

# Old Time Religion

by Vance Havner

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*Vance Havner emphasizes the timeless truths of Christianity and the need to return to foundational beliefs amidst modern distractions.*

**Duration:** 20:50

**Scripture:** Exodus 20:3, Isaiah 66:24, Matthew 12:30, Mark 9:43, Luke 11:23

**Topics:** "Righteousness"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the state of society and the abundance of leisure time that people have. He emphasizes the importance of knowing certain truths rather than being unsure about many things. The speaker firmly believes in the Bible as the word of God and highlights the significance of love and following the Ten Commandments. He also mentions the idea that one cannot break the law of God, but rather, they break themselves against it. The sermon concludes with the notion that true goodness lies in salvation rather than in one's own goodness or badness.

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## Transcript

After 60 years in the ministry, I see no reason for any basic change in what I started out preaching and believing. I'm not interested in fads that fade, demoralize, by which spiritual adolescents are carried away with every wind of doctrine. I'm tired of hooting anti-religion, rock-and-roll Christianity, whirling us under church auspices in order that pagans may feel more at home in the sanctuary.

I'm tired of all efforts to force a counterfeit kingdom of God on an unregenerate society, schemes to bring in the millennium by legislation, education, reformation, by which we sweep out the house and seven demons come back, and the last stage worse than the first. I'm tired of political projects being disguised as moral issues. I'm tired of churchmen riding all kinds of new bandwagons headed for some sociological promised land.

I'm tired of the church being an accompanist when it ought to be a soloist. I'm tired of hearing in our denominations that we must get away from our humble beginnings and shake the hayseed out of our hair and come of age and get with it. I'm tired of all this bragging about how sophisticated we are in America, when actually this is the most gullible generation so far, that has bought more gold bricks and white elephants than any crowd that's ever lived since Adam.

And thus, I heard of a family on a vacation some time ago on a picnic in the summertime and one of the boys stole a watermelon out of a patch nearby, and his dad said, now don't do that again, you don't know what they've been sprayed with. See what I mean? Nothing to say about stealing. The Bible doesn't mince any words, and love does not annul the Ten Commandments that obey them.

Love has no other gods, no greater than images, does not take God's name in vain, keeps the Lord's day, honors father and mother, does not commit adultery, steal, kill, bear false witness, covet. You can't break the law of God, I've heard that all my life and nobody's ever done it yet. You break yourself against the law of God.

If you jump over the skyscraper, you don't break the law of gravitation. Break your neck, but not the law of gravitation. And the God who reigns in righteousness.

I'm tired of little professors brainwashing young students into disbelieving the Bible. I'm tired of popular commentaries on preachers' desks, commentaries that doubt or deny every miracle in the books. I'm tired of seeing the stars and stripes draped in the dust, and the great heroes of our past smeared, and patriotism jerked in favor of an internationalism that's part of the program of antichrist.

I'm tired of calling sin, sickness, and alcoholism a disease. If it is a disease, it's the only one I know overspending millions of dollars a year to spread. The Bible doesn't say no leper shall inherit the kingdom of God.

It doesn't say no drunkard, no paralytic, but it does say no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. I'm tired of hearing murderers called victims of a traumatic experience, whatever that is. I suppose he pushed the oatmeal off his high chair when he was a youngster, and then he grew up and pushed his wife off Brooklyn Bridge.

In the slums, but... I'm tired of making illegitimacy respectable and subsidizing it by the welfare state. I'm tired of these experts today who know all the answers and haven't found out what the question is. I got along pretty well in the depression of the thirties, but I'm having a rough time.

This mirage recalls progress. We've learned how to lengthen life, but we haven't learned how to deepen it. You'd have to live twice as long to live half as much, as some of the word is of another day.

Birthdays tell how long you've been on the road, but they don't tell how far you've traveled. I'm tired of waiting through secondhand tobacco smoke from a generation of lung cancer prospects. While the surgeon general warns the nation and the pulpits keep quiet.

You know the slogan, I'd rather fight than switch. What bothers me is the crowd that'd rather die than quit. I'm tired of hearing about temperance and drinking liquor instead of abstinence, just to please the cocktail set in the congregation.

The overuse of alcohol. If you've had any, you've had too much. I'm tired of bemoaning the evils of alcoholism.

Doing nothing about the sores. Mopping up the floor while we leave the faucet running. Trying to sweep out the cobwebs while we do nothing about the spider.

I'm tired of the stupidity of our smartness. Do you call it progress when we've polluted the very air we breathe and wheeze our way through the smog? Do you call it progress when we've polluted the waters until the rivers have become sewers? Do you call this progress when our cities are jungles of crime and no decent woman dares walk the street at night? Progress? Years ago I could stroll around in Central Park, for instance, when I went to New York unharmed. Now I'd need a police guard.

Progress? When you live in a madhouse of air-splitting noise, and the next generation may have to wear gas masks and hearing aids. Progress? When you're safer on a battlefield than on a highway. Well, I know we're pretty smart.

We've invented television, but they tell me the programs are so sorry now the kids have gone back to their homework. So what? They do our thinking, but who's doing any thinking anyway? We have more leisure than ever and don't know what to do with it. I'm tired of all this, but there are some things, thank God, I'm not tired of.

There are some things I'm sure of. Josh Billings said I'd rather know a few things for certain than be sure of a lot of things that ain't so. I believe the Bible is the word of God.

Yeah, they weren't at it. I don't understand all of it, but I stand on all of it. They've tried to bury it again and again, but the corpse has always had a habit of coming to life in the midst of the internment to outlive all the pallbearers.

They tell us that the resurrection of creation, these are just myths, not miracles. If I believed that, I'd be mystified. I'd be mistaken.

I'd be miserable. I heard of a businessman who said the scriptures had been read. He said if there are no corrections or additions, the scriptures will stand as read.

You who for refuge to Jesus has laid it on that rock I stand. I believe Jesus Christ was the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary. If he was born otherwise, he was born out of wedlock, and I'm not interested in that kind of a Savior.

It's both recorded, you say, in Luke. Well, how many times does God have to say it before you believe it? I believe the record God gave of his Son, and on that rock I stand. I believe that he came down here to die for our sins.

He didn't come just to teach or to be an example or die a martyr. He came to do something about the main problem. You'd never know there's a main problem today.

You'll never know it in Congress. You'd never expect anybody to stand up there and say there's a trouble at hand. Nobody in the U.N. Nobody in the universities.

Nobody in the scientific laboratories. Nobody in the world capitals. But for that cause he came to the world.

He died for our sins. I believe Jesus Christ rose bodily from the grave. I'm not worshipping a ghost.

The world knows that he died, but the church knows that he rose. Have you thought why didn't he show up before Herod and Pilate, Theophilus, and say, Here I am. You thought you'd done away with me.

You could have put on a demonstration in Jerusalem and been the greatest sensation of all time and saved us a lot of trouble all down through the centuries trying to establish the fact of the resurrection, which we don't need to do since it's already established. But it's the greatest secret of all time and the church is the greatest secret order of all time. I accept the fact of it.

I've entered into the experience of it. I'm living in the power of it and I'm awaiting the final fulfillment of it. Up from the grave he arose.

I believe he's coming back personally and visibly to reign on earth. Could be any day. The sooner the better.

Paul Harvey said, It is the Christian's conviction that Christ will return and take over when mortals have made a hopeless mess of self-loathing men. Well, then he ought to be back any time. What a change it will make when he came the first time neither the Roman world of government nor the Greek world of culture or the Hebrew world of religion would accept him when he comes back.

Same story. Neither government, culture, or religion will hang out a welcome sign. And even the church, God help us, is so busy puttering around down there.

We rarely lift eyes toward heaven to pray even so. Come Lord Jesus. Wouldn't you think it would be on all our lips? Wouldn't you think it would be the subject of many a happy conversation? You try to bring it up before the average gathering of church members and they look at you suspiciously and hesitantly and embarrassed.

The Lord returns, the unwanted steps out in the family of church doctrine. But on that rock I stand. I believe Jesus Christ answers every problem, past, present, and future.

I like to make an acrostic out of that word faith. F-A-I-T-H For all, I take him. For all he is, I take him.

For all my need, I trust him. And for all his blessings, I thank him. I believe all who trust him already have eternal life.

You don't have to go through a graveyard to get to it. And all who reject him, even conscious, tore him in. Forever.

I believe it was a hell because he said so. I was pastor of a country church a long, long time ago where an infidel in the community said, Uh, I don't like this preaching on judgment and hell. Tell us more about the meek and lonely Jesus.

But he didn't know as much as the information I have about hell I got from the meek and lonely Jesus. He took the last verse of Isaiah and the garbage heap outside Jerusalem and put them together in the most beautiful picture of eternal torment on record. And I have listened to sometimes even preachers trying to say that Jesus was merely accommodating himself to the prevailing ideas of his time.

But no amount of exegetical sleight of hand can change the fact that he saw the future abode of the wicked as an endless horror beyond the great gulf already fixed. But I also believe in heaven. Long ago as a little boy in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains I carved one day on one of the bricks of the ancient house heaven I hoped to reach.

I heard about it in Sunday school, in the little church, and at home. So I made up my mind to head in that direction. I used to swing into the peaks of heaven trying to sing there's a land that's fairer than day and by faith I can see it afar when I can read my title clear the mansions in the sky.

I visited that sacred spot. I still own the old place from then. And I found it.

The old bridge was worn, but there it was. Years and years of wind and weather had battered it and most of it had been washed by the rains and the storms and the sledding. I've stood the gales too in the summers and winters of every year but the ravages of life the seasons that I have passed through have not removed the hope of heaven from my heart.

And it's embedded there more securely this morning than my boyhood. When I look at inscriptions I've got more personal interest in it than I ever had before. Just a little while ago, a little later when it went out of the way of it.

This road's never been less interesting nothing more attractive than now I'm reading everything I can find about the land that's fairer than days but I take my saviour's word for it and that's enough if, if, where not what more do you want? That says it for me. And I find myself singing praise to every foe and ambition all of salt and hope and moon yet how rich is my condition God and heaven until now.

And I know what you're saying Well we've been in the novelty shop long enough these days somebody ought to get back to the seems to me The sun's old fashioned but you can't get along without it men go to the dark air's old fashioned but without it you gasp and you die water's old fashioned without how dependent we are on the simplicity Jesus always talked about simplicity life, bread, salt, water some time ago the power went off in upper New York State and there sat millions of people just waiting for the sun to rise how dreadfully old fashioned that's old fashioned and then out in Los Angeles they had more smog than ever some time ago and the meteorologist said only a sweep of wind from elsewhere will relieve this smog and there sat several million more waiting for the wind to blow

awfully old fashioned when you come to think of it and they had a drought out in the Midwest and the agricultural experts said only the rain can take care of this and there sat several million more waiting for it to rain dreadfully old fashioned well it's good enough for me the greatest hindrance to any man's salvation is not his badness it's his goodness my problem is we have too many people they're too good to get saved except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees my lord said well how good were they they went to church they read the bible they prayed in public they were all tithers they lived clean separated lives and tried to win others and I'm so glad that although I'm not good enough and you're not good enough I can sing there is a green hill far away where

the dear lord was crucified who died to save us all there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin he only could unlock the gates of heaven and let us in England's great preacher Joseph Parker of generations ago and his text was this we're living in the age of the expert and that's it because of most of our trouble maybe and our civilization is crumbling because the doers have rejected the only foundation of what can the righteous do will you let an old timer after 60 years in the ministry and 30,000 on the road and I started as a boy I never knew the day I wasn't called a priest never knew the day that I really wanted to do anything else my bible says that Jesus Christ is in the gathering business he that is not with me is against me but you hear it said I say get with him and

when you're with him you're in business and when you're with him go in the direction he's going you're going somewhere some years ago during the war I finished a meeting in a Presbyterian church in Baltimore and was due to start one on Monday night and the first register was set up and it looked like it would make I got up the next morning and looked across from the pullman and sitting opposite me was the secretary of war of course you understand he didn't know me but I knew him they say a cat can look at a king so I looked at him and he was on his way to Chicago to make a big speech I was on my way to LaSalle to start a meeting he sent word to the engineer and said we must make this on time rather we did we didn't even hesitate at most of those times as we went across the country but I

had the time of my life I said now this big shot thinks they're hurrying up the train so he can speak in Chicago the good Lord's hurrying the tunnels may be pretty high you may go through tunnels that you can't see the way out but you'll make it because when you're with him he'll make it and he'll see you through God bless you our father we thank thee that in this day of confusion we have a chart and a compass and one who not only knows the way but is the way and the truth and the life we thank thee for what sometimes we call the old time religion but it's not old time it's new time all the time anytime we thank thee that thy eternity rules out all our little adjectives we pray that thou would help these young people here these who here study the word of God to move out into this

generation knowing that we have the answer he's the answer and he has said when I come back he'll ask me nothing Lord we sometimes get puzzled and wonder all our questions we thank thee

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