

Lake Johanna Conference

by Vance Havner

Vance Havner's sermon reflects on the journey of faith, the importance of preaching the gospel, and the value of remaining faithful amidst life's challenges.

Duration: 39:44

Scripture: Amos 7:10, Matthew 11:6, Luke 19:17, John 1:29, John 9:6

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reflects on various aspects of faith and the journey of a believer. The sermon begins with a question about a doctor's actions in the past, but quickly transitions to the preacher's focus on the blessings and assurance found in God. The preacher mentions several hymns and scriptures that emphasize the nearness of Jesus and the redemption offered through Him. The sermon also touches on the preacher's personal journey as a young minister and the challenges he faced, ultimately finding solace in trusting the Lord.

Transcript

Thank you. It's good to have all ages represented here. I have a big time with the old folks these days and I go out to rest homes and so on.

I kid them a lot. I'm one of them. I can call them anything, get away with it.

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

They love that. After all these years in the ministry, I think I'm entitled to a few observations. I'm going to make a few, whether I'm entitled or not.

With your kind indulgence, I'd like to reminisce a little. And we have in Psalm 66, a suitable passage for such reverie, I think. 66, verse 16, come and hear, O 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. At my age, I'm supposed to be retired. I'm tired sometimes, but not retired, in a rocking chair, drawing my Social Security, and talking about the good old days that weren't so good, after all.

Somebody wrote Horace Greeley, the newspaper man, one time, said, your paper's not as good as it used to be. He answered, it never has been. And you feel that way about the good old days.

Distance lends enchantment to the view, you know. My memories begin in the old home in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Came from a little place called Jugtown.

They've got a book out about me now called Journey from Jugtown. They don't make the jugs there anymore. They used to make not only the jugs, but some of the contents therein, in some parts of that community.

But my old home, and I still hang on to what's left of it, and have dreams of doing it over, but that'd cost more than building a new one, so I probably won't do anything. I don't live there, but I go up once in a while. And from the front porch, one could always sit and see the lights at five towns at night.

On the west, the Blue Ridge Mountains, Grandfather and Table Rock, and all the rest of them. And on the one side, I was impressed with man's progress, and on the other side, with the eternal goodness as those mountains stood like silent sentinels along the western skyline. I came along in 1901, which is the first year of this century.

People always get mixed up about their mathematics there. Those of you that make it to the year 2000, as sure as you're born, they'll be celebrating the beginning of the new century in the year 2000. That's the last year of this century.

The new one doesn't start until 2001, but a lot of folks don't seem to remember that. So I'm in step, really, with the century, it seems to me. And I never did know the day when I didn't feel called to preach.

I don't know how you work that out theologically, but that's your problem. I came to Jesus as a 10-year-old boy out there in the country. I didn't understand much about it.

You don't have to understand it, you stand on it. I don't understand all about the plan of salvation. If there's no more to it than that, there wouldn't be much to it.

I don't understand all about electricity. I'm not going to sit around in the dark till I do. So I came with what I did understand and trust in the Lord.

I felt called to preach, and when I was 12, I stood in a little old country church and asked them to license me, as we put it in those days, to preach the gospel. They laid hands a little suddenly, I'm afraid, on me, those dear farmer folk. They gave me the church approval, and three years later, I was ordained.

I didn't know much. I was a typical, typical, typical country boy. I not only didn't know anything, but I didn't even suspect anything, most of the time.

In those days, a preacher, when he was cold, didn't get out a pad and pencil and start figuring what income bracket to put me in later on, and what would be the fringe benefits, and will I be appreciated for what I'm worth, which wouldn't call for much appreciation anyhow. I called to preach, settled it. You either did or you didn't.

Here am I, Lord, send me. I made my first talk away from home in a little town 12 miles away, Hickory, North Carolina. I guess you'd say I'm the Hick from Hickory.

That was my hometown. That was the nearest town I was to, to use awful English. And so, when we went over there, we didn't have an automobile.

There weren't many Fords running around, even in those days, and persuaded a neighbor to take us, and he is one of the old model, I mean old model, Jack Wurtzen and I, two weeks ago. He's got one on his place up there at Word of Life. We rode around all over the place, blowing the horn, and had pictures taken while you'd have thought I was Billy Graham or something.

But this old Ford with the bulb horn, 30 horsepower, and 20 of them dead, we started to cross those dirt roads, and when I got to Hickory, I've been in bigger places since, but never been in one looked as big as Hickory did that night. Looked in down the aisle of the First Baptist Church, looked like a mile to the pulpit. Father and I weren't accustomed to town churches, and he said, I'll sit back here, and I went down.

They put me in a chair. I stood in the chair, and the pastor of the church stood on one side, and the state evangelist stood on the other, like those fellows holding up the hands of Moses, and I did the best I could. And that's what I've been doing ever since, trying to do the best I could.

That's all God asked anybody to do, is be faithful. He didn't ask you to be brilliant. He didn't ask you to be successful.

He just asked you to be faithful, and that's what he'll reward you for, good and faithful servant. I didn't know much about theology. Sometimes I thought, though, the happiest fellow in the world is a brand new Christian before he's met too many Bible scholars.

I didn't know any more than to believe the Bible just like it read, and trust the Lord. When Amos, and he's always been my favorite preacher in the Bible. He was a country preacher for one thing.

I'd like to hear Amos address the minister's conference sometime today. I think that would be refreshing if Amos would come along and give us one of his messages. When he went up to Bethel to preach, no ministerial committee had invited him.

They asked him to leave, but they didn't invite him to come. He hadn't sent his manuscript on to headquarters to have some scribe who couldn't preach for sour apples anyway, and had never done any real preaching. Take a red pencil and go through the MS 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 a divinity school. He was unwilling to be made a member of the guilds who made their living by bowing to the wishes of the people and preaching a pleasing message that would guarantee a return engagement.

He didn't take the teeth out of his sermons in Tekoa and then gum it up at Bethel. When he went up there to preach, I'm sure that Dr. Amazigh, D.D., Lit D., and all the rest of it must have said to him, what do you mean coming out of the backwoods to preach? Don't you know you're in the capital? Don't you know this is the religious center even of the country? You're talking hard times and prophesying judgment. We never had it so good.

Go back to the backwoods. You don't belong on the boulevards. Where are your credentials? Amazigh said, I'm not a preacher by profession.

I am not a prophet. I'm not a preacher by parentage, not the son of a prophet. I'm a preacher by providence.

The Lord called me. And that's all you need to preach anyhow. You know, we have had generalissimos.

General Chiang Kai-shek was a generalissimo, and Franco of Spain was a generalissimo. Sometimes we have preacherissimos. The only trouble is, when they get to be a preacherissimo, they issimo more than they preach.

I don't amount to very much. But when I went up to my Bethel to make his preaching acceptable, he went up to make it available. He didn't go up to make them like it.

He went up to see that they got it. When I started, they said, boy, preachers don't last. They never last.

Well, I think 65 years is long enough to give it a try. But I had a fire in my bones and was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. I never traveled any beaten paths all my life.

I didn't go where they said go to school, and I didn't stay in any place long. I wanted to preach. I was restless.

And I remember that since I started out as a boy, the old principal of the high school, now Gardner Webb College in North Carolina, came to me and said, Vance, you're no genius, but if I were you, I believe I'd blaze my own trail. Well, you could have knocked me down with a feather. He was getting boys ready for Wake Forest and girls for the girls college at Raleigh, and for him to say a thing like that.

And I got to thinking about it. And I followed that course through the years, but I made many mistakes and had to learn the hard way. My first pastorate was a country church.

And after World War I, new ideas were going around. Modernism, with Harry Emerson Fosdick as its high priest, was making their appearance. We'd had the scopes trial, the monkey trial down in Tennessee.

And it's an index to the condition of this country today that we applaud Clarence Darragh and boo William Jennings Bryan. And yet Mr. Bryan was one of the greatest statesmen who ever had a government post in this country. One of the greatest orators who ever opened his mouth to speak.

I got to hear him a few times. I could have listened all afternoon, no matter what he talked about. But he knew God.

He loved the Lord. I was impressed in those days. Looked like things were taking a turn for the better, you know, making the world safe for democracy.

That's what we fought World War I for. Some of you old-timers remember. It hasn't been safe for anything since.

Certainly wasn't for democracy. But the new gospel, according to the modern mind, rather intrigued me. I found out later that it wasn't much modern, not much mind.

But it did intrigue me then. And I became a bit infatuated with it. Tried to preach it.

I believe still in the virgin birth. I hadn't gone that far. But I was going.

And the fire went out of my bones. And finally I gave up my church and went back to the old home in the hills. People were asking what became of the boy preacher.

And I had nowhere to preach. The Lord closed every door right in my face. And one day I came across a poem.

It took me years to find the whole poem. But I remembered, couldn't forget, two lines in it. How sad will be the days in store when voice and vision come no more.

I'll never forget that one. But God who had called me remembered my frame and knew that I was dearest. And he was merciful.

And then I ran into a couple of characters. Gresham Machen, that great Presbyterian with his book on Christianity and liberalism shook me loose. And as a young fellow I was riding on a train one day and spotted R. A. Torrey looking like a prophet out of the Old Testament sitting over there.

And I was brash enough to go over and engage him in conversation. He said, what are you doing? Well, I wasn't doing much. And my report card didn't look so good.

I said, well, I'm interested in this a little and that a little and the other thing. I'm just sort of finding my way, I guess. He said, young man, make up your mind on one thing and stay with it.

Never smile. I used to say Torrey didn't win a lot of people to himself, but he won thousands through Jesus Christ. He was a prophet.

I never forgot that. I've gone to Montrose, Pennsylvania many a time to preach the Bible conference, stayed in his home there, his old home. Climbed that hill many a day to where he lies buried with the tombstone.

I've fought a good fight. I've finished the course. I've kept the faith.

And thank God for a prophet who could look me in the eye and say, make up your mind. In other words, don't go out and try to see to it that you're like a sword with one point, not like a broom with straws pointing every direction. And then it came to my inmost soul, and the dear Lord made it clear to me, if you will get these highfalutin notions out of your head and go back and preach the plain old gospel you preached as a boy, I'll make a way for you.

And I took him up on it. I did, and he did. And the first thing I had to do is go back to that church three years and preach it straight.

I left the novelty shop and got in the antique shop again, back to the things that really mattered. And I'm proud of the old-time religion. The greatest things among us today are mighty old-fashioned.

Sun's old-fashioned, but without it you grow up in darkness. Air's old-fashioned, without it you gasp and die. Water's old-fashioned, no satisfactory substitutes ever been discovered.

Don't you get excited over the fact that we've split the atom and gone to the moon. Sin's as black as ever, hell's as hot as ever. Judgment's as certain, and salvation is free, and eternity's as long.

And never forget that living he loved me, and dying he saved me, and buried he carried my sins all the way. Rising he justified freely forever. One day's coming, oh glorious day.

Preach it as never before, live it as never before. It's a sad day for any preacher, and I meet many of them over the land, and there was one redeeming thing that came out of my experience. I can spot that poison when it begins to work.

And then's the time to spot it, and that's the time to head it off. It can come to a preacher not when he, like I was, is out of work, but when he's got a big church with a reputation, popular. Maybe one reason why Demas left Paul is that his name means popular.

Sometimes it comes to a pastor of Ichabod Memorial Church having a form of godliness without the power, or Sardis having a name to be alive and dead. A mortician can make a dead man look better than he ever looked while he's living. And a church expert can do that with the church sometimes, but God knows the difference.

The great awakening in Nineveh didn't start with Nineveh, it started with a runaway preacher. And many a revival is waiting to begin, not in the place, but with the preacher. But if you think getting into the will of God is going to settle all your problems, and it's going to be peaches and cream from then on, change your ideas, because you become the target of the devil when you make up your mind to live for God.

I was traveling through the state of Iowa in 1938, stopped night after night at a different place and preached. One night I went to bed in Creston, Iowa. Didn't sleep a wink.

Next night, not a wink. And for two years I was beset with insomnia, nervous exhaustion, depression. The doctors have better words than that for it.

But my heart goes out to anybody who has such problems. They say there aren't but two kinds of people in the world, nervous people and folks who laugh at nervous people. But I don't belong to that aggregation anymore, because you learn the hard way.

And if some dear soul says, snap out of it, you feel like saying, do you think I'm enjoying it? I'd be glad to snap out if you could tell me how. And yet the Lord began to call me into the work I'm doing now, and it didn't make sense. I said, Lord, I can't sleep in any bed, let alone a different bed every week.

There must be something wrong with this somewhere. But the call kept coming. And I said, well, it must be like these electric-eye doors that don't open till you walk in.

I'm going to walk in. I'm going to start, see what happens. So I made the move.

My first date was supposed to be in Grand Rapids at the old Mel Trotter Mission. And got as far as Chicago and took the flu, and they put me in a hospital, and I lay there, and the devil sat on the foot of the bed and said, now what are you going to do? You gave up your church, and you can't preach, you can't do this. I had turned down an invitation to Florida Bible Institute.

I wired the man, I'll come. The doctor said, get out of here in this climate. Anybody who will come from the south to Grand Rapids to start in the dead winter, something the matter with you anyhow.

So I wired the man that I'd come. Got down there and met two interesting people. A long, lean, tall toehead walked up to me, one of the students, said, I'm Billy Graham from Charlotte.

I didn't know who I was meeting that day. And then there was a young lady who took mercy on me in my sad condition. She would make a bowl of soup that I could eat, and she'd leave it at the door and tap gently and run before I could open the door.

She knew the way to a man's heart, you know, and it worked. And oh, my friend, I tell you, I'll never cease to thank God that that dear young lady was willing to start out with a half-sick preacher who didn't have any money and didn't know whether he could do what he was starting out to do or not. That's faith.

We started out. I ran across a batch of old love letters that I'd written in 1940, three-cent stamps, you know, way back then. And to her, and I was trying to brace, oh, we were scared to death of getting married.

We were a little older than I was, almost 39 before I got married, 66 before I bought an automobile. I wanted to think it over. But she was willing to join hand and heart with such a preacher, start out.

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 it.

I was trying to brace myself up, all at the same time. But we took off, and for 33 years we traveled all over America. And we were not sick, and the doors opened, and God met the need.

All the way my Savior leads me. What have I to ask beside? Can the doubt his tender mercy? Who through life has been my guide? I watch today in the church the scramble for seats in the synagogue, the top place, you know. Degrees, recognition, knowing the right people, religious politicking.

We never had more of it than we've got now. You don't have to put your name in the pot at headquarters. You don't have to know the key man if you know the keeper of the keys.

He knows the men. You don't have to wait for a talent scout to find you if you're right with God and usable. God's got a waiting list.

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro looking for somebody in whose behalf he can show himself perfect. Not show you perfect in his behalf, but himself in your behalf. He's on the lookout.

He's shorthanded. He needs help. Sometimes people say, I don't know what's the matter with me.

God doesn't seem to use me. Listen friend, God will wire you out if you're usable. You just get on the usable list.

He'll use you to the full extent of your usability. You find yourself saying, Lord, you're about to kill me. I didn't know you were going to use me this much.

So I've been operating through these years since on a low key, simple. I don't think God ever had anything big in mind when he made me to start with. I've operated on a shoestring, never owed but \$200 in my life.

Borrowed that when I was a boy to go to school. My dad said, I want you to keep away from three things, debt, dirt, and the devil, that they're all in the same source. So I've tried to keep away from all three since that time.

I don't even get out brochures with my picture on it. If I did that, I never would get any calls to preach. I don't know how I make it.

I don't have any of the qualifications. I haven't been an athlete. I haven't been the fullback, halfback, drawback on any team.

Never have had drugs. Don't have any sermons on sex. I don't know how I make it.

I rode with a young fellow some time ago. He's a real Christian, but one of these quiet, this quiet sort that I love. He said, Brother Abner, I've never had many exciting experiences in my life, but I guess you'd call me just plain vanilla.

I love that. When I was a boy, growing up on the farm, if you had ice cream, you worked for it. You got the milk and the ice and ground all afternoon.

You had something sweet and cold and wet, but that tasted better than today's fancy concoctions all smothered in goo. There's something about it, somehow or other. And I love vanilla, Christian, just plain Christian.

We need more of that kind as we make our way through. I never know when I sit down to some of these fancy arrangements in the ice cream part of the day whether I'm supposed to eat it or just admire it. Well, we didn't have anything to admire in the country ice cream, but it was still good.

Vanilla, Christian. And then in 1973, I was exercised very much at the beginning of that year about my own spiritual condition. I said, I ought to be a better preacher as long as I've worked at it.

I ought to be a better Christian. And I made this prayer. Don't you ever pray it unless you're ready for trouble.

Lord, at any cost, bring me to the place where I can sing that old line once, earthly joy, I crave so peace and rest. Now thee alone I seek. Give what is best.

That's easy to sing and hard to come up to. God took me up on it. Well, Sarah went to glory.

On Labor Day, it'll be six years. She died at 2.15 on Sunday morning, and I preached at 11. I didn't know whether I could or not, but I preached on the forgotten beatitude.

When John the Baptist sent his delegation to Jesus to ask, Art thou he that come? Or do we look for another? Now, that was a low mark for John the Baptist. The man who had stood on the Jordan said, Behold the Lamb of God. Now he's saying, are you the one? Or do we start looking all over for the Messiah? I'm so glad that Jesus didn't send word back to him and say, I'm ashamed of you.

I'm ashamed of you. Didn't even send him a cute little tract on how to be happy in jail. Sent word back, said, tell him I'm running on schedule.

The blind are seeing, the deaf are hearing, the lame are walking, the poor are having a gospel preach. And then he added this, and this is the forgotten beatitude. We know all the others.

Nobody ever knows this one. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Blessed is the person who never gets upset by the way I run my business, God is saying.

Well, I certainly couldn't understand it. I'd hope for old age together. And here, if ever I needed somebody along, it seemed of all times, Lord, why? That little word, why? I preach sometimes on why.

And then I had read before Sarah passed away in daily light where Jesus said, this sickness is not unto death, but that God should be glorified. And I grabbed it. I said, that's my verse.

I believe, I believe God's going to keep that verse. And I told my pastor about it. But Jesus said it about Lazarus, and Lazarus died, and God was glorified after it.

And so I had to learn that he meant afterwards, not after death, not in the hereafter, but now. I wrote that little book, though I walk through the valley. Many of you have it, and some of you have already spoken to me about it here.

And I've heard more from that little book than all the other thirty that have written. I never knew there were as many lonely people in this world as there are now. With all our amusement and all our entertainment, we've got more lonesome people than we've ever had.

And so many dear souls come up, and I see a tear in their eye, and they grip my hand. They don't have any little speech to make. They've been down the valley, and I know what they mean.

And then there's Psalm 84, 6, about the righteous man who, walking through the valley of Baca, leaves a well. There's a new song out, I've not heard it, Leave a Well in the Valley. It's brand new, I think.

I'd like to hear it. And that means when you have trouble in going through a dark road, dig a well for somebody else when they come along to get refreshment from it. Leave a well in the valley.

Fanny Crosby could have grumbled at God for 90 years. She could have said, why did that doctor put that poultice on my eyes when I was a baby, the wrong poultice, and blind me for life? 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 them. This concludes side one.

Continue to listen on side two. And there's not a Sunday that goes by that we don't drink from those wells. She could have grumbled at God, but she didn't.

She took the other way out. And God gave me a new dimension and a new note that I didn't have before. Sometimes it looks like God has to have killers to teach you some things.

You ought to learn without it. But if God's taking you along a lonely and hard path, he's got something in mind. So I'm back where I started.

No home, an apartment, no family, but more open doors than ever. And I can't understand it. It amazes me, absolutely.

I never thought that I'd be going around like this. And I don't ask for it. Shipwrecked on God and stranded on omnipotence.

I said that in the conference. North Carolina and Billy Graham heard me. He lived right across on the mountain.

Sent a note next morning. I keep it. I have it.

Said, shipwrecked on God, stranded on omnipotence. That's where I want to be when he calls me. That's all he put.

No. Sent it to me. As I look back, beloved, I see an unseen hand.

Unseen but seen by faith. A lot of things have happened that didn't make sense, and I still can't figure out some of them, but God knows why. I can't put it together.

And I hear people say, I don't understand. These folks want to go to heaven. Homesick for heaven.

What are you talking about? Who wants to stick around here forever? I'm homesick for heaven. Paul was. Had a desire to depart and be with Christ.

Sometimes the very fact we're headed that way helps us. I heard of a fellow who was seasick. He'd lost breakfast, lunch, and supper all over the railing.

One of these cheerful mortals that comes along always at the wrong time. Slapped him on the back. Said, cheer up.

Seasickness never killed anybody. Said, don't tell me that. It's the hope of dying that's kept me alive this long.

So it's the hope of dying that's kept me going. Years ago, many years ago, I had a meeting in the First Presbyterian Church of Narberth, Pennsylvania. The preacher has since gone to the most prestigious Presbyterian Church in America, Fifth Avenue, New York.

He's written a book, Home Before Dark, and that title intrigues me. I love that title, Home Before Dark. When I was growing up in the country, Dad had an understanding with me that I was to be back home by sundown.

We didn't argue about it. We didn't do much dialoguing back in those days. Dad did a lot of monologuing, and when he laid it down, it stayed laid down.

He believed he was the head of the house, and the rest of us were inclined to agree with him. So I made it a point to be home by sundown. And you know my ambition as I stand here this morning.

I want to get home before dark. O. Henry, the short story writer, lived in Greensboro, and his last words before he died was, I don't want to go home in the dark. But I don't know what he meant.

I don't mean, I think, what he meant. But I want to go home before dark, if it will please God. I'd like to before my physical faculties play out.

I've seen some dear men. Oh, I went to see one the other day. What a rugged preacher he had been.

When I walked into the room and looked at him, I'm afraid my face registered the shock, and I'm afraid he noticed it. He's gone now, but I know the day when he was such a burly physical specimen. And I found myself saying like dear Dr. Culbertson at Moody Institute in his last days, Lord, when thou seest that my work is done, let me not linger on with failing powers, a workless worker in a working world.

I know what he meant. I'd like to get home before dark that way. And I'd like to get home before dark, before I make some blunder, because, dear friend, if you're saved, you're saved, but you're never safe till you get home.

Safe from blundering and safe from saying something that'll spoil your testimony and make that last blunder on the last mile, and they'll remember that and forget everything you did back up the road that was good. That's human nature. So watch that last mile of the way.

You're not home yet. Be careful about it. The man that followed Churchill, Anthony Eden, was a fine Britisher, brilliant man, but he sort of blundered at Suez.

And if you mention him now, a Britisher may say, yes, too bad about Suez. But he did so many wonderful things before Suez. So watch.

And then I want to get home before the lights go out in this old world. The darkness deepens. Lord with me abide.

Fast falls the eventide. It's getting dark in this old world. The night's far spent.

The day is at hand. When I started out as a boy, my daddy went with me for a year or two. And then when I was on my own, he'd always meet me when I'd come in at the Little Raider Road station.

I can see him standing there. He had beside that little old Ford with that old blue suit on that he hadn't had pressed since the day he bought it. And I'd go up to him, and he'd always ask me one question first.

How did you get along? Well, I haven't seen him in a long time. One of these days, I'm going to round the curve into glory. When I get there, I'm going to see him not in the old blue surgeon suit, but in the robes of heaven.

I believe the very first thing he'll say of me, how'd you get along? And I think I'm going to say pretty well, Dad, and owe a lot of it to you. And then I think as we walk down the Golden Street, I'm going to nudge him, and I say, you remember, Dad, when I was supposed to get home by sundown? Well, bless God, we've both made it home before dark. And I, I believe you want to do that too.

They invited me up to Hampton, Virginia, to the great black college up there. They wanted me to preach for three days to between four and five hundred black preachers. I nearly preached myself to death.

I said, if you, if I could get my white folks to back me up like you folks backed me up, I might turn out to be a pretty fair preacher. Oh, I preached so hard I lost one of my cuff links, never did find it. And then the last night that great crowd gathered and sang as only our black friends can sing, farther along we'll know all about it.

And I sat there and patted one foot and just bowed. I didn't cry, I just bowed for joy. I said, Lord, this crowd's going somewhere, and I'm going with them.

They know where they're going, and I hope you do too. God help us to make it home before dark. We'll all be there someday, sinners saved by old time grace.

All because of God's amazing grace. Are you going home? Are you heading for home? Are you? I can help you. Anybody can help you.

You say, well, I'll tell you, I'm not sure I'm going to heaven. Let me lead you to Christ. Let me pray with you.

That's very important. It's imperative. Stand with me, will you please, everybody? I'd like to have you sing just one stanza of Fanny Crosby's Blessed Assurance.

Dr. Havner, listen to all those great songs from Fanny Crosby. This one, I'm sure, would be a good benediction. We're going home before dark.

We get there, all will be sunshine. This would be a great benediction for this morning. Let's sing the whole song, shall we? Listen here.

And all God's people said.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/19/SID19726.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/vance-havner/lake-johanna-conference/>

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