I was a kid growing up on the

farm, now you'd be home by sundown.

That was a law of his. We didn't dialogue back in those days. Father monologued a lot and we said amen.

And I learned early to come in before sundown. And I found myself saying, Lord, I'd like to get home before my physical faculties play out, if it's all right with you. Now, God doesn't always grant that.

Oh, I went to see a fine preacher not long ago, used to preach in Tremont Temple and other places. He was built like a prize fighter. And when I walked in and saw him, I'm afraid my face registered such a shock that he couldn't help noticing it.

He's in heaven now. He's out of all that. But I found myself saying like Culbertson at Moody Bible Institute, Lord, when thou seest that my work is done, let me not linger on with failing powers, a workless worker in the world of work.

God took him home. He didn't stay sick too long. Or like old Pappy Reveal of the Evans Rescue Mission, Evansville, Indiana.

That man had no education. He was a plain crippled fellow, but he knew God and he got just about everything he prayed for. He got every preacher from Billy Graham.

He was glad to come down and preach just to be with Pappy. Because Pappy knew the Lord. Pappy said, Lord, I want a quick getaway.

I don't want to lose any time. And he got it. His wife was preparing breakfast and he was shaving in bed being a cripple.

And he shaved one side of his face and laid the razor down and went to heaven. That's a great way to go. I can't help wishing I could do that, something like that.

I think it's all right to ask the Lord about that, but put your name in the pot. It's all right. He may not be as well.

Well, I think it's all right to do that. And I said, I don't want to lose, I don't want to lose my faculties. And so far I managed to keep going around over the land.

You've got to keep your chin up, you know. You don't always feel like it when you're 79 right away. Got to be like that old 90 year old who's getting ready to go around the world.

And a friend of his went over to the airport to see him off. Said, you oughtn't to take a trip like this. I said, I may never see you again.

No, he said, you may be dead when I get back. So that's the way I'm going on day by day. Then I said this, and I believe you can join me in a prayer like this for yourself.

Lord, I'd like to get home before I make some big blunder the last mile of the way. Now, if you're saved, you're saved, but you're not safe from making a blunder as long as you're on this trail down here. And the last mile of the way, you may even through circumstances beyond your control.

You may be caught in some kind of a situation that'll give the devil a happy time, and something bad, they'll all remember that and forget every good thing you did, clear back up the road. That's human nature.

And I've prayed that that might not be the case.

And then I find myself saying, fast falls the eventide, the darkness deepens. Lord, with me abide. The lights are going out all over the world.

Oh, Henry, the great short story writer, lived in Greensboro, and the last thing he said when he died, I don't want to go home in the dark. Well, I don't know what he meant, but I know what I mean here. The darkness deepens.

Lord, with me abide. R. E. D. Sankey was blind in the last few years of his life, a man who had sung Sonobre for Moody. A friend went to see him, said, Mr. Sankey, could you find your way over to the little organ and play just one piece? He knew that his voice was cracked and he wouldn't be able to sing like he once did, but he made his way over there, sat down to sing, and what do you suppose it was? There will be no dark valley when Jesus comes.

Be no dark valley when Jesus comes. Be no dark valley when Jesus comes to gather his loved ones home. That's a good one to be able to sing at a time like that.

So my daddy went with me the first year or two when I went out preaching, and then when I was able to go by myself, he would meet me at the train in the little town of Newton, North Carolina. I can see him standing there beside that little old Ford Roadster in that old blue shirt suit that hadn't been pressed since the day he bought it, waiting to meet me. And I'd go up to him, and the first question he'd ask would be, How'd you get along? And I always reported, I haven't seen Dad in a long time.

One of these days my train's going to round the last curve into Grand Central Station, and I'm going to see him not in that old blue shirt suit, but in the robes of glory. And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the first thing he'll ask will be, Well, how'd you get along? And I'm going to say, Pretty well, and I owe a lot of it to you. And then as we go down the golden streets, I'm going to nudge him and say, Dad, you remember when I was supposed to get home by sundown when I was a kid? Well, bless God we've both made it, and home before dark.

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