

2 Timothy - Part 4

by William MacDonald

In this sermon, William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of diligence, doctrinal purity, and the necessity of separation in the Christian faith to effectively influence the world.

Duration: 1:16:39

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 2 Timothy 2:23-25, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Timothy 4:1-2

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, Dr. Gooding discusses the importance of properly interpreting and teaching the word of God. He emphasizes the need to avoid getting caught up in meaningless arguments and instead focus on presenting oneself as approved by God. Dr. Gooding warns against engaging in profane and vain babbling, as it can lead to ungodliness and the spread of harmful messages. He concludes by highlighting the significance of living a life that aligns with the teachings of the Bible, as it serves as a powerful testimony to the existence and power of God.

Transcript

I've often said that some of the best sermons are not delivered from the platform, and when I say that tonight, I think of some who work very faithfully behind the scenes. Just as an example of that, I know we shouldn't mention names, but just as an example, I don't know how many of you know or have met Bill Flynn, but that dear brother works away at the tapes into the wee hours of the morning, and I have no doubt he'll be working into the wee hours of tomorrow morning in order that the tapes might be available for you before you leave here. It's really a labor of love, but it's carried on so quietly, and this gentleman at the back there, Clint Durbin, he does the same thing too, working into small hours in order to serve us in this way, and so we really are grateful, knowing that of the Lord he shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for he served the Lord Christ.

Now, obviously, we're not going to finish Second Timothy, are we, tonight? Dr. Gooding spoke this morning about the grasshopper exposition of the scriptures, and since he spoke of it rather approvingly, I think that's what we'll do tonight. Second Timothy, chapter 2, and let's begin tonight with verse 14. Second Timothy 2, 14.

Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain dabbling, for they will increase to

more ungodliness, and their message will spread like cancer.

Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who are strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past, and they overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal, the Lord knows those who are his, and that everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lust, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

The servants of the Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach patience and humility, correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." In the first part of this chapter, we had the soldier, we had the athlete, and we had the hard-working family, verses 3 through 6. In this portion of scripture, we have another triad. We have the worker, verse 15. We have a vessel, verse 21, obviously referring to a person, and we have a servant, verse 24.

Paul, first of all, cautions Timothy not to become involved in a lot of worthless things that are sometimes prevalent. We live in an age of fads and fancy in the theological realm, just as there are fashions in clothing, and in many other ways there are fashions in theology, and many of them are really very unedifying. And so, Timothy is not to become involved in doubts and denials and deviations and drivels, but he's going to be an approved workman, hewing to the line with the word of truth.

And I hope that's characteristic of all of us here who are teaching the word of God, that we hew to the line. Not that we try to get as far away from the truth as we can, but that we speak the word of God with authority. You know, it's an amazing thing, but it's possible to believe in the absolute inspiration of the scriptures, and yet when we come to a verse that doesn't strike us the right way, we have all kinds of ways of explaining it away.

Did you notice that? I think it's especially true with verses dealing with money and security, because after all, the most sensitive part of a man's anatomy is his pocketbook, and the New Testament has a lot to say about that, and one of the hardest jobs that the Holy Spirit has is to sever the nerve between the brain and the pocketbook. Now, how do our doctors like that? It's not quite anatomical, is it? Now, let me just go over some of the ways that have been cleverly devised to extract the plain meaning of the word of God, and substitute for that our own willful opinions. We discussed the first one on Monday night, and that's what I call the cultural argument.

In other words, what Paul is saying was just for the culture of his day, and we mentioned that when you adopt that stance, you can really take away the meaning of any portion of the word of God. It's a very dangerous position to take, and we want to be worn solemnly against it. But there are others.

There's the tradition argument. The tradition argument is, we never did it that way. I know that's what the Bible says, but we never did it that way, and of course the Lord invaded against that when he was speaking to the Jews.

By their traditions, they made void the commandments of the Lord, didn't they? That man was supposed to take care of his aged father. He was supposed to support him. The father didn't have any social security.

He was at the end of his resources, and he said it was some kind to help me out, and the son said, Corban, that meant anything that I might give you now, dad, has been dedicated to the Lord, to the temple. Didn't mean that the temple ever got it. It was just a tradition, and he excused himself from any obligation to help his father by just uttering a word.

That's the tradition argument, and it still goes on all over the world today, and in the United States. The non-literal argument. We say, well, I know that's what Jesus said, but we shouldn't take it literally, or some say we shouldn't take it too literally.

Well, I don't know about that. The first rule of Bible interpretation is, if the first sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense, and I think that's one of the safest rules of Bible interpretation. There are some things in the Bible that you don't take literally, and the Bible explains that very clearly.

But, I like what Garvey said. He said, cream lies on the surface. I do not care for novel interpretations of scripture.

So, if we can take it literally, take it literally, and don't, especially don't try to explain it away on that basis. Another ploy that we devise, I call it the exception argument. I know that's what the Bible says, but in my case, God wants to make an exception.

No, he doesn't. That word means exactly what it says, and it applies to you, and it applies to me, and God doesn't want to make that exception. You find this, especially in the realm of romance and of marriage.

And then, of course, is the prudence, or common sense argument. You read a plain verse of scripture, and they say, I know, but you've got to use common sense. Hmm.

You know, you wonder what that does to the inspiration of the scriptures, don't you? I thought this was the word of God, and we're going to see that it is, too, tonight, and later on in the book. But, that's what they say. They say, well, you've got to use prudence.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. You say, I know, but you've got to be prudent. But, you've got to use common sense.

I tell you, friends, I think in the Bible we have something better than common sense in that divine revelation, and it's far higher than common sense. A lot of things you read about in the Bible aren't common sense. They're better.

Common sense would never have brought the Lord of life and glory down to the earth to suffer, bleed, and die for a race of rebel mankind. What? I don't think that's common sense. I think it's great, abounding grace.

So, please don't come to me with that argument, the common sense argument. I won't have it. I think I've told some of you before, I was in a prayer meeting years ago in Belgium, and I'll never forget a young fellow praying, and maybe he was preaching in his prayer.

I don't know, but it came out in his prayer that sometimes in things of God, common sense is no better than rat poison, and it woke me up. And, I know what he meant, too, and it's good. It's good.

Then there's the survival argument. The survival argument is, I have to live, don't I? I mean, some of these verses of scripture dealing with the stern demands of Christian discipleship, and we see, well, I have to live, don't I? That's what a young man said to a virgin once, and the virgin said, I don't grant that. We have to obey God.

That's right. Who said we had to live? He said, lose it, it's like the mind's sake, and the gospel's soul. Find it.

Isn't that right? You know, it's a terribly embarrassing position to take a stand contrary to the word of God. Terribly embarrassing, because somebody will come to you and just give you the word of God, and it backs you right into a corner, and shut your mouth. You have nothing more to say.

Then there's the never-offend argument. You teach what the word of God says, and somebody comes to you and says, I know, I know, but you wouldn't want to do it if it would offend somebody, would you? Of course. Of course I would, because I realize that so much of the teaching of the word of God is offensive to fallen man.

The gospel's offensive, isn't it? The cross is offensive. Blood atonement is offensive. The gospel's offensive.

It tells man he's a guilty, lost, depraved sinner. What does that do for his self-esteem? It tells him he can't save himself. He always thought he could.

It tells him there's only one person in the universe can save him, and his name is Jesus. What a narrow way of salvation. All roads lead to God.

All the spokes of the wheel lead to the hub at last. The never-offend argument. Then there's the dispensational argument, and I am a dispensationalist, and I could understand the Bible apart from dispensations, but I refuse to be robbed of portions of the word of God on the dispensational argument, because even if they aren't written directly to me, I can extract honey from them.

The family-or-friend argument. Some years ago, a man wrote a book. It was called The Case for Orthodoxy, and it really undermined the Christian faith, denied inspiration, and all the rest.

And one Christian leader was speaking to another about this book, and telling him, you know, this book is an attack. It's not The Case for Orthodoxy, it's an attack on the Christian faith. And you know what the answer was? You don't know the author as I know him.

He's a gracious man, and a good friend. And I said, what's that got to do with it? In fact, he's a gracious man. He's speaking against God's word, and undermining the faith of people, as it says in the verse we just had.

The never-offend, the family-friend argument. Then there's a science argument, and of course that is, I have problems reconciling science with the word, with the Bible. Well, I don't have any problems with it, because I know that no true fact of science will ever conflict with any true interpretation of the word of God.

Notice the use of the word true twice. No true fact of science will ever conflict with any true interpretation of the word of God. Why? Because both books were written by the same person, that's why.

God wrote the book of science, he wrote the book, the Bible, and that's the wonderful thing. Then there's the experience argument. I know that's what the Bible says, but I know a man who.

Well, I've known a lot of men who, but I don't base my doctrine on men who. If I did, I could prove the falling away doctrine to you, couldn't I? But I can't prove it from the Bible. I go to the Bible and it says, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

No true sheep of Christ will ever perish, neither can any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. So, we have all of these theological arguments to rob the sacred scriptures of their real meaning.

Timothy, keep away from them. Be a man of the word. Stand by the word with authority, and preach it with authority, and don't use weasel words.

Don't be mushy-mouthed about it. Verse 16. Profane, shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

Boy, he really had a vocabulary, didn't he, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Profane and vain babblings. Dr. Harlow, in one of the earlier sessions, spoke about increasing messianic awareness.

Imagine sitting around and asking such a question as, when did Jesus first know he was Messiah? Is that edified? Never edified me. To me, it's just an attack on his person. The mistakes of Paul.

Maybe that's what I should preach next, should I? A series on the mistakes of Paul. Is that going to build people up in their most holy faith? Was Jesus born on December 25th, or did he die on Friday? I'm 73, and I've lived a normal life without spending hours studying such subjects as that. Fact to me is that he died for my sins according to the scriptures.

He was buried, he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. Could Jesus sin? And I think Dr. Harlow referred to that to the other day. The impeccability of the Lord Jesus.

They say he was tempted in all points as we are. Yes, without sin. The Lord Jesus could be tempted from without, but he couldn't be tempted from within.

I can be tempted both ways, and am all the time. But he could say the prince of this world comes and finds nothing in me. There's nothing in the Lord Jesus to respond to.

Ah, you say, then his humanity wasn't real. Yes, his humanity was real. His humanity was perfect.

Mine isn't. That's the difference. People want to bring him down to my level.

I don't want to bring him down to my level, God forbid. The kenosis. One man said, when Jesus came to earth he laid aside his deity and he'll never take it up again.

Imagine. It's nonsense. It's nonsense.

Profane and vain dabbling, Paul would call them. Self-esteem, the new reformation. Hmm.

Have you read that book? Well, read it and get enlightened. The mistake, the mistake the reformers made was that the theology was God-centered instead of man-centered. Robert Schuller, our Californian, why did I have to say that? Imagine.

The mistake the reformers made was that the theology was God-centered. I thought that's what theology was. I thought that's what the word meant, instead of man-centered.

Sin is when you have a bad self-image. The new birth is when you exchange that bad self-image for a good self-image. Hell is the terrible feelings you have when you have a bad self-image.

In other words, it's all closed in evangelical Bible language, but it's robbed of all its meaning and other things put in its place. Then the health and prosperity doctrine spreading all over the world. It's kind of pathetic when you think of it being taken to the third world, isn't it? Health and prosperity doctrine.

Hmm. Really, they'd be far better off if they preached an adversity doctrine. Sure, it's true in the Old Testament that if a Jew was obedient to the Lord, God promised him that his silos would bulge with new grain and his wine vats would overflow with fresh wine.

But I believe the great miracle of the New Testament dispensation is Christians suffering through adversity and glorifying God in it all. But the fact of the matter is that Christians do far better in times of adversity than they do in times of prosperity. William Kelly said that it is always true in times of declension that false prophets will promise prosperity.

You only have to go back to the prophets of the Old Testament. So, that's what's happening today. Times of declension promising prosperity.

And so, Timothy is to avoid all this sort of unedifying and destructive type of teaching, and trivia as well. You know that when the Communists were taking over Russia, the Orthodox Church spent hours discussing what color a certain part of the robe of the priest in the church should be. Imagine discussing that when the country was turning red, and it's easy to do that in theological things.

Verse 17 and 18, their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection has already passed and they overthrow the faith of some. Hmm.

I don't know what they taught. Maybe they taught that just as when Christ died, others died with him, and when he rose, others rose in Christ. But, Paul says, look, if there's no resurrection, we might as well adopt the philosophy, let us eat and be merry, eat and drink.

And that's true. If there is no resurrection, that would be the same sensible, logical, reasonable philosophy of life to have eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Okay, let's go on to the picture of the house, the great house in verse 20-21.

In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. If anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel of honor, sanctified and useful for the master prepared for every good work. I believe the great house is Christendom, and I believe the passage has to do with a single word that's separation.

I believe this passage is a guide to Christians today as to what attitude to take toward the ecumenical movement, because the ecumenical movement says, let's all get under the same umbrella, all professing Christians, Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, we all get together and work to serve the same Lord. But I want to tell you, God is a God of separation, separation from every kind of moral and doctrinal evil. God separated the light from the darkness.

The very first chapter of the Bible, he separated the water from above the earth, the water under the earth. He separated the sea and the dry land. He's a God of separation, that's what it's all about.

He wanted Israel to be separate from the nations. It says the people dwelling alone, not reckoning itself among the nations. He told the Jews not to plow with an ox and an ass together, but separation in service.

They don't pull together. He said that they were not to wear clothes of woolen and linen mixed, separation in personal righteousness. He forbade sowing the field with mixed seeds, separation in doctrine, and he forbade a Jew to marry a Gentile, separation in marriage.

This is what F. B. Meyer said, it's impossible to move our times as long as we live beneath their spell. When once we've risen up and gone at the call of God outside their pale, we're able to react on them with an irresistible power. Archimedes said that if he could get a fulcrum outside the world, he could move the world.

But you have to get outside the world to move it. As long as you're a part of the world, you'll never be able to influence it. There's not a single hero or saint in the history of the Christian church who did not move himself out from the establishment in order to exercise an influence on it.

They've all raised a cry, let us go forth to him outside the camp bearing his reproach. Separation doesn't mean isolation, it means insulation. The Lord Jesus went to the house of the Pharisees, but he was faithful to God his Father in all things when he was there.

That should be the model for us in our going passage through the world to be faithful to Jesus in all things, not to condone sin in any way or to galley with it. An eastern conqueror laid siege to a city, and there was a great idol in the city, and the people of the city fell down on their knees and begged this conqueror not to destroy the idol. And he said, I would rather be a breaker of idols than the savior of idols, and he took a great fledghammer and smashed the idol and out flowed a great quantity of precious gems from the idol.

When he smashed it, all the treasure poured out at his feet. So that's our job, not to compromise with idols, but to smash them. Better to be known as the smasher of idols than a savior of idols.

In verse 22, Paul says, flee also youthful lusts, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. When we think of youthful lusts, I suppose we think preeminently of sexual temptations, and that doesn't necessarily mean that exclusively. It could mean a youthful lust for power.

It could mean a youthful lust for prominence. It could mean a youthful lust for possessions, and then, of course, for pleasure as well. I cannot come to a verse like this without thinking of what Chuck Smith said to a graduating class at Columbia Bible College.

Actually, it was the preachers, some young class of preachers that were going out, and he said this to them, Don't touch the dollar. Don't touch the woman. Don't touch the glory.

Don't touch the dollar. Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things that he acquires possessions. Don't touch the dollar.

Don't touch the woman. Think of the scandals that have taken place in the evangelical world over the last year. Dragging the name of the lovely Lord Jesus down into the mud.

The people say, If that's a Christian, I'd rather have my dog. Don't touch the woman. Don't touch the glory.

Keep me little and unknown, loved and prized by Christ alone. 23. But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes.

Here he is at it again, knowing that they generate strife. The rabbis used to go into learned discussions on whether an egg laid on a feast day could be eaten, and they also held learned discussions on what sort of wick and oil should be used for lighting candles on the Sabbath. What a wonderful deliverance we have in the Lord Jesus Christ from all that sort of nonsense.

Chapter 3. I'm going to have to skip a lot of that, and I just was impressed as I read chapter 3 verse 10. But you notice verse 9. But they, but you, verse 13, but evil men. And this is typical of Paul's writing in 2 Corinthians.

He flashes back from one to another. It's a book that's filled with contrasts. That in itself would make a good study.

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, and perseverance. Notice doctrine, manner of life. Paul was not only found in his doctrine, but he had a life to match it, and this is so important.

Robert Speer wrote, after 30 years of leadership in missionary work, it is my conclusion and conviction that the greatest missionary problem is just the failure of Christian people to live up to their profession. Johnson wrote, the chief obstacle to the spread of Christianity is not Hinduism, nor Buddhism, nor even paganism, but the rotten behavior of people who call themselves Christians. Dr. A.J. Gordon said Archangel Gabriel himself could not play a decent tune on a cheap tin whistle.

What Paul is saying to Timothy here is, we must not preach cream and live in milk. That's what he's saying, and he gave himself as an example of a man who was what he taught. Doctrine, manner of life.

I think the best evidence for God in an age of fact is a redeemed life, a great miracle. It's great when our lives match our words. You know, when I was a young man and my hair was falling out, there was a barber in one of the assemblies near us, and he had a marvelous cure for falling hair.

I found out since then the only thing that will stop falling hair is the floor, but he had a marvelous thing. It was a, see if I can describe it. It looked like a rake, only it was made of glass and hollow glass tubing, and it had fingers that went down, and when he turned on the juice, all kinds of fiery blue sparks went through that thing, and when he touched your head with it, it went snap, crackle, pop, and the hair came out in handfuls.

The punchline is that dear brother Henry wore a wig. He wasn't a very good representative of the cure, was he? So, I really rejoice when I come to a portion like this where Paul says, My doctrine, my manner of life. And doctrine comes first.

I think that's significant. God says, Get your doctrine first, and then get your life to match with it. And that's the way the epistles are written, of course.

Get your doctrine straight, then your life will match it. And we mustn't go without just mentioning verse 16 of chapter 3. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Notice carefully, it doesn't say the Bible is inspired.

I will give you a minute to recover from that. Inspired of God. It makes a difference, huh? I mean, people say, Well, Shakespeare was inspired, you know, the writings of some of these great men of literature, inspired.

And what they mean was a writing of extraordinarily good quality and clever, cleverly put together. Inspired. That's not the Bible.

The Bible, God reads, and it makes a big difference. All scripture is inspired of God, is given by inspiration of God. I believe that.

And I thank God for men who used to come to our assembly down through the years and hammer this away at our young heads. All scripture is inspired of God. It's the inspired word of God.

It's verbally inspired. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2, Which things we speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but words which the Holy Spirit teacheth. So, very spiritual things at first.

Or, conveying spiritual truths with spirit-given words. That's what I believe. I believe that when those men sat down and wrote, they wrote the words that God gave them to write.

Then, Ah! Mechanical dictation. So what? Doesn't God have a right to use mechanical dictation? Although we know that in the process of that, He took into account in a way that you and I can understand the individual personalities and styles of the writers. But God can do that.

That's nothing to Him. He made us in the first place. He can take our styles and our personalities into account when He gave the words.

Verbally inspired. It's plenary inspired. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, from Genesis through Revelation.

There are no degrees of inspiration in the Bible. The words of Jesus are not more inspired than other words, which is the fallacy of red-letter editions of the Bible. Because it is God-breathed, it's infallible.

If it contains error, who is to say where the error begins and the error ends? Dr. Daniel Fuller. Dr. Daniel Fuller of Fuller Seminary. He said, We know the Bible contains error.

Jesus said that the mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds. We know the mustard seed is not the smallest of all seeds. Therefore, the Bible contains error.

Well, if he's right, it's worse than that. Not only does the Bible contain error, but Jesus is fallacious, and He's not God, and we have nothing, and we might as well close our Bibles and go home. Is that serious? The Bible doesn't say that.

Jesus wasn't giving a scientific explanation of mustard seeds. He was talking in terms of the world that they lived in, and their pantry at home, or the marketplace there. They would see all of these seeds in the marketplace, spices and all the rest, and He said mustard seeds were small.

No big deal. They didn't have that problem. It took 2,000 years for a theological professor to find that problem in the Bible.

No degrees of inspiration in the Bible. It's inspired, it's infallible, and...but I think we should say this, that inspiration does not guarantee the truth, for instance, of what the Bible...of what the devil says in the Bible. The devil lies...he's the father of lies.

He's been lying from the beginning, and a lot of his lies are recorded in the Bible, and they're part of the inspired word of God, but they're not true. And inspiration doesn't guarantee the accuracy of what man says apart from divine revelation. For instance, Ecclesiastes...the book of Ecclesiastes records man's attempt to find the meaning of life under the sun.

The words under the sun are found 29 times in the book of Ecclesiastes, and a lot of the things he says aren't true at all. Man has no priority, no preeminence over a beast, he says. The world continues forever.

Well, it doesn't continue forever, but if you didn't have a Bible, that's what you think, too. But inspiration doesn't guarantee the truth of what man says under the sun, unaided by divine revelation. If the Bible is accepted by faith, it proves itself to be the word of God.

You don't prove the Bible by a series of arguments or apologetics and that, generally speaking. Just get people to read the Bible, and it's self-authenticating. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

I read it. I heard God speaking in it. It exposed me to myself like no other book ever did.

I know it's the word of God. It's unique and distinct among all books in the world. And God is looking for men and women who tremble at the word of God.

I like that word in Isaiah 66, too. God is looking for the person who's poor and of a contrite heart, and who trembles at his word. Afraid to disobey it, afraid to handle it lightly, or anything of the sort.

And finally, before we pass on from the verse, it's not enough to believe the Bible. It's not enough to believe in the inspiration of the Bible. We must obey it.

That's what God wants. He doesn't just want an intellectual assent to the fact of what the Bible is. He wants us to obey it.

It says, It's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Doctrine. What is right? Reproof.

What is not right? Correction. How to get right. Instruction.

How to stay right. Then he comes to Timothy in verses 1 and 2. I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead by his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word. Oh, I like that.

You know, that's a word for the day in which we look. Preach the word. Doesn't they preach psychology? Doesn't they preach philosophy? You know, there's a fellowship near us, and an elderly lady left it recently to come into fellowship in our assembly, and she condemned it in a way I don't think I've ever heard a similar work condemned.

She said, You don't need your Bible when you go there. Isn't that awful? You don't need your Bible when you go there. Preach the word.

That's what people need, and you know, that's what people really want. When I was in the Navy, a chaplain complained to me one time. He said, Nobody comes to my service but the man who plays the piano, and he gets paid for it.

Well, discretion is a better part of valor. I wanted to say to them, Look, wise up and start preaching the word, and they'll come to your service. That's true.

Men in the service knew when the word of God was being preached, and they knew when the man who preached it was living it, too. That's what they really went after. But I can't resist quoting Spurgeon on the subject of preaching.

He said, You are probably all acquainted with ministers who have mistaken their calling, and evidently have no gift for preaching. Make sure that none thinks the same of you. There are brethren in the ministry whose speech is intolerable.

Either they've done you to death, or they send you to sleep. No knockout drop can ever equal their discourse in sleep-giving property. No human being, unless gifted with infinite patience, could long endure to listen to them, and nature does well to give the victim deliverance through sleep.

I heard one say the other day that a certain preacher had no more gifts for the ministry than an oyster, and in my own judgment this was a slander on the oyster. For that worthy bivalve shows great discretion in his opening, and he also knows when to close. If some men were sentenced to hear their own sermon, it would be a righteous judgment on them, but they would soon cry out with pain, My punishment is more than I can bear.

Preach the word. Preach the word in season, and be ready in season and out of season. It's a wonderful thing when we can obey this.

There was a Christian dentist down in Los Angeles. He was a very devout Christian, and a very expensive one, too, and he used to get Hollywood stars to come and sit in his chair, and one day one of the most famous stars came into his office clad rather ghastly, and she was supposed to be one of the most beautiful women in the United States. When using his drill, he inadvertently hit a nerve, and she let out an oath.

She said, That will be all. He said, What do you mean? You've never heard a curse word before? I said, Yes, but not in this office. She said, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

He said, You didn't hurt my feelings. You took the name of my Lord in vain, but I do not permit that here. She burst into tears and said, No one ever talked to me like that before.

He said, No, but I'm doing it, and she said, Forgive me. The next time she came in, she was dressed as a person ought to be dressed, and no unseemly word was ever heard in that office again from her in season and out of season, even in a dentist's office. I remember years ago when Mr. Tharp came back from China, and he was living in an apartment in Alameda, and the phone rang, and Mr. Tharp went to the phone, and of course, you're not supposed to listen to people's conversation, are you, when they're talking on the phone? I mean, sometimes you can't help it, and I heard him say, I'm sorry, you have the wrong number, but just a minute, I have a word from the Lord for you, and he gave it.

I thought it was just a wrong number. He thought it was an opportunity to witness for the Lord, and there's a lot to that, because nothing happens in life by chance, does it? Not even a wrong number. In fact, there was a fellow that got saved on our way through a wrong number.

The wires between two houses got crossed up some way, and he called, and a young Christian woman invited him to come. She got the wrong call, but she invited him to come to a young people's meeting, and he came, and he got saved. God can control the telephone wires too, can't he? A poor old minister was sitting on a tombstone in the cemetery adjacent to the church building.

His elders had told him that he was too old to carry on, and that he should give up the task he loved, and as he sits there on the tombstone, his heart breaks. A little child comes, and he looks at the child, and he thinks about the Lord Jesus, and to think of him always turns sadness into gladness, and he tells the little fellow the story of Jesus, the Lord of glory, the cross, the resurrection, the story of the gospel, and then the old man goes home to think his sad thoughts. He said, I'm no good.

I'm too old. A few years pass, and the old man is in heaven now, and if full vision is given to those in the glory, he looks down, and he sees William Carey in India. William Carey, the great missionary, turning hundreds to the Savior he loved, all because he had been told the story of Jesus by the old man.

The romance of touching right with God, of witnessing in seasons and out of seasons. Who can measure it? I wanted to speak, but there's no time on Demas. That verse in chapter 4, verse 10, Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica.

And, you know, the word Paul uses there is the verb connected with agape, a strong word for having loved this present world. It's quite hard when you come across Demases in the service of the Lord, isn't it? Paul contrasts Demas' love with verse 8, those who loved his appearing. The same word.

He loved this present world. He loved the world that's in opposition to God, the world that crucified the Lord of glory, the world that cannot satisfy the human heart, and the world that is under the curse of God. What shall we say about Demas? I can only say what the Bible says.

Many men love the world. The love of the Father is not in him. It's sad.

Well, our time is gone. I'd just like to close our little series with a verse from Terstigin, one of my favorite poets. And this is a verse that I'd like you to just carry away with you.

He said, On, dare and suffer all things, yet but a stretch of roads and wondrous words of welcome, and then the face of thine. The world, how small and empty, our eyes have looked on him, the mighty sun has risen, the paper, the candle, the paper burneth dim, led captive by his sweetness, and dowered with his bliss. Forever he is ours, forever we are his.

Paul closes his epistle, The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, grace be with you all. Amen. And we'll just close with that lovely benediction ringing in our ears and hearts as we pray.

Father, once again, we just thank you with an overflowing heart for the precious holy word that you've given us, our greatest treasure here on earth. And we pray that we might go forth from this conference with a new determination, not only to dedicate ourselves afresh to you, but to faithfully and with conviction and with authority, declare, teach, preach the word of God, and see you working in human lives that will welcome us to the gates of glory. We ask it in the Savior's name.

Amen. I must be honest, it was very tempting after a lot of things that he had said through the years to say, well, Sam, why don't you just have a little concert with the people? That would certainly provide some comic relief, and as well, it would be a glorious opportunity for some sing-along. Oh, excuse me, he's getting angry back there.

Well, your singing this evening was really enjoyable, and just sitting there listening to it was a real inspiration, and so I hope you understand that you are not done for the evening. This is a song that we had the great joy three and a half weeks ago of singing again at the very foot of Golgotha, and I'd like to do the first three verses for you in the original tune and have you join me and sing along in the last verse of When I Survey the Wondrous Cross. When I surveyed the wondrous cross, On which the Prince of Glory died, My richest gains I count but loss, And poor contempt a pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should ever boast, Save in the cross of Christ my Lord. All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood. Deep from His head and hands and feet, Harrowing love's flow mingles down.

When did e'er such love and sorrow meet, Forth from compose so rich a crown? Sing with me, please. Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were an offering far too small? Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my heart, my life, my all. Behold a spotless victim dies, My surety on the tree, The Lamb of God to sacrifice He gave Himself for me.

Whatever curse was mine He bore, The wormwood and the gall, There in that low, mysterious hour, My cup He drank it all. The Lord Jesus bowed, and none beside, Its bitterness could know nor other tell. Thy joys full tide that prompt, That cup shall flow.

Thine is the joy, but yet is mine, Tis' ours as one with Thee. My joy flows from that grief of thine, Thy death brings life to me. And it was alone, alone, He bore it all alone.

He gave Himself to save His own, He suffered, He bled, and died alone. There's an album released not long ago with a person who for many years was well known and famous in secular music circles, but evidently has gotten saved. And without mentioning any names, because I guess the jury's still out until we see his life, this song that I heard on the radio from that particular album just kind of blessed my heart, and I fell in love with it all over again.

And I think maybe if we could do a little singing, at least on the chorus of this, put a little medley together on songs of commitment. Not that you folks necessarily need to hear it, and we respect that greatly, but just to rejoice in the fact that we serve a Savior who's not only interested in the fact that we serve Him, but is all-caring and very grateful, I believe, of the fact that you folks have turned your backs on so many of the comforts of home and family and gone to islands beyond the sea. These songs really kind of epitomize

what we think of you and give us great encouragement as we think of you and as we sing them.

All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee. I would ever love and trust Thee, daily let me live for Thee. Sing with me.

I surrender all. I surrender all to Thee, my blessed Savior. I surrender all to Thee, my blessed Savior.

I surrender all to Thee. The words of Helen Haworth Lemel when she was 17 years of age for High School English Projects. O soul, are you weary and troubled? No light in the darkness you see.

There's life for a look at the Savior, and life more abundant and free. Sing with me, please. Turn your eyes upon Jesus.

Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim. In the light of His glory, give me a sight, O Savior, of Thy wondrous love to me.

Of the love that brought me down to earth, die on Calvary. Everyone, O make me young. Help me to take it in.

What it meant to Thee, the Holy One, to bear away my sin. He is Lord. He is Lord.

He is risen from the dead, and He is Lord. Every knee should bow. Every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth will grow strangely dim.

In the light of His glory and grace. A newer song, but kind of following in the same line. I walked one day along a country road.

And there a stranger journeyed to. Bent low beneath the burden of His load. It was the cross, the cross I knew.

I cried, Lord Jesus, and He spoke my name. I saw His hand, so bruised and torn. I stooped to kiss away the mark.

A shame, a shame for me, that He had borne. So take up Thy cross and follow me. I hear my blessed Savior call.

How can I ever make a lesser sacrifice, when Jesus gave His all? How can I make a lesser sacrifice, when Jesus gave His all? A number of years ago, it was our great privilege to meet and begin to work with a gentleman by the name of Rusty Goodman, who may or may not be known to any of you, and that's not the critical point. But of over the years of all of the Believer's Hymnbook albums, and I guess eight of the albums through the years, Rusty was the one who was responsible for arranging and producing most of them. He is at present dying of cancer.

At the age of 54, and if the Lord calls him home, it will be a keenly felt loss, not just personally, but to many Christians around the world. The last album, I guess that maybe he will ever do, contains a song on it that might be very new to you, but of all of the songs that he has written and recorded, I don't think I've ever come up against one that I like any better. He calls it his testimony song, and I want you to listen very

closely as he paints the word picture in a song that maybe many of us can identify with.

It's called, The Prodigal Son. I still recall the day this boy went away. I remember his sad eyes could not conceal.

The hurt he felt down deep inside was more than the man could hide. Waved goodbye and turned around and cried. At first light you could find him staring out the window, wondering if he came home in the night.

And at noon he'd set another plate at the table, breathe a prayer and hope he was all right. Then late one evening on his porch he sat thinking, who's that coming down the lane alone? He looked so tired and weary, but now I see him clearly, my boy is finally coming home. They met in the yard, both crying hard.

Tears ran together like a stream. The boy fell down to his knees. He prayed, forgive me please for all the wrongs that I have done.

I'll just be your servant and you won't even have to call me son. But then they laughed together, called all the neighbors, celebrated his return. Sang in sweetest harmony the welcome home melody that a son who was lost now is found.

They killed the fatted calf and placed a ring upon his hand, dressed him in a brand new robe of royalty again. The father said you're welcome home, forgiven of all the things you've done. You can be my servant, you can be my servant and my son.

The story's one I know so well and it's one that I'll always love to tell. For he is my father and I was that prodigal son and I'm coming home. Coming home, never more to roam, open wide thine arms of love.

Lord, I'm coming home. Dan said we had within a half an hour and we're almost there. So I'd just like to do something a little crazy tonight.

Does anybody have a favorite that you've been waiting to hear? Okay, you're not missing anything. Well, if there was any, boy, now you can hear that, huh? Okay. I guess if there's ever a song that a person can possibly be blessed with, it's this particular song.

I was telling the folks in Wilmington on Saturday night that I hate not being able to see anybody. This is for the birds. Wait a minute.

There we go. Telling the folks in Wilmington on Saturday night that I was down south. I won't say where some of you might be from there and I won't say exactly where it was, but giving a little thing on a Saturday night and then taking the meetings the following week and they invited a lot of people in.

This young fella came up afterwards and he said, I was using soundtracks, background, and he said, you sang two songs tonight that I want your soundtracks. And I said, well, I'm not really in the in the habit of giving them, nor do I have one of those double cassette decks at home to make copies. I said, maybe what I'll do sometime is if I get to someone's house that has one, I'll copy them off for you.

And he said, no, I want those soundtracks you used tonight. I said, well, you have to understand that I need these and I cannot really part with them. I said, like I said, if I can make some copies, if you write down your name and address, I will give them to you.

And he said, you don't need to hear me. I want them and I want them tonight. Well, when I unpacked at the next place, guess which two soundtracks were mysteriously missing and have been to this day.

And unfortunately, the one of them was my last working copy of My Redeemer. So what we'll have to do, Lord willing, if we can do it, and we're trying right now to fit in the time a little later this fall to get working on another album in Nashville, I'm going to take the master tape down and find a studio that still has an old eight track machine and get them to run off a copy for me. But the problem with that is that dear person doesn't realize that it's going to cost somewhere in the neighborhood of about three thousand dollars to replace those soundtracks.

So anyway, I am not familiar and I apologize for this with playing it on the piano and you'll have to bear with me a little bit. Somebody else played on that record and I...

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