

# Priorities 02 Subject Studies

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald emphasizes the critical need for confession and humility among Christians to address spiritual drought and seek national revival.*

**Duration:** 1:04:34

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:13

**Topics:** "Subject Studies"

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## Description

In this sermon, Greg encounters an older man and begins to witness to him about the Lord Jesus. The man reveals that he is an elder and expresses his interest in hearing about the Lord. Greg then discusses the issue of materialism and worldly desires that have infiltrated the church. He emphasizes the importance of brokenness and confession among believers, as well as the detrimental effects of television on spiritual life. Greg urges the congregation to be devoted to Christ by turning away from worldly distractions and seeking God's presence. He concludes by sharing a promise from Isaiah 44:3, encouraging believers to thirst for God's spirit and blessings.

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## Transcript

...on what I consider to be the most neglected priority of all. Confession. Confession.

Humiliation. Repentance. Brokenness.

Most of us can live and die in our local fellowships without ever attending a meeting when God's people gather together in confession and humiliation before him. True or false? Absolutely true. Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles, chapter 7, and I think you'll realize that the two verses that I'm going to read have a very special application to the time in which we're living.

2 Chronicles, chapter 7, verses 13 and 14. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people, if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. Those verses should have rather a familiar sound to us today.

California is going through the most severe drought that it has known in over 70 years. Livestock losses in Alameda County and losses of crops amount to the hundreds of millions of dollars. I come to Colorado

and I hear you've had the lightest snowfall in many years.

Who is behind the weather? Well, it says in these two verses of Scripture that God controls the weather. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain. But God doesn't leave us without a remedy.

And there's a promise in verse 14 that God himself can never fail to keep. If we abide by the conditions, God will come in and heal. He'll hear from heaven and forgive our sin and heal our land.

And I'd like to think with you this afternoon about this subject. National drought. Drought in our country.

Assembly drought. Family drought. And drought in our personal lives.

Drought, its cause and cure. National drought. Think of our country today and think of the divine institutions and principles that are under attack.

Almost everything that is of God that we find in the word of God is being attacked in our country today. Isn't it? Absolutely shocking every time you pick up a paper or hear the news. Same thing.

Think of the institution of marriage and how it's being dragged in the gutter. How premarital sex is being popularized and legalized. A country of people living together without being married.

Think of the rise of adultery and divorce and now the legalization of prostitution. And do Christians read all about this? They hear about this? And they think what can we do? Should we become involved socially in the affairs of the country? What can we do? I think of capital punishment. How God instituted capital punishment after the flood.

He said, Whoso shedeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. There's no more capital punishment in the United States. I know there are still men on the death row.

But capital punishment as such has fallen into disuse and it's doubtful if anybody will ever die by capital punishment in this country again. Yet it wasn't man who devised it. It was God who instituted it.

And now because God did, it's under attack. I think of the distinction between the sexes and how God set up this distinction. And so what do we have today? Break it down.

The unisex movement. And every effort being made by men and women to obliterate these moral distinctions that God has set up. I think of the headship of men and the subjection of women that is so clearly taught in the word of God.

Is this popular today? You think of the women's liberation movement and all of the undercurrents that are flowing seeking to undermine the word of God. Submission of children to their parents taught in the word of God. Ephesians chapter 6 verse 1. Now we have the children's rights amendment being discussed and pretty soon parents will be hauled into court, no doubt, if they dare to discipline their children.

I think in the word of God of the prohibition of sexual perversion and how much God has to say about it in the word. And now the attitude is, let's legalize it as long as it's done between consenting adults. Can you think of one divine institution that God has established that isn't really under attack today? I think of how many times in the word of God I read prohibitions against nudity.

Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of it. It's a refrain that goes over and over in the Pentateuch. So what do we have today? Beaches set aside for nudity.

I think of the sacredness of life as it's inculcated all through the word of God and now the great drive with regard to abortion and violence of every kind. I think of the prohibitions against drunkenness and now I turn on the radio and hear that drunkenness is a sickness and must be treated as such. What does it all mean? Did it ever occur to us that God expects us as Christians to fall on our faces and confess the sins of the nation as our own sins? I believe this is what the word of God teaches.

Think of a man like Moses leading his people out of Egypt and through the wilderness and how he stood in the gap before God and confessed the sins of the people as his own sin and pled for his people. It changed the course of history, didn't it? God could do it again. I think of a man like Ezra who also stood in the breach.

Came before God and led the people in a great time of confession and prayer. Made things right. I think of Elijah, the time when God's people had wandered away from him.

He cried to God and God shut up the heavens so there was no rain. Then the people moved toward God and he prayed again and the rain came in abundance. You say, I know it happened all in the Old Testament.

It never happens today. Well, I don't believe that's true. I believe the reason it doesn't happen today is because nobody's doing it.

When our country was in the depths of the terrible Watergate scandal, Senator Mark Hatfield and some others called for a national day of confession and humiliation. Some of you remember that. I've tried to track down the date of it, but I have never been able to do it yet.

But I remember that we ourselves set ourselves to pray for this nation and to confess the sins. Did God work? It wasn't very long after that that some of those most explosive Watergate tapes came to light and the abscess was punctured and the pus began to flow. So God is still doing it today.

Still doing it today. And then last night I told you of that time when a little group of people got together in confession and prayer in San Leandro and later prayed for the Chad Republic and got over through the government there before the weekend was over. So I'd like to suggest to you first of all that as far as our beloved country is concerned, we can do more on our knees in confession and humiliation and prayer than we can do in all the social activism that might come into our minds.

Learn to move men through God by prayer. There's a man in England years ago named Rhys Howell and there's a book about him called Rhys Howell Intercessor and it's really interesting to plot, to chart his prayers of confession and humiliation and the changes that took place in the history of the nation and of Europe at that time because a man prayed. But I believe that God is calling us to this ministry today.

Traditionally we shy away from it. From confession. Why is that? Is it because we know we're perfect? No.

We know that we have enough sin and frailty and infirmity to sink a battleship. But I think that probably it's a reaction against excesses when people gather together to confess and all kinds of lurid things surface. We don't want that.

But the principle is here just the same. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. You know, in addition to drought in our nation, we can have drought in the assembly too, can't we? And I really believe that God is looking for men and women today who will stand before him and take the sins of the church and confess them as our own.

And when I say that, I don't mean any particular portion of the church. I mean the church of the Lord Jesus Christ as it exists on earth today. Sometimes we hear of some dreadful thing that happened in some segment of the church and we kind of preen our feathers and say, thank God it didn't happen to us.

But really, if we're going to take a scriptural view we'll have to see those things as affecting the body of Christ of which we are a part. You might turn in that connection to Daniel chapter 9. I think this is one of the most vivid illustrations of it in the word of God, Daniel. Daniel is one of the few men in the Bible, as far as I know, about whom no failure is recorded, no adverse comments.

It seems he wore throughout the white flower of a blameless life. We know he wasn't sinless, but no failure is recorded of him. And yet, we read in Daniel chapter 9, verse 3. What I'd like you to notice in these verses that I'm going to read, how Daniel took the sins of his people, and they weren't really his sins, you couldn't say Daniel was guilty of them, but he took the sins of his people and he made them his own.

He made them his own. This is known as eating the sin offering. It's very foreign to all of us, but it's scriptural just the same.

I set my faith unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. And I prayed unto the Lord my God and made my confession and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, to them that keep his commandments, we have sinned. And you know, I really believe with all my heart that God is waiting for people to confess that today.

We have sinned. Confession, the road to revival. We have sinned and committed iniquity and have done wickedly and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.

Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants, the prophets which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes and our fathers and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongs to thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to all Israel that are near and that are far off through all the countries where thou hast driven them because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face.

To our kings, to our princes and to our fathers because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses though we have rebelled against him. Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God to walk in his laws which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

And so he goes on in this most eloquent prayer of humiliation and brokenness before God. Anything happen? Yeah. God brought the people back from captivity.

He always does. He always does when men will stand in the breach and intercede before him and confess and humiliate themselves. God brings his people back from captivity.

Think of the situation in the church today. Think of the scandalous cases of immorality. Think of Christian leaders who have been corpses, have become corpses along the highway of Christian service.

When we hear this, what do we feel? They should really bow us in contrition before the Lord. Think of the divorces, the separations, the broken homes today. What an advantage the enemy has gained.

I never hear it in our prayer meeting. Think of the children who have become rebels and even apostates from the Christian faith of the drugs and the liquor and the free love. And think of the terrible tension that exists in so many homes between the children and the parents.

Is this something that we just want to sweep under the carpet and feel that if we say nothing about it, it will go away? Well, that's not God's way. God's way is to drag it out of the open and confess it before him and humble ourselves before the Lord. Think of the desecration of the Lord's Day.

I don't know how you feel about the Lord's Day. I'm afraid that to many Christians it's just another day of the week. But I don't believe that.

I really believe it's a divine principle. I know that we're not under the law and I know that we're not Sabbath observers, but I believe it's a divine principle there. And I really believe that the Lord's Day is a day in which, set apart from our secular affairs, we can dedicate it to him in a special way if we can't the other days of the week.

And so what goes through my mind is, not is it wrong for me to do such a thing on the Lord's Day, but how can I give this day to him in a very special way? I really believe if we love the Lord, we'll love his day as well. But largely today the Lord's Day has become a day of recreation and most people wouldn't allow the local meetings of the assembly to interfere with a trip to the mountains, would they? Or am I being too frank? I don't like to step on toes very much. Prayerlessness.

Think of the prayerlessness in the church today. The terrible blight that is over our churches and over our assemblies. We're occupied with everything else and prayer is the last resort as it really comes to this.

I'd like to suggest to you that in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today we have a great deal of ministry without function. Do you know what I mean? We go through our meetings and the meeting is over and we gather around, we joke, we talk about the baseball scores and really we don't go home smitten before the Lord, do we? I'm sorry to say that in all too many cases it's just a rehash of the obvious and the meetings are ho-hum meetings. I feel this is something we have to come before the Lord.

I really believe today that we're suffering a famine of the Word of God and I think the famine of the Word of God is worse than the drought that the nation is experiencing today. A famine of the Word of God. Where will God find men? Where will He find assemblies who will bow before Him and confess? I think of some of the dull worship meetings.

You know, I think there's nothing more wonderful than New Testament principles when they're carried out in New Testament power but God help us when we have the forms without the power. There's nothing worse than that. Sometimes I feel that some of the meetings need nothing more than closing down.

Really? When we're so taken up with TV which incidentally is very poor preparation for a worship meeting. Very poor preparation for a worship meeting. And we come there and we're dumb priests.

We have nothing to say. No basket offering to bring to the Lord. The fumes that are being saved in the day in which we live.

And you know it's wonderful how we can become so accustomed to it. We don't think anything of it. We just accept it as being, well you know, we're living in the last days.

The day of small things. Don't despise the day of small things. But really it is a tragedy when you think of how we can be accustomed to seeing souls going down to hell and not really care.

I think that we should get before the Lord and confess as far as our assemblies are concerned the sin of Sodom. You say, what's the sin of Sodom? Well it says in Ezekiel 16 verses 49 and 50 that the sin of Sodom was pride, fullness of bread, and prosperous ease. Isn't that where we are today? Pride, fullness of bread, and prosperous ease.

Well it's easy to get discouraged and think there isn't any hope. But there is hope. And wherever God gets a man or a woman or men and women will really lay hold of him and come before him in confession of these sins, taking the sins of the church and making them our own.

God works. Some years ago on an island off the northwest coast of Scotland there were two elderly women. You say, what can two elderly women do? Well I tell you, these women could pray.

And they were really appalled by the conditions on that island. In some ways it's the island of Lewis. It's rather an unusual island.

The children learn the word of God in the school. Somebody said they know more about Ezekiel than they know about mathematics. So it gives you an idea, under the background anyway, of the people.

I don't think you could find many people on that island that didn't know the gospel. But these women were really consumed with an awe of the sin of the people. And they started to pray.

They prayed that God would visit this island with his mighty power. And after some time God gave them a promise that he was going to do that. That he was going to sweep that island with his reviving power.

It was that subjective knowledge that came to them that God had answered their prayer and God was going to work. And so they wrote to a man on the mainland named Duncan Campbell. He's connected with a faith mission there on the mainland.

And they told him that they had prayed. They confessed to God and vowed in humiliation before him. And God had given them assurance that he was going to work.

And they said they felt that he was God's man to come over at that time and minister to the people. Duncan Campbell was having a crusade there on the mainland. And he wrote back and told them, So sorry, you know, having a great crusade here on the mainland and I can't come.

Well they dipped their pens in acid and wrote a tart letter back to him and said whether he came or not God was going to work and if he didn't come he'd miss the blessing. And when their second letter reached Duncan Campbell his crusade had evaporated. There was nothing left.

And he got on the next ship and crossed that little body of water between. And when he got there God was already working. The people were in the church until four o'clock in the morning praying.

People were getting saved right and left. Here's a drunkard and he's walking home and nobody talking to him. He bows by the side of the road.

He's saved before he ever reaches home. Out there on the moors the men often, they have little huts out there. They call them bohuns.

And they go out there and drink. They have their great drinking parties out there. They were going to go out while this revival was going on.

Some of them were going to go out to one of these bohuns and have one of their drinking boats. And so they said to one of the fellows, now it's your turn to buy the liquor. You buy the liquor.

He said, how much do you want me to buy? And they told him. And he said, I think you better buy more than that. He said, I have a feeling this is the last time I'll ever be coming.

And it was. And before the next time he was swept into the kingdom of God. And I had a cousin named Norman Morrison.

He had come back from the war and he had a plate in his head. He had shrapnel. He had lost the sight of one eye, shrapnel in the other eye.

And he had a plate in his head. If he leaned over he lost consciousness. Couldn't get a job.

And he started to drink. And he became a drunkard. And his mother used to see the fellows come by and take him off at night.

And she knew that he'd come back tanked. But this revival came along. And he didn't want to go to those meetings.

But he went. Pow, the spirit of God came upon him. And he went to the meetings.

And he was gloriously converted. And afterwards when he'd be walking down the street of the village, the people would pull aside the curtain and look. And they'd say, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

And literally hundreds of people were saved and swept into the kingdom of God. At that time. And very few of those who were saved at that time have ever gone back into the world.

There was a real moving of the spirit of God. Even girls from that island that were working down in Glasgow and in London when the revival was going up in the northwest of Scotland. And they're working down there.

And the spirit of God would come upon them and say, you better go back to Lewis. And they'd go back to Lewis and they'd get saved. How do you account for that? Well, I'll tell you how I account for it.

Two old women got before God in confession of sin. They confessed the sins of that island and of the church as their own. They cried to God.

And God heard from heaven. And he healed the land. And he saved souls.

It's real, isn't it? And it could happen here in the United States, too. But I believe when we take God at his word, we'll see these things happen. Personal drought.

Personal drought comes right down to our own lives. And it's so easy for me just to think, well, here I am and I'm going along and everything is well and nothing to be worried about. But really I think if we look at ourselves today, we'll realize that we're a pleasure-loving people.

Is it true? A pleasure-loving people. Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. And whenever the cross moves up in the pathway ahead of us, we can find all kinds of retreats, all kinds of escape routes to avoid the sharpness and pain of the cross.

The Lord deliver us. How many living double lives today? You think of the coldness and the bitterness and the cynicism that's so easy to come in among us as people of God. Don Norby mentioned in his prayer, think of the gossip and the backbiting that goes on.

Actually tears local churches apart. Local fellowships. What's the answer to this? Well, the answer is given to us in the verses we read tonight.

We have become a people who are TV worshipers, really. I don't know how you feel about it, but I really feel that TV has detrimental value upon spiritual life today that few of us really realize. I don't say there aren't things on TV that are interesting and educational and all the rest, but I'm thinking taking it as a whole is a mass of filth and certainly not edifying.

In the days of the early church, devotedness to Christ was seen in people willing to die for Christ. I think today devotedness is seen in people willing to get up out of an easy chair and go off and shut off the TV. I think it takes the same kind of spine and the same kind of backbone.

May the Lord deliver us and may the Lord deliver our children from the terrible brainwash. Every magazine, secular magazine I pick up today tells about the detrimental effects of TV. Really, the secular magazine.

The issue of redesigning is why Johnny can't write, I think. And TV is very prominent in why Johnny can't write. Why do we have a nation of crime and violence? Well, because we learn it on TV.

And every magazine you pick up has something like that. And yet on we go. We're really largely a worldly people.

What does it mean to be worldly? I think a worldly man is a man who has a love for passing things. A love for passing things. And this is a blight on the church today.

I think of the personal feuds and animosities that come in among the people of God. And what's the solution? Oh, the solution is brokenness. Being willing to go to one another and confess and say those words that are so hard to come by.

I was wrong. I am sorry. Forgive me.

I think of the materialism that has come in among us as the people of God today. And I really believe that God is waiting to hear us say what Daniel said. In Daniel chapter 9, we have sinned.

I don't know any incident in the whole word of God that is more relevant and timely and true to life than the story of the prodigal son. It comes back to me all the time. I can identify with him like I can identify with a few people in the Bible.

It goes off. Everything looks so attractive there in the world. And he goes off in the world.

Comes to the end of himself. Fain would have filled his belly with the hops that the swine did eat. He thinks of the servants in his father's house faring better than he's faring.

And he says, I know what I'll do. I'll arise and go to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against thee and against heaven. In thy sight am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Make me, I pray thee, as one of thy hired servants. And off he went. Off he went.

And the father goes out to meet him. And pretty soon he knows the father's kiss. The arms flung around his shoulders.

The best robe. The ring on his finger. The shoes on his feet.

But that had cast the joy that began and never ended. And that's what God is waiting for us to say. I really believe that if my people, who are called by my name, if we'll just humble ourselves before the Lord, take that low place, confess our sins, the sins of the church, and claim the promise of the word of God.

There was a promise in the word that was especially meaningful at the time of the Lewis revival. And I'd just like to share it with you this afternoon. And maybe some of us will take this promise from God's word and lay hold of it, make it real in our lives, and see God answer it.

Isaiah chapter 44 and verse 3. A verse that is precious to me. Isaiah 44 and verse 3. It says, For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.

On what kind of ground does God promise to pour the water? On thirsty ground. Floods upon the dry ground. I wonder, are our hearts thirsty today for better things? Are we willing really to humble ourselves before the Lord and cry out to him to come in and revive the work in the midst of the years? Shall we just look to the Lord in confession and in prayer? O Lord, we can honestly say with Daniel, we have sinned and committed iniquity and have done wickedly and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.

And Lord, we would come before you this afternoon and we would confess to you the sin of our nation. We know the terrible scandal and disgrace of Watergate and all the reproach it has brought upon this people and the weakening of the nation in international affairs. We confess it, Lord, as sin in thy sight.

We think of the bribery on every hand. We think of the corruption, Lord, as a way of life. And we think of how all of our government seems to be built on the big lie.

We think today, Lord, of the absence of that righteousness that exalts the nation. And Father, in this 200th year of this nation, we pray, O God, have mercy upon our land. We pray that the gospel might go out with renewed power.

As it has not before. We think, Lord, of our business lives. Lord, we think of how often our lips are sealed by our lives, by our conduct.

We think of how often we use the wisdom of this world instead of the wisdom that comes from above. How brainwashed we often are. We think, Lord, of how we give priority to the dollars rather than to spiritual values.

We pray, Lord, that you will anoint our eyes with divine eye salve. That we might see things the way you see them. That we might be radicals for the Lord Jesus, adhering human strictly to the line of the word.

We think, Lord, of our assembly life today. Lord, we would confess to you our self-satisfaction. O God, forgive us for our comfort and ease in Zion.

Forgive us, Lord, that we're so blissfully unaware of the low state of spirituality in our midst today. Forgive us, Lord, that we have a greater interest in the sound of music than in the sound of praise, than in the meetings of the assembly. Lord, send a revival, we pray, into our assemblies and let it begin with us.

We pray, Lord, concerning our family lives. We think of the unequal yokes on every hand. We think of the separations and divorces.

We think of wayward children today and the abandonment of the family altar. Lord, we think back to a day when in many Christian homes that motto was on the wall. We pray that it might become a reality again, that Christ is the head of this house.

The unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation. May our homes, Lord, be like that house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha in Bethany where the Lord Jesus loved to be. And then, Lord, we think of our personal lives.

We think of our materialism, our gross materialism, and our covetousness. Lord, we pray that we'll lay hold of these words, that godliness with contentment is great gain. We confess to you that we are a pleasure-seeking people occupied with a world of trivia and passing things.

And, Lord, we think in our personal lives how we have neglected the word of God. I think once again of the gossip and the backbiting and the prayerlessness and all the rest. And, oh, God, we pray that we as men might go forth from this retreat a different way than the way we came.

We pray that your spirit will come upon us in power. And we pray that men will take knowledge of us that may have been with Jesus. And so we would come this afternoon, Lord, and we would really eat the sin offering in your presence.

And we would pray concerning the physical drought that's in our land, too. Lord, send the rain, but even more than the physical, material rain, we pray that you'll send the showers of reviving blessing into our midst. We ask it in the Savior's name, and for his sake.

Amen. Okay, we'll try to get through these questions rather quickly so that we'll cover them all. The first question is, do you see a promise for the giver in 2 Corinthians 9, verse 10? 2 Corinthians 9, verse 10 says, Now ye that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.

Yes, well, of course, it is a prayer, and it says that the same God who provides the seed for the farmer to plant his crops is able to provide bread for you and give you seed for sowing that you might have an abundant harvest. And so it definitely is a promise for the giver. I think a similar promise is found in the 8th verse.

Don't miss the 8th verse. It says, God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. And if I can just paraphrase that in simple language, it says that God is able to give you the ability to be an investor for him if you really want to be.

That's what it says. If a man really has the desire to give to the work of the Lord, the Lord will fulfill that desire. I really believe that's true, too.

God is able to make all grace abound to you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. So let's claim these promises from the Word. Question 2. How do you feel about investments provided the income goes totally toward the Lord's work? Well, what do you think about that? In the light of Matthew 6, verse 19, I have to ask you, are those investments laying up treasures on earth? If they are, the answer is put them to work for God, not the interest on them.

I know these are hard sayings, but what else can I say in the light of verses like Matthew 6, verse 19? It says, Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, or moth and rust of corruption, where thieves break through and steal. Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. So send those lovely investments on before you.

Do your giving while you're living, then you're knowing where it's going. Amen. Amen.

...say that accepting Christ as one's Savior and making Him Lord of my life are necessary conditions of salvation. This has caused me a great deal of confusion, since I have always thought salvation is by grace alone. Could you explain how salvation is contingent on making Him Lord of my life? Well, of course, there are... quite a debate goes on in this subject.

There are those that say that you're saved by grace through faith plus nothing, and others say that really in the act of salvation you must crown Him Lord of all. If He's not Lord of all, then He's not Lord at all. Well, I take great comfort in the fact that God is sovereign, and He's greater than all our little debates down here.

And there are problems here. For instance, if you say that in order to be saved you have to crown Jesus Lord, the question comes up, how much? How much do you have to crown Him Lord? Remembering that nobody crowns Him Lord completely. You know? After we've done our very best, we're still unprofitable servants.

And so if you make the Lordship of Christ a condition of salvation, you do run into problems. On the other hand, if you say that you can trust Christ as Savior with a mental reservation that you're not going to make Him Lord, you're running into problems there too. Aren't you? You're running into problems there too.

So I take real comfort in this fact that whenever God sees that spark of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He saves the soul. And He's bigger than I am and He can sort out all these things. He really can.

Certainly the Lord Jesus should be Lord of our lives. And that begins with a process, with a crisis and should go on to a process. Please make suggestions as to how a Christian family should handle TV

viewing by both parents and children.

Well, if you really want my honest answer, I think the best way to... I imagine you do. I really think the best way to handle it is to get rid of it. Now, that sounds harsh.

Oh, McDonald's, you know, way out of it. But seriously, I know non-Christian families who have got rid of TV and extoll the practice. I think it's the greatest thing that's happened to their families.

Non-Christians, they got rid of it and they extoll the practice. They recommend the practice to others. Does that answer? Okay.

I know what Mandela does. And their motto is brings the world into your home. And he said, if that's what it does, I don't want it.

He sent it back. That's the simplest answer to the problem. If you do have TV, it certainly should be controlled with the children.

And sometimes it's difficult to do that. Matured. This is one that really, I feel a little bit beyond my depth and some of you might be able to help.

What is your thought in light of, in other words, you haul the wheat off the market for a better price? Well, the question that comes to my mind is, and I don't know the answer to this, is that a form of speculation and some of you wheat farmers can perhaps tell me. Is it definite that the price is going to be better in a few months or is there a risk involved? Can anybody speak to that? It's usually better. Pardon? I see.

A very definite risk. It can go up or it can go down. It can go up or it can go down.

Well, you see, that affects the answer, doesn't it? It all comes into prayer. Comes into prayer. I'm a farmer and I still have most of my wheat from last harvest.

I see. Well, don't God give us wisdom to then tell us? Okay, that's why I said I'm beyond my depth with this question. I want to hear what you have to say.

Uh-huh. Say anything on that. As far as the price is concerned.

Poetry, I guess. Anybody else? Differing viewpoints on it. This himself and that we shouldn't.

If there is a person investing for the Lord, what is the balance between wife, 16, 33, is it? So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. That's the kind of a verse that each one of us has to go before the Lord on and say, Lord, what is this verse going to mean in my life? Now, it doesn't mean the same in everybody's life. There are differences.

Some people have a family, some don't. And so, the thing to do is to have that exercise of soul that goes before the Lord and seeks his will. And when you do, God begins working in your life.

And God begins speaking to you about things. Maybe things in your life that never bothered you before. And yet you've opened the door for him to do it and he begins speaking to you about it.

I don't think it's right for me to go around and tell anybody else what it's going to mean in his life, what it means to forsake all. I don't know. I know what it means in my life and that I'm responsible to do it.

It's so easy to forget or slip back into the old way of thought. How can we avoid this? Well, my answer is put yourself in a position where you have to trust God. Where you're really cast upon the Lord.

And you'll grow in the life of faith. I like to tell a story and I might have told it to some of you before, but some years ago a fellow came back from overseas and he came to my apartment and discussed a problem that had arisen on the mission field. And he was going from my place to another city there in the Midwest.

And when he got to, I said to him, you know there's an elder in an assembly in the next city you're going to that should know what you've told me today. And I'd like to suggest that in the few hours you're in that city you go to that elder and you share with him. And before this fellow left I said to him, I said, I'd like to ask you a question.

What makes you tick anyway? I just wanted to see how he would react to this. I said, here you are. You've got a wonderful education in the United States.

You could, you know, get any kind of a job you wanted. And I said, here you go overseas and you throw your life away with a bunch of nobodies there on the mission field. I said, what's it all about anyway? And he said this to me.

He said, Mr. MacDonald, I see that it's very hard to live a life of faith in the United States. He said, you have to put yourself in a position where you have to trust God. Where if God fails you, you're sunk.

And when you do that there'll be a power in your life and when you touch other lives something will happen for God. Now just keep that in the back of your mind because that's not the end of the story. I'm going to say it again.

He said, it's very hard to live a life of faith in the United States. You have to put yourself in a position where you have to trust God. Where if God fails you, you're sunk.

And if you do that there'll be a power in your life and when you touch other lives something will happen for God. Well, he went up to this city and after he left he wrote me a letter from Los Angeles and he said, brother, I went there and I had appointments and I had meetings and the time went. He said, I never did get to see that elder.

And he said, the Lord knew I was willing. The Lord knew I wanted to do it but he said it was completely impossible for me to do it. So he went out to California and had two weeks of meetings in Riverside and at the end of the two weeks he boarded a Greyhound bus to go back to the East Coast and when he got on the bus it was fairly empty.

And then they drove on to Riverside and when they got to Riverside it started to fill up. And he watched the bus fill up and strangely enough it filled up until there was only one seat left on the bus and that was the seat next to him. And the door still hadn't closed.

So he bowed his head and prayed. Lord, send on some young person that I can witness to for you. And he waited.

And an older man got on. The older man walked down the aisle and sat in the seat next to Greg and Greg said, he said, young or old I have my responsibility to the Lord. So he started to witness to this man.

And the man said, well that's a funny thing you should speak to me about the Lord Jesus. He said, I happen to be a born again believer. And Greg said, you are? He said, my name is Greg Livingston.

And the man said, my name is. And he gave the name of that elder from that Midwest assembly. So they got a drive away car.

The man dropped his wife off with him. Go back to... When you think of all the Greyhound buses wasn't it a coincidence that that elder sat next to Greg Faint in the United States. You have to put yourself in a position where you have to trust God.

Where if God fails you, you're sunk. And if you do that, there will be a power in your life. And when you touch other lives, something will happen for God.

Three months later that elder met me and he said, Bill, nothing in my life has ever spoken to me as loudly as that, that God would bring two people together. To this question, to put yourself in a position where you have to trust God. Where do we draw the line concerning working in preparation for raising a family? The word seems to indicate a married man has to please his wife or meet her needs.

Also what kind of standards by what kind of standards do we judge richness? A recent survey said a couple with children and an income of \$10,000 is just getting by. Also, I don't know the accuracy of this statement but I've been told the average house in America is \$40,000. Thus a nice house to one might be nothing to someone else.

But once again, we've answered part of this in our discussion. Once again, it's something that each one of us has to be before the Lord about. And comparing America with other countries, we're all millionaires.

Let's face it, really. We're all millionaires. So things really are relative.

But what I must do as a believer in the Lord Jesus is to live sacrificially really for the cause of Christ. Pray before the Lord and ask Him how I can best do this. I don't know if you've ever had this experience, but I did.

I really wanted this life of sacrifice and renunciation and so I turned over my life to the Lord and the Lord really started to barbecue me about certain things in my life. Really did. And I'd lie in bed at night and I had all the theological arguments there and they didn't mean a thing.

I mean, the Word of God was still there and I was fighting against it and I never got rest for my soul until I did the things that the Lord was telling me to do. And then when I did them I had a great peace. Great peace of those that love thy Lord.

And so, if you want to put yourself in the position, do so. And I think don't take yourself out of it. If you don't plan for future needs then you have to borrow at high interest rates.

I think I answered that, didn't I? High interest rates. Is that using the message? Please speak to the question of borrowing finances for business progress. Well, of course, in any business you have to have fixed capital and you have to have working capital and God knows that and as far as I'm concerned some of these things are current needs and it seems to me that in the course of running many businesses today that it is necessary to borrow funds for the current needs and for the long-term needs of the business.

The Lord knows about that and I think our attitude of heart is what really counts in a case like that. Well, it seems to me when a man goes in things are made upon him that were not part and continued in that employee condition. I want to initiate a program to alleviate spiritual drought within the family setting without being superficial and rigid.

Daily discipline in this regard seems to detract from any possible spiritual blessings received. Well, I think that the answer to the problem is to get before the Lord as we had in our message this afternoon and to confess all known sin and put it away. And to really get down to business being business for the Lord be yielded to him and you'll see the spiritual temperature rising very rapidly.

Could you give your testimony on how you got saved? Well, I could and I think there might... No, the time is up, is it? Well, a very strange thing happened to me early in life. You know, it speaks about Timothy and prophecies that went before on him. When I was five years of age my parents had taken me to Scotland and we lived there for a year and I developed diphtheria in the throat and I was so sick that the mucous membrane across your throat had strangled you to death.

And I was gasping for breath and a knock came on the door. It was my father's brother. He had been sitting by the fire in the adjoining village and he'd been reading the word of God and God made a promise to him.

He came through the night and knocked on the door. Just as my mother had turned her back and he said, I just came to tell you he's not going to die. He's going to live and God's going to save his soul someday.

He had been reading in Psalm 91 because he has set his love upon me I will set him on high with long life will I set destined to long life which as far as I'm concerned the Lord has already fulfilled. He can take me anytime and to salvation as well. Thousands of years when that uncle used to write to me he'd always put at the bottom of the letter God as he went before on you.

Well, I grew up in a Christian home. I can't remember a time in my life when I didn't know the gospel. I used to witness to the kids in the neighborhood and I wasn't saved myself.

We lived a very sheltered life. My mother was a very stern Scottish Presbyterian. She brought us up with a Bible in one hand and a strap in the other.

His mother's knee and over his father's knee. In Pittsburgh, Massachusetts he used to carry my brother and myself on his shoulders through snow drifts to get us to the meetings when we were kids. We had no car of course in those days.

We'd go to the theater. I didn't say I was a very bad sinner. I resented it when people asked me if I would say some of the preachers would and I'd lie to get them off my back.

When I became a high school student God began to work in my life in conviction. He showed me something very important. He showed me that what I was was a lot worse than anything I had ever done.

That was a great revelation. Apparently stripped me of all my pride worse than anything I'd ever done. And then the Lord began to convict me of sin.

Convict me of sin. Convict me of sin. I could take you to a meeting place in Cambridge, Massachusetts and show up in the balcony where the family was there one night and I couldn't stand it anymore.

I got up and walked out. I was just afraid the place was going to cave in on me. The conviction of sin was so great.

Then sometime during that period I don't know when I laid down my arms. I had really been fighting against the Lord. C.S. Lewis said that when the Lord brought him in he brought him in fighting.

Well, that's the way I was too. And I finally yielded. I said in effect Nay, but I yield, I yield.

I can hold out no more. I sink by dying love compelled no more. The idea that when you trusted Christ would go on and the electrical impulses would go through your nervous system.

I just knew from the testimonies I had heard that salvation was a tremendous emotional experience. And it wasn't for me. It was just the quiet acceptance of a simple offer.

So then I went through months of doubt and agony and darkness. And I trust you now. I wait.

I believe in certainty and enjoyment. And it was just what I needed. I read it and the clouds drifted away.

Cutting shows that it's the blood that makes you safe. It's the word that makes you sure. And when I saw that assurance came through the word of God and not through feelings.

That was just what I needed, you know. Just what I needed. And then after that I heard Ironside.

And he said, I don't know I'm saved because I feel happy but I feel happy because I know I'm saved. And that helped me too. In the system of a believer.

As if there's a God in heaven for feelings come and feelings go and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the word of God. Nothing else is worth believing.

And I can honestly say that when I got assurance of salvation I've never really doubted since. Because the assurance is based not on something that is changeable of my feelings but on the infallible word of God. That was the beginning really of a wonderful life.

I have only praised for the Lord for the wonderful way he has led. And my only regret is how I have failed him. See? A joke.

Were there any other questions or comments from the floor? If you can suit the word of God to the individual needs of those who are present we can't do it. We don't know Lord. You can even take verses out of context and use them for eternal blessing.

And so we pray that you'll be doing that with what we've had before us today. And we pray that you'll send us forth with hearts to love and serve and obey you in all our ways. We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake.

Amen.

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