

Priorities-04 Dan 9

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the need for confession and prayer to address the spiritual drought affecting both the nation and individuals.

Duration: 1:01:21

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 44:3, Isaiah 55:1, Matthew 6:33, Luke 14:33, Luke 15:22, 2 Corinthians 9:10

Topics: "Priorities"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses various topics including the value of money, the power of prayer, and the importance of confession and humility. The speaker emphasizes the need for individuals to prioritize their spiritual growth and rely on prayer to bring about change in their lives and in society. The sermon also touches on the issue of television and the need for control and discernment in its use, especially when it comes to children. Lastly, the transcript briefly mentions the idea of storing crops for a better price, but does not provide a clear answer or guidance on the matter.

Transcript

And I'd like to think with you this afternoon, national drought, drought in our country, family drought, family drought in our personal lives. Drought, its cause and cure. National drought.

Think of our country today and think of the divine institution 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 and the 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 punishments.

How God instituted capital punishment after the flood. He said, whoso sheddeth 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, you know? 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 right 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? Features 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 abortions 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 to change 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.

Laid 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 as the rain came in abundance. You say, I know it happened all in the Old Testament. It never happens today.

But 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 to confess the sins of the... 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 God overthrew 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 was a man in England years ago named Reese Howell.

And there's a book about him called Reese 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. And I believe that God is calling us to this ministry today. Conditionally 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 comment.

It seems he wore throughout the white flower of a blameless light. 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 face unto the Lord God, the seat 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 belongeth 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, to all the countries whither thou hast driven them because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. But 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.

And then they happen. 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? It 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 meetings.

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 in 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 there'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 there'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 that 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.

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 score 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. So 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, isn't it? 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.

I think of the few 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. A 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 who 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 of 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 in 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. Well Duncan Campbell was having a crusade there in the mainland.

And he wrote back and told them so sorry you know having a great crusade here in the mainland and I can't come. Well they dipped their pens in acid and wrote a tart letter back to him. They 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 churches till 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 and he's saved before he ever reaches home.

Out there in the moors the men often they have little huts out there they call them Bohans 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 Bohans 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 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. He didn't want to go to those meetings but he went.

Power of 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 it? Well I'll tell you how I account for it. Two old women got before God in confession of sins. 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. 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. 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.

Think of the darkness and pain of the cross. The Lord deliver us. How many living double lives today? Just 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. It 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. The secular magazine. Why Johnny can't write I think and TV is very prominent and 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 have been 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. He goes off. Everything looks so attractive there in the world and he goes off in the world.

Comes to the end of himself. Vain 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 of no more worthy be called thy son. Make me I pray thee as one of thy hired servants.

And off he went. Off he went. The father goes out to meet him and pretty soon he knows the father's kiss.

The arms flung around his shoulder. The best robe. The ring on his finger.

The shoes on his feet. The father'd cough. The joy that began never ended.

And that's what God is waiting for us to say. I really believe it. 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 seek God. Answer it.

Isaiah chapter 44 and verse 3. 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. Oh 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.

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

We confess it Lord as sin. 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 a nation. And Father in this 200th year of this nation we pray oh 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 lies, by our conduct.

We think of how often we use the wisdom of this world instead of the wisdom that comes from above. We think Lord of 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. Oh 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 form and 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 him 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. We 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 we 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 growth that's in our land too. Lord send the rain that 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 he 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 abundance 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 and 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 and 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 chapter 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 where moth and rustle corrupt and 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.

Some brethren say that accepting Christ as one 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 is 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 the 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 well 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 and with a crisis and should go on to a process.

Please make suggestions as 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 I imagine you do. I really think the best way to handle this is to get rid of it.

Now that sounds harsh. Oh McDonald's. 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? I know a man who is a white president and he doesn't have a TV in his house. As was said earlier may his tribe increase. When I was serving the Lord in Ireland there's a company in Ireland that sells TV and their motto is brings the world into your home.

One Irishman ordered one. An Irish Christian ordered one and he saw the truck pull up and he looked up and said brings the world into your living room. And he said if that's what it does I don't want it.

He sent it back. Well I think 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.

Brother. Yes. I heard a report on KDN News the other day that a child graduating from.

Matured. This is one that really I feel a little bit beyond my depth and some of you might be able to help. It says what is your thought in light of storing say the wheat harvest for sale later in the year for a better price.

In other words you hold 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 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.

Okay. That's why I said I'm beyond my depth with this question. I want to hear what you have to say.

Say anything on that. The last two years the price of wheat has been the highest in all of it. Right after harvest.

I think this is very helpful to get these different viewpoints on it. There's another thing I feel as far as I'm concerned is the value of money and this is something that we can't hang on to eternally. At least have food for livestock or personal use.

The time may come here that money can't buy. Maybe we should say that each individual has to be before the Lord about this himself and that we shouldn't judge others in the matter. Would that be helpful.

If a person is doing it with the idea of speculating there might be problems that he has a conscience about but generally speaking it's something that he'll be before the Lord about. And that applies to the next part of this question. What is your thought on a wealthy brother? Should he become poor as E.T. Studd did or

be a wise steward and is investing and reinvesting for the Lord? What is the balance between wise stewardship and Matthew 6? I have always said that when you come to a verse like Luke 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 there's things in your life that never bonded 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 through 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. But 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. McDonnell 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 will 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 will be a power in your life and when you touch other lives something will happen for God. Well he went up to the city and after he left he wrote me a letter from Los Angeles and he said brother I went there and he said I had appointments and I had meetings and the time went and 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 of the bus and that was the seat next to him. And the door still had been closed. So he bowed his head and prayed Lord send on some young person that I can witness to for you.

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 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.

He 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.

Now just think of the marvel of this. How did that happen? Well that elder and his wife have a daughter and son-in-law in Arizona. And they decided to visit them so they got a drive away car to come across the country to visit their relatives in Arizona.

The man dropped his wife off with the relatives with the daughter and son-in-law and then the car had to be delivered to Riverside. So he delivered the car to Riverside and got on a Greyhound bus to go back up to Tucson. When you think of all the Greyhound buses in the United States.

When you think of all the seats on a bus. When you think of all the hours in the day and the different schedules of the buses. Wasn't it a coincidence that that elder sat next to Greg? Well it wasn't any coincidence to me.

I thought of those words that he said in my apartment. He said it's 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 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 in a Greyhound bus on the way from Riverside to Arizona. And so that's my answer to this question. 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. 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.

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. And to be 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. And I 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 from my soul until I did the things that the Lord was telling me to do.

And the minute I did them I had great peace. Great peace of those that love my law. And so if you want to put yourself in the position do so and I think don't take yourself out of it.

If we don't plan for future needs then we have to borrow at high interest rates. I think I answered that didn't I? High interest rates. Is that using those? 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. In regards to serving two masters just how much do you owe your employer when it may take time of serving Christ? Well it seems to me when a man goes to work for an employer there's some kind of an arrangement. Maybe he's going to work a 40 hour week.

What does he owe his employer? He owes him an hour of work for every hour of pay he gets. He owes his employer loyalty. He owes his employer the fact that he's not going to be a man pleaser or a clock watcher and that he does what he does for the glory of Christ.

If excessive demands are made upon him that were not part of the original arrangement and are going to be drawn out and continued he may have to have some kind of an agreement with his employer that's really taking him away from the work of the Lord. But I think if a man agrees to work 40 hours a week he should do it and be a faithful employee in the very rare state. How does one 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 to yield it 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. 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 as you know diphtheria it forms a mucous membrane across your throat and strangles you to death. And I was gasping for breath and my mother turned her back so she wouldn't see me die.

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 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 while I satisfy him and show him my salvation.

So I was 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. And down through the years when that uncle used to write to me he'd always put at the bottom of the letter Psalm 91.

Don't forget the prophecy 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.

And 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. These theater reps said he was brought up at his mother's knee and over his father's knee.

And my father was in fellowship in a little assembly back in Fitchburg 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. Does it pay? I think it pays.

We had no car of course in those days. Because I lived a very sheltered life I'd never been inside a show in my life. We had a mother whose will was iron on that.

We were not going to go to the theater. And I didn't think I was a very bad sinner. I resented it when people asked me if I was saved.

Some of the preachers would and I'd lie to get them off my back. But when I became a high school student God began to work in my life in conviction. And 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. It stripped me of all my pride.

I had never been in a show, that's true. But I had a rotten heart and a vile temper. And what I was was a lot worse than anything I'd ever done.

And then the Lord began to convict me of sin and convict me of sin and convict me of sin. I could take it to a meeting place in Cambridge, Massachusetts and show up in the balcony. But 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 cane in on me. The conviction of sin was so great.

And 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 and own thee conqueror. But you know, what I thought would happen didn't happen. And I was terribly disappointed when I trusted Christ.

Because I had always the idea that when you trusted Christ, the bells would ring, the lights 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 gift. Oh, and it was an experience.

And it wasn't coming. It was just a quiet acceptance of a simple offer. I trust you now.

Wait. And then in the goodness of God, I came across that little book of safety, certainty, and enjoyment. And it was just what I needed.

I read it and the clouds drifted away. You know, 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. 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. And then I read what Scofield said. He said justification takes place in the mind of God and not in the nervous system of a believer.

That was good. And then I read what Martin Luther said. Somebody said to him, do you feel your sins have been forgiven? And he said, no, but I'm as sure of it as that 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's as changeable as my feelings, but on the infallible word of God. And that was the beginning really of a wonderful life. I have only praise for the Lord, you know, for the wonderful way He has led.

And my only regret is how I have failed Him. Okay. Were there any other questions or comments from the floor? Otherwise I take the time.

We thank you for the wonderful way that 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 will 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, for His sake. Amen.

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