

# The Kind of Preacher We Need

by Vance Havner

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*We need preachers who are anointed, authoritative, absolute, and apocalyptic to proclaim the truth of the Bible in these uncertain times.*

**Duration:** 52:41

**Scripture:** Matthew 11:2-6, John 1:29, John 7:37-39, Ephesians 4:12, Revelation 21:5

**Topics:** "Preaching"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the role of preachers in today's society. He mentions that while some may believe that the main job of a preacher is to equip laymen for their ministry, the Bible still emphasizes the need for preachers. The preacher also highlights the idea that in the end, only two lists will remain - the lost and the saved. He encourages listeners to switch from being lost to being saved through the offer of grace. Lastly, the preacher emphasizes the need for preachers to have an apocalyptic tone, similar to the book of Revelation, as we are living in a significant and challenging time.

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## Transcript

This regimentation is pretty serious. I heard of a fellow who went to the hospital the other day, he only had a sore foot. They said, well, go over there in that little room, take off your things, put on a robe, and we'll send for you.

He said, I've only got a sore foot. He said, that's standard procedure. So he went over there, fussing like everything, praying there's somebody knocked next to him.

There's a fellow in there who said, shut up, you have got a sore foot, I just came here to fix the telephone. So we're really regimented. I think I was with you last time, Dolphin Way, and then I've been with John Bogd here before.

I feel at home, it's good to be here. You folks from Southwestern, I'm sorry for you, because I was asked to give this message again by some of the brethren who heard it, and if some of the rest of you heard it, if once was enough, I beg your indulgence, you're going to hear it again. In these wild and weird and wicked times, the work of the preacher is being rethought and revamped and reexamined.

Some think his main business, according to Ephesians 4.12, is to be the equipper of the layman for their ministry. He's been pushed away from the center of the platform to the wings in favor of celebrities and experts and entertainers. But the Bible still says, How shall they hear without a preacher? What kind of preacher do we need today? We need the same kind we've always needed.

Nothing important has changed, and just because we've split the atom and gone to the moon doesn't mean that we need a new kind of preacher. We have a new kind in some quarters, but we don't need him. There's a lot of cheap preaching going around today.

I heard of a preacher years ago when the haircuts were fifty cents apiece who had a barber in the crud who said, I'll take care of your haircuts. I'll take it out in preaching. The preacher said, I'll have you to know I don't have any fifty-cent sermons.

The barber said, That's all right, I'll come several times. First of all, we need an anointed preacher. The old word unction, which I don't hear much anymore, is connected with unguent, unguentine, ointment.

But the kind I'm talking about is not sold over any counter. Simon Magus tried to buy it, but it's not for sale. It's not compounded by any apothecary.

It's not put together by chemistry. A preacher may be wrapped in the robes of learning, and his study walls may be decked with diplomas, and his home filled with travel souvenirs from many lands, and he may wear all the trappings of ecclesiastical pageantry, but he can't function without unction. And if he tries, he'll spend his time taxiing to the runway and never take off.

John Wesley demonstrated that a long time ago. He started out equipped with formidable qualifications. No man was better prepared for the ministry and still not ready to preach.

And many a freeholder's gate Wesley today starts out to convert the Indians without ever being converted himself. Exodus 30 to 33 speaks about the anointing of the priest. There were three restrictions.

Upon man's flesh it shall not be poured. You cannot anoint old Adam for the service of God. And whoso compoundeth any like it, no imitations allowed, or whosoever putteth any of it on a stranger, shall be cut off from the people.

Sometimes I think we Southern Baptists have just about rededicated ourselves to death. We're running down the aisle every chance we get, running a sort of an old Adam improvement society. But unsanctified flesh that never has died to sin and risen to walk in newness of life is trying to rededicate itself, and God wouldn't accept it if we rededicated for a thousand times.

There are some qualifications. We read that not many wise, mighty, noble have been called, and they haven't. You know that.

Not many wise, because you don't get their head first, you get their heart first. The only thing I know of that has its head and heart in the same place is cabbage, and you're no cabbage. Then the mighty.

How many Presidents of the United States can you think of that you believe were born again, spirit-filled, New Testament Christians? It's kind of discouraging. And then the blue-bloods, the noble, bragging about their ancestry. The trouble with this ancestry business is, it's like potatoes, the best part's usually under the ground.

You don't get there that way. And why have not many wise, mighty, and noble been called that no flesh should glory in his presence? And the other verse says they that are in the flesh cannot please God. It's absolutely impossible.

The preacher we need is authoritative. I heard a minister say the other day we must get away from authoritarian preaching. I think we need to get back to it.

We've already gotten away from it. Our Lord taught us having authority and not as the scribes. Too much of what I hear today sounds like the scribes.

When authority goes out, anarchy comes in. Jesus met the devil not in his own power, he could have done it, not in his own name, he could have done it, but with the scriptures. It is written, it is written, it is written.

If he could defeat the devil with three verses out of Deuteronomy, we ought to be able to do it with the whole Bible. Don't be ashamed of the old-time religion. There isn't anything newer on the face of the earth.

I have a New Testament about a new and living way that you enter by a new birth that makes you a new creature with a new name and a new song, walking in newness of life, living by a new commandment, headed for a new heaven and a new earth and a new Jerusalem. And just about the last word in the New Testament, behold, I make all things new. No, I know the gospel is good news, old time, new time, any time, all the time.

God's not running an antique shop. For several years we've run on the expression, tell it like it is. But you can't tell it like it is if you don't believe it like it was.

If you don't believe that the scriptures were God breathed and Jesus virgin born, that he died for our sins and rose bodily from the grave and is coming again, then you can't preach it like it is because that's the way it was, and what it was it still is. You can't preach Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today if you don't believe that what he was yesterday he is now. The Quakers got their name from the fact that they used to shake under the power of God.

They were shook up by what they believed. Today too many of our folks are not shaken by what they believe, they're shaky about what they believe. It's almost the unpardonable sin to be dogmatic.

I believe in being dogmatic. When I get sick I want a dogmatic doctor. I don't want him to say, well it couldn't be this and it couldn't be that.

We're going to give you these pills and if they don't kill you we'll try something else. And when I start back to Greensboro tomorrow on the plane I don't want that to be the day of old days when the pilot says I'm tired of these old instructions, we're going to try something new. When I go to church I don't want to hear an expert in the heart of almost saying something.

I don't want to come away feeling like I've been to dinner where they didn't serve anything but cool whip. The preacher we need is not apologetic with an inferiority complex in the presence of the new left and the hippies and the jet set. If anybody's embarrassed it ought to be that crowd, not us.

William Jennings Bryan said in the speech that made him a candidate for the presidency, the humblest citizen of the land when clad in the armor of a righteous cause is stronger than all the hosts of error. We don't have to call in TV celebrities and athletic personalities to put the gospel over. We're trying to fix up

something that doesn't need fixing up.

We don't have to hobnob with Sodom and be chummy with Gomorrah and visit the love inns to find out what the hippies are thinking and drink ginger ale at the country club to find out what they're thinking and read Playboy to know what the world is thinking. What difference does it make what they're thinking? My ways are not your ways, neither are my thoughts your thoughts. Some of these avant-garde boys ought to wake up.

The devil told me if I preached like this, I'd starve to death. And from the way I look, you may think the devil is right. But I'm doing all right.

They said when I started out it wouldn't last just because I was a boy. It's lasted 60 years in ministry. I was long enough to try it out.

Some of these dear fellows are knocking themselves out today, trying to keep up with the procession and get up to date. We don't need anything new half so much as we need something so old it'd be new if anybody tried it. Instead of setting the pattern, the professing church today runs along imitating every fad that comes by.

You don't have to put on a maudition, pick a guitar and stage rock operas and move from hymns to hootenannies to make the gospel acceptable. They say that the idiom of Isaac Watts is not intelligible today to the young people, so we need to cheapen our music so they can understand it. What an insult to the intelligence of this young generation.

They still study Shakespeare, the old idiom. The law students study the legal terminology. That's pretty heavy.

The med students wrestle with medical terminology, and that's pretty strong. They can do it by the help of the Holy Spirit. Every true preacher is not an accompanist.

He's a soloist. He has his own message to give, and he doesn't need to borrow from the world to put it across. The preaching we need is absolute.

This is a day of relativism. The right used to be right and wrong wrong, and they still are. But black and white have been smudged into an indefinite grave.

But if it was right 50 years ago, it's still right. If it was wrong 50 years ago, it's still wrong. We're living in a strange time.

We've had two wars, but we neither won nor lost. As Paul Harvey said, we were afraid to win them and ashamed to lose them. But Douglas MacArthur had it right when he said there's no substitute for victory.

I like to read what one big preacher says about another, and Joseph Parker said this about Spurgeon. The only colors that Mr. Spurgeon knew were black and white. In all things he was definite.

You were either up or down, in or out, alive or dead. As for middle zones and graded lines and light compounded with shadow, in a graceful exercise of give and take he only looked on them as head or a dot, and the implacable enemies of the metropolitan tabernacle. Mr. Spurgeon knew where he stood.

We're dealing with absolutes, beloved, the absolute authority of scripture, the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ, the absolute sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. And that may sound too dogmatic to some because they're living in a fog. They've moved all the way from Dogma to Smogma.

Jesus was absolute, and he said, He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. That's pretty definite. No room for a third class there.

Sin is dogmatic, death is dogmatic, hell is dogmatic. I remember when the Titanic went down in 1912, that majestic ocean liner that was made to be unsinkable, and the only thing it ever did was sink. On the first trip at that, they had all kinds of passengers aboard, millionaires, celebrities, people of moderate means, poor people in the steerage.

But a few hours after it hit that iceberg, there were two lists put up in canard offices in New York, lost and saved. Just that. Unlike sea, there are scores of classifications.

But when the voyage is over, it won't matter whether you were rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, butcher, baker, candlestick maker, whether you lived on the boulevards or in the backwoods, whether you drove a Cadillac or pushed an apple cart through town. All such distinctions will disappear, and only two lists remain, lost and saved. Thank God as long as the offer of grace avails for you, you can switch, and that's our message.

They can switch from lost to saved, but we're dealing in absolutes. And finally, the preacher we need today is apocalyptic. He ought to sound like the book of Revelation.

Because we are living, we are living in a grand and awful time. In an age on ages, telling to be living is sublime. I heard a radio preacher some time ago preaching from the text, when these things begin to come to pass, lift up your heads for your redemption, draweth nigh.

And that's a great text, but he said it meant that the new age of brotherhood, sanctified socialism through education legislation under religious auspices, is about to dawn. The social gospel is paradise. And I thought, Lord, help a fellow that in a day like this, saying just as the crocuses are beginning to bloom, it was springtime, so the new age, that kind of new age is dawning.

I said, Lord, help a fellow in a time like this who can't do anything but croak about crocuses in such an hour as we're living in. We're living in a day of beasts and seals and trumpets and four horsemen and the harlot on the beast and the scorpions and dragons and a sea of glass mingled with fire and earthquakes and falling stars and Babylon and the bottomless pit and the lake of fire and Gog and Magog and the 666 and the downfall of the devil and the great white city coming down. It's no time to tiptoe through the tulips.

For a Christian, good news is bad news and bad news is good news. We're different from everybody else. When they shall say peace and safety, that sounds like good news.

Sudden destruction come up, bad news. But on the other hand, when you hear of wars and rumors or wars and famines and pestilences and earthquakes and men's hearts failing and fear, that's bad news. But what does it say? Lift up your heads for your redemption, for if not bad news, it's good news.

It always works that way for a Christian. I'm not waiting for the abolition of war and poverty and urban renewal. I'm not waiting for that.

They say, oh, we need a change of environment. My friend, when you're up to your ears in crocodiles, it's no time to discuss how to drain the swamp. We are living, if you want to know what time it is, if somebody asks you what time it is, tell them it's until.

We're living in the great until. He which hath begun a good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. I'm waiting until he that hinders be taken out of the way.

I'm judging nothing before the time until the Lord comes. I'm waiting until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. I'm waiting until he puts all things under his feet.

I'm waiting until he subdues all things unto himself. I want to be sincere and without offense until the day of Jesus Christ. I want to hold fast what I have until he comes.

And when I partake of the Lord's table, I want to show forth his death until he comes. And I want to remember that he said, Occupy until I come. I'm waiting until all his enemies be made his footstool.

We're living in the great until. I preached this in Georgia some time ago, and a dear brother wrote a letter, and instead of signing it sincerely and so on, he just signed it until. And on the tombstone of A. J. Gordon in Massachusetts, just three words, until he comes.

A little over a year ago, the dearest person I've ever known, a sweet little lady who for 33 years went with me all over the land, went home to heaven. She died at 315 on Sunday morning, and I preached at 11. I preached about John the Baptist sending that delegation to Jesus to inquire, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? And you remember that Jesus sent word back and said, in effect, Tell John I'm running on schedule.

The blind are seeing, the deaf are hearing, the lame are walking, the lepers are cleansing, the poor are having the gospel preached. Then he added what I call the forgotten beatitude. We know the others.

Nobody ever seems to know this one. Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me. Blessed is the man who never gets upset by the way I run my business.

And I found myself saying on that Sunday morning, Lord, I don't understand it. I'm getting old, and I needed somebody to help me through the last chapter. But though I cannot trace God's hand, I can trust God's heart.

I haven't lost her because I know where she is. You haven't lost anything when you know where it is. And death can hide but not divide.

She is but on Christ's other side. She is with Christ, and Christ with me, united still in Christ, or we. She heard my sermon on her until at the very last, after six months of illness and disease, I'd never heard her.

She still managed to write a bit and scribbled this, I have much to endure that I can't tell you about until. And there she stopped. But I've an idea that when we meet again she'll not tell me all that.

I think it'll be forgotten in the glory of his presence. And I'm saying to myself, you old septuagenarian as near heaven as you are, what business do you have hanging your harp on the willows? After all, boot camp's about over. My internship's spent.

And I read that his servants shall serve him over there. I've never loafed down here. I don't want to loaf over there.

I don't want to sit on a cloud plucking a harp all three times. So I'm just making my way through the great until. How will his enemies be made to do? By the preaching of the gospel? No.

By social action? No. When he comes again, cataclysmically, apocalyptically, suddenly, he's not coming back to hold a summit conference with his enemies. He's not coming back to reconcile.

He did that the first time. He's coming to destroy the conquerors subdued. The day of reconciliation will be over, and the day of retribution will begin.

The first time he came quietly, a babe in Bethlehem, he did not cry aloud. His voice was not heard in the streets. The next time, there'll be plenty of noise.

There'll be a shout, and the voice of an archangel and the trump of God. People used to ask, how could an angel's voice be heard around the world? Well, they don't say that now. You can blow a trumpet in New York and be heard in Australia.

A man can blow a trumpet loud enough to deafen the living. An archangel ought to be able to blow one loud enough to wake up the dead. That just about wraps it up.

I'm not looking for signs. I'm listening for a shout. I know some of the fellows today say there aren't any signs.

Peter said they'd come along. Whenever you see a fellow who says there are no signs, you've just seen another sign. So I'm not looking for a sign.

I'm listening for a shout. Amen. I'm the first speaker, and I did not talk over countenance.

In Matthew 12, verse 30, there is what I think one of the greatest unused texts on evangelism. I'm surprised that I've not heard it used in this connection. Our Lord said, He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

This allows for only two kinds of people. There's nothing relative about it. It's absolute.

We divide the human race horizontally, high class, middle class, low class. Our Lord divides it here vertically to the right and to the left. We have God's eternal alternatives, Christ or anti-Christ, for it's very plain here that if we're not with him, we're not merely non-Christian or un-Christian but anti-Christian.

This cuts against the grain of popular thinking, even in some pulpits. There are those who feel that we have so many grades and shades and degrees and varieties of humanity that we cannot arbitrarily lump them all in the lost or saved against Christ or with Christ. But my Lord leaves no neutral ground, no middle way.

He does not recognize neither nor in a world that's either or. In this text, you have the believer's position and the believer's practice. It's stated negatively.

He that is not with me, dead with Christ, crucified with Christ, risen with Christ, hid with Christ, joined heirs with Christ, we must be with him in the heavenlies before we can work for him in the earthlies. We must do

business with him before we can do business for him. D. L. Moody was having a testimony meeting once when a man jumped up and said, I've been living on the Mount of Transfiguration for twenty-five years.

That didn't sound right to Mr. Moody. And he asked, How many souls have you led to Christ? And he couldn't think of any. And Mr. Moody said, We don't want that kind of mountaintop experience.

If the vision doesn't turn into a venture, and what you sow among the clouds won't work down among the cobblestones, if you can't bring the mystery down to the misery and live it out down there, you haven't seen anything. We must be with him in position before we can be for him in practice. But there's the practice, he that gathereth, not with me.

Jesus Christ is the great gatherer. He's the gatherer of Israel. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

And when he saw in point of time that they would not, he lamented, O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together? He's also the gatherer of the Church. He's taking out a people for his name. God's not out saving civilization.

Civilizations are gone. God's taking out a people. You hear a lot about togetherness, and all the way from the U.N. down to the clubs and the societies and the fraternal orders, we try to gather humanity.

But only in Jesus Christ and his Church will they stay together, for by him all things hold together. A long time ago when the first disarmament conference was held, old Will Rogers said, and I wish he were around today. I wonder what he'd say about some things now going on.

He said, those fellows might get somewhere if it wasn't for human nature. That's just about the trouble. But Jesus Christ does something about human nature.

All our brotherhood schemes come to naught. We've never been closer together, never farther apart. We're just not cutting the mustard.

We're not making the connection today somehow between what we've reared, all this tremendous edifice of religious activity and the stream of humanity. I was in Knoxville for two weeks some time ago, and they have a five-house hotel there built on the Aztec-style slopes in front. It looks like a power dam right on the Tennessee River.

They said a drunk came along some time ago and said, I knew TVA would do it sometime, built the dam and miss the river. I think that's about what we've done. We've built the dam, and we're not connecting with the stream of humanity.

Even in the Church, the majority of our Church members are living so low you'd have to backslide to be in fellowship. The average Church may have started out as a sheepfold, but it's become a zoo. Any man not identified with Jesus Christ in personal redemption and his redemptive work may be very busy for world peace and civic improvement and social justice and the art clubs and the cultured set and who's who and what's what, every branch and band of the amalgamated sons of the old Adam.

But he gathers in vain, for he that gathereth not with Christ scatters abroad. My Lord's also the great up-gatherer. He shall send his angels at the great sound of a trumpet and gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other.

Then he's the out-gatherer. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels and gather out of the kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity and cast them into the furnace of fire. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

And finally, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, he shall gather together all things in Christ, even in him. Now, with that background, think of what a text we have here. He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad, colabors with God.

There is no such thing as an inactive Church member, because if you're not gathering, you're scattering. You're not drawing people to Jesus, you're driving people away from Jesus, but either is activity. We must get over the notion that God is up there somewhere sending down a program for us to carry out as best we can, with occasional help from the Almighty.

God is down here working in and among and for and with his people. And from start to finish, God is with us. Follow me and I'll make you fishers of men.

You remember he said, Once, launch out into the deep. A ship is safe only in the harbor or out on the deep sea, but never in the shallows. Somebody said a ship is safe in a harbor, but that's not what ships are for.

The Church is not meant to be just a point of arrival, it's a point of departure. It's not a place just to come to to hear the gospel, it's a place to go from the herald to the gospel. We weren't saved just to be salt depositories, but salt dispensers.

We're not salt sellers to store the salt, we're salt shakers to scatter the salt. Sometimes when I read these impressive Church statistics today, I find myself saying, Well, if we're the salt of the earth and there's that much salt around, why is the country so corrupt? And if we're the light of the world and there's that much light around, why does the country group in darkness? Well, I know, like we conservatives say, we're in the last days and God is not converting the world and he's gathering out a remnant. I believe that, but that's no excuse for such a poor showing as we're making.

John Wesley started something that had its impact on society. There's a book, This Freedom Went, that shows us that many of the great social reforms had their start with Methodism. When Wesley came along the Puritans had all died and the Methodists hadn't been born.

Wesley stepped into the picture and look what started. The trouble today is the salt has lost its savor and our candles are under the bushel of the bed and we've forgotten that we're in business with God. Then we have the Spirit to help us.

Some time ago they had more smog than usual in Los Angeles and a meteorologist said, only a wind from elsewhere can relieve the situation. We're in a lot of smog today and only a wind from elsewhere, such as blew a long time ago, can relieve the situation. Do you remember Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones? Bones, body, and breath.

Did you ever go to a dry bones convention where a lot of dry bones experts were rearranging the dry bones? Some of the designs were very clever, but no breath in them. Now a church may have the bones, the skeleton of sound theology, organizations up to date, every department functioning. It may have a body, a big membership, a name to be alive, but so had Sardis.

My Lord said, You're dead. A mortician can make a dead man look better than he ever did look while he was living. Daniel Webster said one time about the Constitution and government, You may see that it possesses all the externals and yet find nothing of the essence, no vitality in it, just as you may contemplate an embalmed body where heart has preserved proportion and form amid nerves without action and veins without blood.

Our problem is we have the bones and we have the body, but we're out of breath, yasting our way along in spiritual emphysema. I was brought up on that old song, Brethren, we have met to worship and adore the Lord our God. Won't you pray with all your power while we try to preach the word, All is Thine, unless the Spirit of the Holy One come down.

And then you want to pray and sing, Breathe on me breath of God, fill me with life and air. But I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do. God told Isaiah to go and preach.

He said, They won't listen to you, but preach anyhow. He said just about the same thing to Ezekiel. Paul said to Timothy, Preach the word, and immediately said, The time will come when they can't take it.

It's not our business to make it acceptable. It's our business to make it available. It's not our business to make them like it.

It's our business to see that they get it. Billy Sunday used to say, They tell me I rubbed the fur the wrong way. I don't.

Let the cat turn around. When God called me to preach sixty years ago, it never occurred to me to figure how many years I'd have until I had it made. I was green.

I didn't know much, the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. I not only didn't know anything, but I didn't even suspect anything. I started out, no Social Security, no financial security, but thank God I had eternal security.

I never expected the road to be easy. I knew that old S&N, that straight and narrow is never crowded, but I was in partnership with God. The devil said I'd have nowhere to preach.

I'm busier in my seventies than I ever was in my fifties and forties and thirties and twenties. I know I'm getting old. I was down in Florida some time ago.

I'm a bird watcher for a hobby, and there was a cardinal up there in the tree, and that rascal was singing just exactly what sounded like, Geritol, Geritol, Geritol. I said, Shut up. I know I'm getting old, but all the way my Savior leads me.

What have I to ask beside? Can I doubt His tender mercy here through life has been my guide? He's able to make all grace to abound so that I, always having old sufficiency and old things, may abound to every good work. And that means, and it means for you too, there'll always be enough of everything you need to do all that God wants you to do as long as He wants you to do it. Now, what are you worrying about? There's a lot of hand-wringing today about so few entering the ministry and so many leaving it, and all kinds of reasons, and most of them excuses offered for the decline.

Some of them amuse me. Some amaze me. They say preachers are underpaid, retirement benefits are inadequate, other professions are taking over the functions.

No longer do they enjoy the peculiar honor they had in the community. There was a time, beloved, when they called to preach Saturday. When God said, Go, a man didn't sit down with a pad and a pencil to ask what income bracket the list put me in.

What will my fringe benefits be? Will I ever be appreciated for what I'm worth? It wouldn't call for much, of course, of that. All it could say then was, Here am I. Send me. There are two I's in there.

Whom shall I send? Here am I. And there are two sins in there. Whom shall I send? Send me. A preacher's not a man who just decides to preach.

He consents to being sent. He's in partnership with the Lord and a co-laborer. There was one man in the New Testament who got out his pad and pencil, really, in a way, out of Simon Peter.

We've left all to follow thee. What do we get? What's the payoff? Somebody said Peter was the most American of all the disciples. And the Bible says he said not knowing what he said.

That was pretty typical. Nearly everything in the Gospels that Peter said was a mistake. Let us build three tabernacles.

Why sayest thou who touch me? This shall not be unto thee. Thou shalt never wash my feet. I'll never be offended in thee.

But he got cured the hard way. There came a day when the man who asked, What do I get? said, Silver and gold have I none but such as I have. I give.

Not what do I get, but what can I give? And until a preacher makes that change, he cannot say to a crippled world, Rise and walk. Peter became a co-laborer with God. We need a new school of prophets that are teamed up unto the Almighty.

Trouble with us and the old-timers. These old-timers are gone and not forgotten, and we're forgotten and not gone. You don't have to ask God to use you, beloved.

He's using you right now all he can, but not all he could. If you forget everything else, will you remember that tonight? God is shorthanded. The harvest is plenteous and the labors are few, and he's looking for help.

And his eyes run to and fro throughout the earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Not to show them strong in his behalf, but himself strong in their behalf. You don't have to wait for a talent scout to locate you or a pulpit committee to find you.

He's doing all he can with you. You increase your usability, and God will increase your usefulness. Move over to what God can do and what he could do if you'd give him the chance.

There's no secret what God can do, what he's done for others. He'll do it for you. Jesus invited us to be his partners in the greatest business on earth.

I'm proud of the business and the company I work for. The President's the Son of God, and his office doors are open day and night, and this country preacher can walk in any time and talk with the boss. I've got stock in the corporation, been cashing dividends for sixty years.

I read every day this scary news about the coming depression. I've made my investment where banks don't break and thieves can't steal. Moth-proof, rust-proof, I'm not just a member of the firm, I'm a member of the family.

I'm not just a stockholder, I'm a son. You can lie at night and worry about stocks and bonds, but I know whom I've trusted, and I'm persuaded he's able to keep the deposit. That's what the word means anyhow.

I've made the deposit. Nothing can put me out of the Father's hand. I'm graven on the palms of his hand.

My times are in his hand. I call that having the situation well in hand. My bank can't fail, my business can't fold up.

I like my job. It's not urban renewal, abolition of war and poverty. I'm not improving the environment.

That's all right in its place. But I'm not for building better hog pens out in the far country and trying to get the prodigal home. And oh, if somebody had offered him soup and a sandwich, he never would have done the thing, and he was desperate.

But my Lord's gathering his church, taking out a people for his name, and one of these days he'll gather out and gather up. We're in the biggest union, the face of the earth. We carry no card, but we are gathering with him.

Malachi says, making up his jewels. We're in the jewelry business, friends. I heard of a bishop riding along back in the train days, sitting over by the window, wrapped in deep thought, as I suppose bishops ought to be.

And a traveling salesman who had just read *How to Win Friends and Influence People* came bouncing along and sat down beside the bishop and engaged him in conversation. Said him, a traveling man. The bishop reflected that we're all pilgrims and strangers.

And he said, So am I. I'm in the jewelry business. And the bishop thought about that person, Malachi, and said, That's interesting. So am I. I'm in partnership with my father.

And the bishop thought that one over and said, It grows more interesting. So am I. And the salesman said, I'm anxious to get home and turn in a good report. And the bishop said, Shake, brother, so am I. I'm not only in the fishing business, I'm in the jewelry business, and all that my Lord asks of you and of me is that we be faithful.

And anybody can do that. I carry something here that your money couldn't buy. It's a ragged little piece of paper, but it's from the dearest person in the world to me, and it said, I'm grateful for you and for your ministry.

You've been faithful as a husband in every detail, faithful and consistent in your Christian living and faithful in your preaching. Sometimes when the going gets a little rough and that old lump comes in the throat, I pull this out and read it. But I'm interested in something a little better than that.

When I've caught my last fish and gathered the last jewel, may the master of all good workmen be able to say not just done or half done, but well done. And that day I declare it, and the only thing that matters is whether we're gatherers or scatterers. So I know I'm supposed to be sitting in a rocking chair, content to look from a Social Security check and reminisce about the good old days that weren't so good.

Somebody wrote to a magazine editor and said, Your magazine's not as good as it used to be. He said, It never has been. I'm having a better time right now if it'll cheer up some blue preacher here tonight than I've ever had.

God compensates. I know we have to walk that lonesome valley. We have to walk it for ourselves.

Nobody else can walk it for us. We have to walk it for ourselves, but thank God not by ourselves. We have company.

I like the way old Dr. R. G. Lee faces it in these last years. Somebody said he's down here sometime ago and blacked out while he's preaching, and they thought he ought to go to his room. He was given payday some day, and he said, No! I want to finish.

I want one more crack at Jezebel. That's one reason why he's still preaching, and some preachers have gone into life insurance. I'm concerned, and I look over this crowd, and we've got three kinds, according to Isaiah 30.

We've got three kinds of preachers here tonight. Some are flying, some running, some walking. I'm concerned with young men leaving the ministry who have found preaching weights when it should have been wings, who ought to mount up like eagles and live on crags instead of languishing in cages.

I'm bothered about middle-aged preachers who've mired down in the monotony of mediocrity, never learned to run without becoming weary. And I'm troubled over some older men just coasting toward retirement, not looking for revival anymore, not looking for miracles anymore, not looking for anything much to happen. Are you here tonight not really looking for much to happen? You've had it.

You've never learned to walk and not find. If it'll help you, I've been through all three stages, and I've shifted all three gears. But I'm coming in shipwrecked on God and stranded on omnipotence.

I may have to stop tomorrow, but God has given me a bonus in my old age. And whether you fly or run or walk, the best is still ahead. I may be in heaven tomorrow, but I love him and serve him today.

I'm concerned for all these preachers tonight. Thank God I don't know which gear you're in, whether you're in high, intermediate, or low, whether you're flying or in middle age, you're running, or in old age, you're walking. But I thank God there's grace for all three gears.

I used to drive an old Ford that only had two gears, high and low, and the high wasn't very high, and the low was mighty low. But there's wonderful, one wonderful thing about it. When you can't fly in youth anymore and run in middle age, and you have to shift from high, intermediate, and intermediate to low, you may find out you may sometimes, God lets you make better time in low than you ever made in high, because your youth is renewed.

As Eve, I started out when I was twelve, but when I was thirty, I had nowhere to preach. I didn't have much to preach. My heart was cold.

I was living in anemia and apathy and amnesia. I didn't know where I was. God woke me up with a book by a Presbyterian, Gresham Machen.

That was one instrument, Christianity and liberalism. God said, if you'll go back and preach like you did when you were a boy, I'll make a way for you. And I took him up on it, and he did.

And then there was a later time when I was exercised about the fact that there wasn't much of the unction of heaven on my ministry, and God led me when I was in Charleston to John 7, 37-39, thirsting, coming, drinking, believing, overflowing. And then in 1973, you'd think a fellow ought to have learned his lessons by then, but God taught me another one, and that's not been long, and I ought to, God willing, give a testimony about it tomorrow. I love the with-mes.

I love the with-ness of my New Testament. Now, there isn't any such word, but when I need a word and can't find one, I make one. Have a word in a dictionary made by somebody.

I've got as good a writer as anybody else to make another word if I want. Emanuel, God with us. Enoch woke with God.

And if you want something to really lift you up, look at the with-ness of I Thessalonians 4. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God. Then which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. We that are alive and remain shall be caught up together with him to meet the Lord.

So shall we ever be with the Lord. No wonder he says next, comfort one another with these words. Oh, brother, that's a lot of with-ness.

If that doesn't send you out of here tonight, you walking one foot says amen and the other hallelujah, you're in bad shape, friend. We say sometimes, get with it. I say to you tonight, get with him.

Don't get with it. You've heard me tell it, and I don't apologize because it says it better than anything else. Back during the war, I closed a meeting in Baltimore Sunday night due to start on Monday night in La Salle, Illinois, and the trains weren't running on time.

They said you'll never make it in time to preach at 730. I looked across next morning from my seat and over there sat 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. He was on his way to Chicago to make a speech, and this little Baptist preacher was on his way to La Salle, Illinois, to start a meeting. He sent orderlies up to the engineer, we must make this on time.

Brother, we did. We didn't even hesitate in those times as we went through, and 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.

God's getting me through to La Salle, Illinois. I had the government working for me. I was with the right man.

And when you're with Christ in the same train, you may ride over some high trestles and go through some dark tunnels and not see the light at the end, not at that time. But when his train arrives in Union Station, when he gets there, you will be there because you're with him. Sometimes when I get low, I rejuvenate my soul by reading the life of Christmas Evans, the great preacher of Wales.

Nobody knew much about him until a great meeting came where some outstanding Welshman was to preach, and he didn't show up. And somebody called on him to speak, and he arose one-eyed and poorly dressed and drunk and haggard and took a text that if a fellow couldn't preach from this, he can't preach. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now have he

reconciled with the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unflamable and unreprouable in his sight.

That ought to preach. And it did. His movements were awkward at first.

He was slow in warming up to the text. But the what the Welshman called the wheel, the wind of the spirit came on him, the power came on him. They forgot he was one-eyed.

They forgot the shabby clothes. They forgot the awkward manners. Heaven came down.

Glory filled the place. And the multitude bowed like a wheat field under a summer breeze when he sat down. He was one of the greatest preachers in Wales.

And as his ministry ripened and drew near to a close, he preached with such unction that people used to date other events by his sermons. They'd say, Well, I guess that was about the time Christmas Evans preached that sermon on the seven eyes. Somebody else would say, No, I think it was about the time he preached on the wedding ring.

Now, nobody ever dates anything from any sermons we've preached. Dr. Lee says, If you want to get your pride lowered, ask some deacon what you preached about last summer. But between these two experiences, Christmas Evans had a backsliding time.

He got involved in a theological controversy. He was right, but he was wrong. He was right in the theology, but he was wrong in his attitude.

He rode along those dark mountains under conviction. He said, I tethered my horse and waited on God until I could feel as it were in my heart the breaking up of a hard winter. And the winter went by, and the springtime blossomed, and he went on to preach, and the awe was poured upon him again.

Before I sit down, I wonder. There must be in a crowd this large, undoubtedly, there must be a preacher somewhere with wintertime in his heart. Maybe a theological controversy did it.

Maybe church difficulties has done it. Maybe personal failure, and the awe is not on you, and you shake yourself every Sunday like a Sean Samson. Go through your pulpit calisthenics with the Spirit's purging.

What time of year is it in your heart? What's the season in your soul? Get alone with God and pray, and let the wind of the Spirit blow, and you will preach again. And don't try to get with it. Get with him, for he that is not with him is against him, and he that gathereth not with him is against him.

Well, I guess I'm happy to be here. I've been taking up with this auditorium. I'm going to have to get over that, because I've been preaching in the same church about 36 years.

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