

Collegiate Conference 1983-01 the Gospel

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living a simple and happy life, prioritizing Christ's interests, and responding to the great commission to share the gospel with others.

Duration: 55:59

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 1:2, Ecclesiastes 12:14, Matthew 16:26, Mark 16:15, John 4:13-14, Romans 14:12, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Philippians 2:11, James 4:14, 1 Peter 4:10

Topics: "Conference"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher talks about how people focus so much on their physical appearance and worldly possessions, but neglect their spiritual well-being. He emphasizes the importance of living for the eternal world rather than the temporary pleasures of this life. The preacher also highlights the need to take care of our souls just as we take care of our bodies. He shares stories and examples to illustrate the emptiness of pursuing worldly success and fame, and encourages the audience to prioritize their relationship with Jesus, who truly values and cares for them.

Transcript

Okay, let's look to the Lord in prayer. Father, once again we come before you this morning and we pray that as we sit and muse and meditate, that we might hear the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to our hearts today. We pray that hearts might be bowed to his influence with your words, and that the speaker might be hidden behind the cross.

Just ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. First of all, I think we'd like to review the material we went over last night.

Some weren't here. We were dealing with some of the great life-changing truths, and each of us should think clearly the fact that life is real. Life is real, and life is earnest, and the grave is not the goal.

Duck thou watchest, duck thee turnest, but not the torment of the soul. Life has vast potential. It has vast potential for good, vast potential for evil, vast potential for weakness.

Life has purpose, and each of us should ask ourselves the question, what is the purpose in my life? Life is brief, it's vanishing. We're here but for one brief day. Eternity is in our future, every one of us.

It's feeding on to that eternal meeting place, and we're accountable to God. There isn't God out there, and every one of us is going to give an account to Him. We dealt with the great truth of redemption, that we've been bought at enormous cost, and that we no longer belong to ourselves, henceforth we belong to Him.

We dealt with the truth of the Lordship of Christ. He died and rose again, that He might be Lord. We reminded ourselves that we're stewards.

A steward is not noted for what he himself owns. He's put here to administer the affairs of someone else. We hurried over these last ones, unfortunately, but we face squarely the fact that souls are dying in the world.

This is one of the central things that those who are Christians should face. What are we doing about it? And we have the answer, too. I tell you, I'm really impressed with that fact that Christians are the ones in all the world who have the answer to the world's problems.

Jesus said, Go, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, and we're going to have to answer the question someday, What did you do about the great commission? And then finally, we took up the truth of the judgment seat of Christ, that every true believer one day will stand before the Lord Jesus and all our service will be brought into review. Now, we want to think of how to respond to that, and first of all, I'd like to think about those who might not be saved. Although I suspect you that in preparing to speak here, I'm thinking primarily of Christians.

I want you to realize that in any audience this size, there might be those who are not the slightest pursuant. What should you do? Well, there's only one sensible thing to do. First of all, that is to repent of your sins.

That means to take sides with God against yourself. That means to take the position that if I receive what I deserve to receive, I heal myself. Secondly, by a definite act of faith, receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Because that's where you know how. Accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your own hope for heaven. When you do that, God saves your soul, and you know it through the word of God and not through feelings.

You know in the authority of the word of God that the sinner who places his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ has passed from death to life. He'll never come into condemnation. And I say again, it's not a matter of your feelings, it's a matter of divine fact.

The transaction takes place in heaven, and not in your nervous system. For Christians, there are three ways to respond to the great truth that we have said before us. The first is to plan your own life.

And this seems to me the most natural thing to do, to plan your own life. I mean, we all have kind of an overdose of vitamin I, and we think that we've got the situation well in hand, and that we're really quite capable of making our own decisions, and please don't interfere in my life. And I say this is the most natural thing to do.

This is what I would get. This is what most Christians should do. Plan their own life.

Say, how? Well, first of all, you can plan to live for wealth. Once again, that's the most natural thing in the world. Live for money, because money holds the promise of fulfillment.

That is the illusion that creeps over the human mind. Isn't that what you believe? If you just have enough money, you'd be extremely happy, right? Well, there's a Roman proverb that says that money is like salt water. The more you drink it, the thirstier you get, right? Money is like holding on to an electric wire.

You can't let go. A man said, when I had \$50,000, I was happy. Now I have \$500,000 and I'm miserable.

And his friend said, easy, give away \$450,000. He said, I can't. That's life around us today.

Money can block out God from our vision. You ever think of that? Ever hold a dime up? I'm glad I have a dime. Hold a dime up between your eye and the sun? You know, a dime can block out the light of the sun.

And dollars can do that too, can block out the glory of Christ from our vision. James Dobson tells a delightful story. He says that after a long time, he and his family one night settled down for a game of Monopoly.

And they hadn't played Monopoly for a long, long time. And he said, as they played, a bit of the old excitement and enthusiasm came back to him, especially as he began to win. He said, everything went my way and I became master of the board.

He said, I own Boardwalk and Park Place. And I was stuffing \$500 bills into my pockets and under my feet. He said, suddenly the game was over.

I had won. Shirley and the kids went off to bed and I started putting everything back into the box. Then I was struck by an empty feeling.

Everything had to go back into the box. All the excitement that I had experienced was unfounded. There was nothing to show it.

I didn't own any more than those who had gone off to bed. It all had to go back into the box. And all of a sudden he realized that's life.

People spent their lives amassing wealth. And then the tactic lived. When Alexander the Great died, he left explicit instruction that his hands be like that in the tactic, showing that although he had conquered the world, he went out empty.

It's okay. A child comes into the world grass-faced. Ever notice a baby's hands? Grass-faced.

We grew up that way. In Greek mythology, there's a story of Atalanta. She was a great jogger.

She could have won the marathon in Massachusetts the other day. And she, a lot of young men wanted her hand in marriage. And she determined that she would only marry a fellow who could beat her in a race.

And the penalty for losing was death. So a fellow named Hippomenes came along one day and challenged her in a race. And he had some golden apples.

And as he ran, he dropped these golden apples along the way. And Atalanta stopped to pick up the golden apples, and she lost the race. And did you know that somebody in life is always dropping golden apples in front of Christians so that they'll lose the race, the lure of wealth.

It's an interesting thing that when men come to die and leave instructions concerning their tombstone, they never have a dollar sign engraved on their tombstone. Do you ever notice that? Always a cross, or a Star of David, or something religious. They want to give the impression that they've been hired.

But the fact of the matter is that they live for the dollar. They don't want that. Because it could be engraved on their tombstone.

That's the first thing we could live for. We're going to plan our own life. We could live for wealth.

Or, closely related to it, we could live for material possessions. Now this is the wrong way to go. I hope we'll see today that it's the wrong way to go.

There was a woman who lived in a very fine mansion in one of the prairie states. And one day she looked out, and she saw a prairie fire in the distance. And she was raging in furnace.

She wasn't herself in the prairie because the wind was, I guess, But all of a sudden she noticed that there was a change in the wind direction, and the fire started coming toward her and her house. And so, it finally came so close that she realized she had to get out. And she thought, well, what will I do? So she went into her bedroom, and she started gassing some of her valuables.

You can only carry so much, you know, out of a fire. And she was going to the dining room, and she dropped some of the things she had got in the bedroom, and she got some of the things she got in the dining room. She went from room to room in the house, picking up things and dropping them.

But the story is that when the fire came close, she knew she had to leave. She had in one hand a bucket of sour milk, and in the other hand a well-worn handbook. It's possible that she was grasping for material things, and comes to the end, she had in one hand a bucket of sour milk, and in the other, a well-worn handbook.

You see, I mean, Jones in one of his books tells about, it's a myth of course, and it's a man who found himself in the delectable position of only having to wish for something, and he got it, didn't he? He wished for the finest home that he could buy himself, it was there. He wished for extensive grounds with trees and vegetation from all over the world, it was there. He wished for a fleet of Cadillacs, and they were there, with chauffeurs.

Everything he thought that would bring satisfaction and joy to him in life, he wished for, and it was there. Just like that. But after a while, he began to suffer from boredom and disillusionment.

One day he said, I don't think I like this! It all began to fall on him. He said, I want to get out of here. I'd rather be in hell than here.

The voice said to him, where do you think you are? And for a lot of people in the United States, I would say they're in a hell of material things. They think that material things can satisfy. But Pascal was right when he said that God shakes vacuum in the human heart.

Nothing and no one but God can ever satisfy the human heart. The book of Ecclesiastes is a commentary on that, I don't know if you've read it recently, but in the book of Ecclesiastes, what it's saying, in effect, is all the world is not big enough to satisfy the human heart. The Song of Solomon gives you the other side of the picture.

It says the human heart isn't big enough to contain the loveliness of Christ. Jesus said it beautifully when he said, Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again. That's the key he asked.

Whoever drinks of this water shall thirst again. That is the water that this world offers. You drink of that and you'll thirst again.

He said, whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, the water that I shall give him shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life. It's good to remember that all the world isn't big enough to satisfy the human heart, but in the Song of Solomon, the lovers do not stick with love. And lovers are not trying to get any more outbursts.

Do you guys get any more? Do you have another question? That's what the Lord says. Thomas Hardy pictures himself going through a cemetery, and he's listening to the conversations that are going on down below. Here's a man who valued his cattle above his gods, but they don't make any difference now.

Here's a woman who went off every day and sailed like a gallant ship from shopping mall to shopping mall, after graperies and porcelain and all the rest of it. It doesn't make a bit of difference now. That's a pretty photo.

I'm noticing that. I have a pet mother that's over a hundred, and she's dying. That's not often favored as a home.

Fine clothes don't make a difference. Who's sailing? All her kids' clothes are gone. Who has no taste for her anymore? I tell you, if she didn't have Jesus, she wouldn't have been here.

She wouldn't be here. That's what I said. But that's the human heart, you know.

The human heart is covetous, and we have this stupid illusion that happiness comes from possessions. Jesus taught that very often. He taught that happiness comes from renunciation.

Not from acquisition, but from renunciation. There was a man who had this insatiable love for more and more land, and he heard that there was cheap land among the Bashkirs. And so, he traveled over to the land of the Bashkirs, and he found that he could, for a very cheap price, he could have all the land he could walk around from sunrise to sunset.

And so when sunrise came, he was there at the starting point, and he started to walk in one enormous circle. But oftentimes he made detours, because he'd see a nice plot of land there, and he would go around that fertile land. Then he'd see a wooded road, and he'd go around that.

And the day wore on, and he saw the sun declining to the west, and he said, I've got to get back to the starting line. By sunset. And he realized that to get back there, he had to run.

He ran. He ran. He ran, and as if the sun was setting, he got back to the starting line, and dropped dead.

And they buried him in a six-foot hole. All the land he needed. The answer is not in acquiring material possessions.

One day, somebody was taking Samuel Johnson through a very wealthy estate. Do you know how people love to do that? Show you all their wealth and glory. And when he got all through Johnson, he said to his host, these are the things that make it hard for a man to die.

What is the right way? That if material possessions, if they're not the right way, what is the right way? What should my attitude be toward material possessions? Well, the right attitude is to have few wants. To have only as much of this world's goods as are absolutely needful. Or, I think David Livingston said it very well.

He said, I am determined to hold or possess nothing except in relation to the kingdom of Christ. A lot of young people ask me that. They battle it about materialism.

They say, what should I have? Is it the right attitude? Is it the wrong attitude? Well, this is the thing that has helped me a lot. David Livingston's rule. I am determined to hold or possess nothing except in relation to the kingdom of Christ.

If you can use it for the advancement of Christ's interests here on earth, it's good. It's really good. Watchman Mead said, I want nothing for myself.

I want everything for Christ. Hoser one time said, own nothing. They have to understand what he meant.

You don't have that terrible projectiveness that you can't enjoy anything unless you own a few things. Christ can be able to go through life and be able to enjoy things without owning them. And I like what Malcolm Muggers said.

He said, as I look back, I realize the only times I've been happy in life have been times of simplicity and austerity. A little white room with a chair and a table. Fruit and rice on a green leaf.

A barren cup or a tent. He said, these things bring their own ecstasy. It's true.

It's true that the simple life is the happy life. I get a kick out of hearing people building these magnificent homes in suburbia. And do you remember they have their hot-cold folding doors and they have all the latest improvements and gadgets and everything that money can buy.

And they get to the place where the house is finished and they go up in the backyard and barbecue some hamburgers in the simple life. And that's what Muggers was saying. He was saying the really happy times in life are the times when you're living in simplicity.

The other day I was reading an article by John Alexander and he said, I used to own a barn where I stored my grain. One day the barn burned down. Now I can see the moon rising and people walking by.

Get it? He said, I used to own a barn where I stored my grain. One day the barn burned down. Now I can see the moon rising and people walking by.

The barn and the storage of grain in this case hinders you from enjoying the simple things in life and from being occupied with people in several ways. And Alexander wrote at the end of the article, burn down your barn. Something worthwhile is within your grasp.

Well that's another way you can go, the way of material, living for material possessions. Or you can live for a business or a possession. As you know, an awful lot of people are doing this.

Live for a business or a possession. Let that be the simple thing in your life. Some of us were talking about this at the breakfast table.

How does it all fit in? I was thinking about the Apostle Paul. You know, Paul was a tent maker. But he never began his letter by saying, Paul called to be a tent maker.

Did he? He was a tent maker. But he said, Paul called to be an apostle of the business. Well the business is between my occupation in life and my calling in life.

I certainly don't believe God ever called him in to be a carpenter or a plumber or electrician. I think it's good to be those things. To put bread and butter on the table, but it's not my calling in life.

My calling in life is to represent Christ's interest down here. And then cobble shoes to pay expenses. Who would have said that? It's very unseemly.

I'll never forget reading one of Job's books one time. He spoke of people who were content to be minor officials in transgender society. And it's amazing to me how generous the world is.

For instance, with the title of vice president. I used to work in a bank. And we had more vice presidents.

You could shake and pick at them. The pay was lousy. People loved it.

Minor officials in transgender enterprises. Here's a fellow who was a missionary in China named John Mott. I think he was a missionary in China.

Calvin Coolidge, who was then president, offered him the ambassadorship to Japan. And John Mott said to Calvin Coolidge, Years ago, God called me to be his ambassador. And ever since then, my ears have been deaf to any other call.

And in his famous message in Brisbane, Billy Graham tells the story of the oil company that was looking for a man to represent them overseas. And they got a hold of this missionary because he knew the country, he knew the culture, he knew the language. And they said, he's our man.

And they offered him \$25,000. And he totally wasn't interested. And they thought, every man has his price.

They offered him \$35,000. And he still wasn't interested. And they opted to \$50,000.

And when he refused, they thought he was loco. They said, well, what's the matter? They said, isn't the pay enough? He said, the pay is enough, but the job is too small. He had heard the call for Christ, to represent him down here.

Virgin said to his son once, my son, if God should call you to be a missionary, I should not like to see you dribble down into a sea. I think Virgin had his priorities right, didn't you? There was a young fellow who was brought up in a Christian environment. And he had his own plans for his life.

And he wanted to make a name for himself in the world. And he had an ambition to run a very successful textile business. And he got into trust with Ortiz as his savior.

But he got his textile business. I often say to people, be careful what you want. Be careful what you want, because if you want it badly enough, you can get it.

And I believe that. I believe there's a principle like that in life. If you really want to think badly enough, you can get it.

And he wanted his textile fine, and he got it. And he was very, very successful. But at 40, he was stricken with a terminal disease.

And when he was dying, this man heard him say, Over there, Jesus is saying something to me. But I can't hear him for the sound of the mill. The mill was drowning out the voice of Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the way he went into eternity. Now, I wouldn't give up my life, the passion of my life, for a business or a profession, and then get to the end and get golden handshakes and nothing more. Now, let me explain that there is a place for a textile job in the life of a Christian.

I don't mean that everybody should be, quote, in full-time Christian work, if you know what I mean. I don't think it's wrong for a Christian to have a business, a job, or a secular profession. In fact, I think that's a normal thing for a Christian.

But there's a difference between our vocation and our occupation. The purpose of the occupation, first of all, is to earn money for your needs and the needs of your family. To have money to give to the work of the Lord, and also to be a testimony for Christ.

I think that's very important. I think of the Lord Jesus of those years in Nazareth. You know, he was a carpenter.

And a carpenter's bench was his pulpit, wasn't it? And I know people that are glorifying God in secular professions today. I knew a man in Chicago, Bill Brooks. He worked for Wilson, these packers.

He worked in the pork section of Wilson. And he had a reputation in the stockyards in Chicago as a man who moved pork. By prayer.

Let me explain that to you. Sometimes, sometimes the pork market would be incredible. And there'd be a refrigerator car out in the yard there, full of pork, refrigerated.

And nobody was selling pork. And Bill Brooks would come to him and say, Bill, we've got to get that pork moving. And you know, Bill would go to prayer.

And the pork would move. And they knew him. In the stockyards in Chicago, there's a man who moved pork on purpose.

Wonderful thing, really, to be God's man in a situation like that. But the danger is when the job becomes central in my life. That's the danger.

I believe that every one of you young people who are in work like that and are moving up toward the top, and incidentally, cream does rise to the surface. And usually Christians do better. They should.

They're non-Christians. But there comes a time when you have to say to that job or occupation or business, thus far have your proud ways come in no purpose. That's a fact.

That's a fact. Whenever it's going your way and the money is rolling in, it's really hard to say that. Another thing we can do with our lives is to live for fame and worldly honor.

Live for fame and worldly honor. This is a mirage. You live for that, and you're quickly forgotten after you die.

The Bible says that. I wonder how many here could name the last five vice-presidents of the United States. I mean, vice-presidents, that's number two, isn't it, in this country.

Did you name the last five vice-presidents? They got fame. But how do you believe it? They believe it. They do.

This wonderful group of young people. How many of you here do you think you can remember their names? What a blast that would be to live for them and come to be here. This world's honors.

The other day I went into a store and I bought a piece of ribbon. See, your eyes are all green. It just cost about 40 cents.

You'd be amazed what a man will do for that. I mean, I haven't touched something in years. You know.

You know, Napoleon held up a piece of ribbon once and he said, With these, I could build a building. And he proved it. You just make it a little fancier, that's all.

Put something on the top and put something. You will not be awarded. Huh.

Or, if you just want to be a participant in the game of life, that's what that one says. Participants. That's great.

Are you glad we go in for a piece of ribbon? It really is amazing how people will knock themselves out for that, isn't it? Maybe you'd like something like this. I went into the Acne Cokie place the other day and they were, That's a street plug for acne. I told them, I'd like to borrow one of these.

They said, you want plastic or metal? I said, I really love plastic. This world honors. They said, April 19th, they just had a marathon back in Boston, Massachusetts.

Men and women running 26 miles. I admire them. I'm not talking to them.

I admire the discipline of this show. The guy that won, I think his name was Salazar this year, if I'm not mistaken. They give him a wreath of leaves.

A wreath of leaves. When I was a kid, we used to go there and watch them come in at the finish line. Watch old Pirate Sid Meier get his wreath of leaves.

I wonder where they are today. I wonder where Pirate Sid Meier's wreaths are. They stand up in some attic, collecting dust.

Paul says they do it for a corruptible crown. We are incorruptible. I'll tell you, when the Lord Jesus hands out the crown at the Judgment Seat of Christ, there'll be something worth having.

Not these poor, withering leaves of earth. Michael Griffiths asked a good question. I liked it.

He said, What will we have to show for our life? Will it be measured by life's little rewards and successes? Some certificate of education? Some gold cup indicative of athletic prowess? A few medals? Some newspaper clippings? Promotion within our profession? Some status in the local community? A presentation clock on retirement? An obituary notice? And a well-attended funeral? Is that all our life will have meant? Kind of empty. Roger Giffley, speaking to the graduating class at McGill University years ago, said to the young people in going through life, Don't think too much for money, power, or fame.

Because one day you're going to meet a man who cares for none of these things.

And then you'll know how cool you are. I want to say that again. In going through life, don't think too much about money, power, or fame.

Because one day you'll meet a man who cares for none of these things. And then you'll realize how poor you are. You know, I met that man.

His name was Jesus. And when I met Jesus, I realized how poor I was. Living with a half-empty bubble in this world.

This world's mine. The two stories that have come to me in recent years that have really touched my life, and one of them is a story about a fellow named Freddie Prince. You all remember Freddie Prince? In the entertainment world.

And that's a sad story. At the age of 22, he seemed to have everything going for him. He had attained one of the highest status roles in show business.

He was invited to the presidential gala at the inauguration in 1977. And yet he knew that something was terribly wrong in his life. A friend said Freddie saw nothing around that would satisfy him.

He would ask his friend, is this what it's all about? He was depressed and despondent. One day he returned to the sofa and took a small automatic disposal. It was all over.

But at least he found a note that said he couldn't go on any longer, that there was a quick end to a quick career. And he said, you know, the world looks at Hollywood and all the celebrities and thinks, boy, they've got their act together. They've really got it named, you know? Why the automatic down by the sofa? The other sad sad story is the story of Howard Hughes.

When he died, I had a Time magazine that had hundreds of articles page after page about him. As a young man, he was really a daring young hero. He was dashing.

And he went up and up and up. He owned a nature airline. He got a real pay.

Kind of love him, of course. Huge aircraft. His wealth was absolutely fabulous.

But during the last years of his life, Time magazine said he lived a sunless, joyless, hot, lunatic life. A virtual prisoner walled in by his own crippling fears and weaknesses. Once a vibrant figure, he neglected his own appearance and health until he became a pathetic vape.

A biographer described him as a torturous, troubled man who wallowed in stealthy blight, lapsed into periods of near lunacy, and lived without comfort or joy in prison-like conditions. And the world looked on and thought, boy, he really had it. I'd like to tell the story of William Telly.

William Telly was a devoted Christian who lived in England about a hundred years ago. He was a Greek scholar, too. And his nephew went off to the university.

Well, when he got there to the university and was taking courses in Greek, boy, the Greek professors really came to him. They said to him one day, where did you learn Greek? And he said, my uncle, William Telly. So when they had a vacancy in the Greek department, a committee from the university paid a visit

on William Telly.

And what they were doing was offering him the chair in Greek. And they couldn't understand it when he didn't bite for the pain. And they brought up all their strong arguments why he should come to their university and be the professor of Greek there.

And when he didn't show too much enthusiasm, one of them said to him, he said, Telly, don't you want to make a name for yourself in the world? And he said, which world, gentlemen? That should be our attitude. Which world? Which world am I trying to make a name for myself in? Dear friend, the only world that really counts is the world that comes. Don't live for pain and earthly harm.

Another thing you could live for is to live for the body. It's amazing really how we do emphasize the body, isn't it? A lot of people are very careful about brushing their teeth three times a day, but they're not careful about their soul. Isn't that right? Is it possible to be sure that you get three, I've seen this, is it possible to be sure that you get three square meals a day and your soul can be starving? That's kind of dumb, isn't it? Here's a woman, and her life is all beauty parlor and no chapel.

Her life is a little world of eye shim, mascara, false eyelashes, false eyebrows, fake lips, perfumes, ointments, and cream. Her dressing table is her office. As a matter of fact, I bought it for her.

We share the room, but it's a little posh. I think it's polite. Look at that makeup.

Don't worry girls, there's never a name. There should be enough to go around. If not, maybe couples.

Everybody get one. Raise your hand if you don't get one. What did you see when you first looked at that picture? You know what the picture was? You see the title down at the bottom, it says all is vanity.

But what that picture really says is this. Don't spend your life living for the body, which in a few short years will be eaten by worms if the Lord ever comes. Remember what it says? Don't spend your life living for the body, which in a few short years will be eaten by worms if the Lord ever comes.

You know, a man can be just as bad as this. This is a man, honestly, you'd think he had a 99-year leap on the box office. He acted as if he had anyway.

He had an expensive hairstyle. He spends a fortune trying to hide the aging process. He lives, wait, not for performance, but for the macho look.

He wears designer jeans, a showy charm, chains, expensive jewelry, and he unbuckles his shirt just to prove that he's all men. Is that all there is to life? You'd think so, the way some people are living today. Another thing we could live for is to live for pleasure, travel, entertainment, amusement, and the like.

I told it to Stanley Jones before. I really laughed when I read the story in one of his books. He told about two people that spent their lives on cruising ships, you know, going on these extensive cruises, and they go into their dining salon in the morning, you know, to get breakfast, and they'd be irritated with the waiter if he didn't give them perfect service.

And, you know, on those cruises you can ask for as much food as you want. They'd be fairly bored as themselves, you know, on everything on the menu. And then after breakfast they would crawl away to the lounge to recover from the enormous noise.

And then they would wait for the next meal to come around, tearing out the portholes into nothingness. And they're sitting there in the lounge one day, and the man's five, he's five two vases on the mantelpiece. And he gets up, and he walks with great effort over to the mantelpiece, and he gets one of the vases, and he looks into it, and he calls back to his wife.

It's empty. And he, Stanley Jones, says, more than vases were empty on that ship. Two empty lives.

Two empty minds. Their purses were full, but their minds were empty. I think it's a great world of teasing today.

You talk about emptiness. You know, teasing today, Friends, is a never-never land, a great American wasteland, where everyone is good-looking, everyone lives in Marlboro country, everyone lives against the front fender of a convertible, and everyone has a titillating personality. Any of that world doesn't exist.

You know that, don't you? And here are people feeding their minds on this all the time. I think of the emptiness of modern tourism, where you see Americans traveling all over the world, and rushing to take this in, and snap this photograph, and rushing back into a bus, and speeding on somewhere else, and rushing out. It's kind of panic.

And they just think if they can see enough places that their life will be filled with living. It doesn't work that way. Don't live for pleasure, travel, or entertainment.

Another thing you can live for is marriage and the family. Marriage is the most important thing in life, isn't it? Just get that nice home, luxury up, luxuriate out in Happy Valley. Begin adding lawnmowers, all kinds of materials in your garage.

Life gets very complicated. I said there's nothing the matter with marriage and a family, but if it becomes a god in our lives, it's very, very long. And I want to tell you that a woman can tail any opportunity for a man to make his life count for God, and a man can do it for himself.

If we get our head strong, and our motives strong, we can put a woman's health. By worldly ambitions and insubjections, we dump the things and toss the things, and all the rest. So, that's plan A. These are certain things you can do with your life.

I'd like to think about them for a while. All of those things that we've mentioned today, they're like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic kind of thing. Or they're like framing the pictures in a burning house.

Somebody said a fool is a man all of whose plans end in a grave. And that's what those plans do. They all end in a grave.

You don't want to go to Bethany. I love to tell the story of George Apley. He was dying, and his friends were all crowded around to hear what his greatest words would be before he passed out into eternity.

I guess you're supposed to say some momentous thing in death even if you never said it in life. And as he was expiring, they heard him say, Don't disturb the roses. What's the matter with roses? Nothing, I love them.

But it's not enough for a man growing up. Don't disturb the roses. Talk of the ghosts who like hugging the subordinates, creeping instead of flying, slaves who should be kings.

It's possible for those who like nagering on the minders. Just one more thing before we close. There's a second possibility that's open to us, and that is to be passive in life.

Don't find your own life. Just be passive and take whatever comes to you. I mentioned the expression last night, go with the flow.

That means drift with the tide. So this man is a man who just failed to take any resolute action. He's in this crisis.

He just can't make up his mind, and before he knows it, this little life is over. This is following the lines of least resistance. If you want to have a life that's free, relatively free, no problem.

This is the way to go. You can really insulate yourself from the problems of life by a plan number B. But I want to tell you something. You can do it.

You'll sink to be a squall. Amy Carmichael in her poem says, Let me not sink to be a squall. Make me thy full frame of thought.

This is the way to sink to be a squall. Just don't do anything. Just take whatever comes to you and say, What's going to be is going to be.

It's the line of fatalism. Really. Well, there are people living that life today.

Living wasted, empty lives. He said that never, that make up their mind. Never decided why they were here.

They never had a goal. And set out for the goal. But there's something better than all of that.

That's what we're going to think about tonight. For ourselves. You know what it is? You should have seen that.

No. Double cradle. Father, it really is good to be in your presence today, in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

And coming apart from the world for a few hours and taking a look back at it. And seeing what a world of shadows and emptiness it really is. How it fails to satisfy the human heart.

We thank you that many of us here have found the one who truly satisfies. Satisfies a longing soul. And Father, we really do want our lives to count for you.

We pray that as a result of our meetings, of our thinking over these issues, that each one of us will take resolute, decisive action that we'll go back from this conference another way. Like the wise men of old who came to see Jesus and said they went back another way. That's what we want to do, Lord.

Go back another way. We ask it in His worthy name. Amen.

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