

# Rise and Shine 1999 Conference-38 Raising the Level of Public Ministry

by William MacDonald

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*The preacher should be clean, awestruck by the glory and responsibility of the ministry, and give their best to the preparation of the message.*

**Duration:** 57:41

**Scripture:** Psalm 24:1, Isaiah 52:11, Matthew 6:33, John 3:16, Acts 20:27, Hebrews 1:3, 1 Peter 1:18-19

**Topics:** "Public Ministry"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving one's best in preparing the message. He shares an example of a well-known radio preacher who spends 10 hours a day for four days preparing for his Sunday messages. The speaker encourages preachers to rely on fresh inspiration from the Lord rather than using old sermons. He also highlights the significance of glorifying Christ and reminding the audience that Jesus, who is greater than anything we can say about Him, died for their sins. The speaker advocates for a systematic study of the Bible, going verse by verse, to provide a balanced diet of God's word to the listeners.

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## Transcript

The golden verse for today is, for this session, is Isaiah chapter 52 and verse 11. It's just introductory, it only has to do with the first part of our session. We're going to, I hope we're going to have discussion afterwards where you will make some very, very valuable contributions.

I think this is over at four, is that right? It's an hour, you know? I should have found that out. Isaiah 52, 11, depart, depart, go out from there, touch no unclean thing, go up from the midst of it, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord. And I thought as I was given this assignment, that would be the first step in raising the level of public ministry, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.

The most important thing in ministering the Word of God is the life of the preacher, I believe. It would be easy just for me to launch into a series of six how to do it, you know, this type of thing. I think we have to start there at almost every phase of the Christian life.

It's true in guidance, most important thing in matter of seeking the guidance of the Lord is the life of the person himself. And one who's going to minister the Word of God should be filled with the Spirit. This

means walking in close, personal fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It means confessing and forsaking all known sin. It means living in full surrender to the Savior, forsaking one's own will and embracing his will. People read the preacher as well as his message.

That's why we have such cliches as what you are speak so loud, I can't hear what you say. Or you've got to walk the talk. Edgar Guest said, I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

People scorn high talk, low walk. Two brothers were doctors. One was a medical doctor and the other was a preacher.

And a woman went to visit one day and she got up to the doorstep to ring the bell. She couldn't remember which one it was. And she rang the bell on the door opening.

She said, pardon me, she said, are you the doctor who practices or the one who preaches? Well, it happened to be the preacher and it spoke rather loudly to him. It was said of one preacher that when he was in the pulpit, people wished he would never get out of it. When he was out of the pulpit, they wished he would never get in it.

So I'd like to begin there. Be clean, be clean. You who bear the vessels of the Lord, history of the evangelical church in our country, certainly in the United States has been stained with these terrible scandals in the last few years.

And I want to tell you, the world loves it. They love it so that they can heap scorn and abuse on the lovely name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's kind of sad to me how Christians will do anything to get on TV, to be interviewed, and they don't realize that it's the world's ploy to just pervert the message that they're going to give and bring disrepute on the Christian faith.

So that's my first point. Be clean. The second point is we should be awestruck by the glory and responsibility of the ministry.

Paul never got over it. He said, to me is this grace given? To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things through Jesus Christ. Paul never got over the marvel of the he who persecuted the church of Christ to be chosen to this twofold ministry.

It's good to remember Paul did have a twofold ministry, didn't he? His ministry was A, the gospel. Preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. B, the church, that all men might see that mystery, the fellowship of the mystery.

One of my favorite writers, a man named J. H. Jowett, his books are mostly out of print now, and he said this concerning Paul and Paul's awestruck appreciation of the ministry that had been committed to him. He said, next to the infinite love of his savior and the amazing glory of his own salvation, his wonder is arrested and nourished by the surpassing glory of his own vocation. His calling is never lost in the medley of professions.

In other words, when he thinks of other professions, other occupations, a medley of them, his own calling is never lost in them. He says the light of privilege is always shining on the way of duty. I like that.

His work never loses its halo, and his road never becomes entirely commonplace and gray. He seems to catch his breath every time he thinks of his mission, and in the midst of abounding adversity, glory still more abounds. Even all the persecution, the trouble, the testing, the suffering he went through didn't affect it at all.

In the midst of abounding adversity, glory still more abounds. Do you not feel a sacred burning wonder in these exclamations, a holy exulting pride in his vocation, leagued with a marveling humility that the mystic hand of ordination had rested upon him? Well, if you can write like that, you've got it made. It's really wonderful.

The mystic hand of ordination had rested upon him. He never got over it. That abiding wonder was part of his apostolic equipment, and his sense of the glory of his calling enriched his proclamation of the glories of redeeming grace.

If we lose the sense of the wonder of our commission, and we all have that commission, if we lose the sense of the wonder of our commission, we shall become like common traders, that common salesman, babbling about common wares. Isn't that great? Common salesman babbling about common products. If we lose the sense of our vocation, the glory and responsibility of the ministry.

Again, J. H. Jowett says, I have been in the Christian ministry for over 20 years. I love my calling. I have a glowing delight in its services.

I am conscious of no distraction in the shape of any competitors for my strength and allegiance. Isn't that good? No competitors for his strength and allegiance. I have had but one passion, and that is, I have lived for it, the absorbingly arduous yet glorious work of proclaiming the grace and love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

He had a tremendous sense of the glory of his calling. We should have that, too, because it comes forth, it comes out of us when we get up to speak. We should, and I just add this, when we get up to speak, we should speak as an oracle of God.

It says that in 1 Peter 4, 11, if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God, that in all things, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. And there's a very interesting verse in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 5 that I'd like you to look at. I hope I'm not putting too much into it, but I don't think I am.

Galatians 3 verse 5, it says, therefore, he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Now, the question is, who is the he in that verse? It's repeated, and I noticed that in the New King James Bible, the he is capitalized. They understood it to mean God. Well, of course, it does mean God, but I just wonder if there's a human agent there, somebody there in Galatia who was working the miracles.

He who supplies the spirit to you. A true ministry of the word of God is a dispensing of the Holy Spirit. Third, I would say give tremendous, your very best to the preparation of the message.

A well-known radio preacher, and a good one at that. I've heard that he has a study. He has an office, and on the door, there's a lock inside and a lock outside.

His secretary's outside. He's in that office, and there's a little toilet next to his office, too. I called his secretary recently and asked him, tell me something about his study habits, and she said, he spends 10

hours a day for four days preparing for the messages on Sunday.

10 hours a day, four days a week preparing for the message on Sunday, messages on Sunday. This is better than opening a file and pulling out some well-worn message from the past, isn't it? Get it right fresh from the Lord. Better than some threadbare sermon from antiquity.

I say preach the word with conviction. I think that's in your outline, is it not? Preach the word with your conviction. We have the most marvelous, the greatest of all messages.

There's nothing like the drama of redemption. Nothing like it. It's stupendous, mind-boggling, astounding, and beyond imagination.

The marvel of it all, that our Creator and the sustainer of the universe died for me and you on the cross of Calvary. I will never get over the wonder of it all, and I would suggest to you as you minister the word of God that you keep that lens before the eyes of your listeners. They might always see God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Go back to Bethlehem and see that baby lying there in its crib. Lo, within a manger lies he who built the starry skies. And somebody else said, see your God extended on the straw.

That is true. It's absolutely true, because in that lovely little body dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. The difference is nothing like that in all the world.

I think of that Lord Jesus, that same Lord Jesus, growing up as a man among men, rejected, despised. I can't understand it. He created us, and he's despised and rejected of men.

And a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And he knew what it meant to be pushed around, to be ill-treated, to endure such contradiction of sinners against himself. He could have spoken the word or even sought the thought, and they could have been atomized.

And I love to go through the Gospels and remember when I get to chapter 14 of John, he says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father but by me. It's God speaking.

It's God speaking. You put those words in anybody else's mouth, and it's bizarre. But they're perfectly appropriate in his mouth.

And then I see him going on, living in this world, a stranger in the world his hands had made. I've been thinking since I've been here at the Hyatt Regency. Dear friends, can you believe that when God came to planet Earth, he never slept on a mattress like he slept on last night? He never knew the luxuries that we have.

Never had hot and cold running water. Imagine the one who created billions of galaxies. I didn't say stars.

I said galaxies. And he comes to this Earth and sleeps all night out on the Mount of Olives while the disciples go to their homes. You tell me a message like that.

There isn't any difference. I really think if we can grasp that, if we can get it, it was God. It was God manifest in the flesh whom men took and they plowed his back.

Can you believe it? It's true. And when he finally was hanging there on the cross, he was disfigured beyond the resemblance of a man. Isaiah 52.

Wow. Dear friends, I would suggest to you, those of you who administer the word of God, when you're going to minister the word of God, always have a big box of gasps with you. G-A-S-P-S.

And have another box of exclamation marks. And use them liberally. And exhaust the language of perfection and majesty when you speak about our blessed Lord.

Get your synonym finder and find all the great synonyms of the superlatives, because they're all enshrined in him. Who purged our sins on the cross of Calvary? The one who created the world. Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, when he had by himself purged our sins.

This is hard for some of our brethren to take in, that God was there on the cross of Calvary. That's what my Bible says. It says right there in Hebrews 1.1. It says in Acts 2, shepherd the flock of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

You say, well, I find some theological difficulties there. Well, don't. Don't.

Just open your hymn book and come to that hymn by dear Charles Wesley. To me, it has to be one of the greatest hymns that was ever written. And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood? Died he for me who caused his pain? For me who sinned against my God? Amazing grace, amazing love.

How can it be that thou my should die for me? Tis mystery all, the immortal dies. It is a mystery, isn't it? Tis mystery all, the immortal dies. Who can explore his strange design? In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine.

Amazing love. How can it be that thou my God should die for me? The Lord high and lifted up was the one who was lifted up on a pole of shame. It was not just the one who inhabited Nazareth.

It was the one who inhabits eternity. The carpenter of Galilee is the architect of the universe and the Savior of the world. The same one who upholds all things by the word of his power was upheld by his nails when he was crucified.

The Christ of Calvary is Immanuel. His power is great. Tell it out to everyone who will listen.

Someone died to take away their sins and it was God, it was their God who died. That someone was God. It was divine blood that stained the ground at the place of a skull to wash the stains of sin away and turn our darkness into day.

Don't let your audience forget that someone died for them. That someone was not a person just like ourselves. He was human.

He was perfectly human, perfect humanity. He was the object of the worship of the hosts of heaven, the one who is clothed in majesty. This is the greatest truth that can ever enter the human mind.

Preach the word with conviction. Declare the whole counsels of God. Next on our outing, declare the whole counsels of God.

I have no doubt in my mind that the best, most needed system is the consecutive verse-by-verse exposition of the Bible. This is the way God gave it. It's the only way that people will get a balanced diet of the word of God.

You know, there's a group of fellowship of Christian churches, they call themselves Calvary Chapel, and that is the distinguishing mark of their ministry. They go through the Bible, verse-by-verse, week after week, and when they finish, they start again. Thousands of people turn out with their Bibles in their hands, and it's just as simple as it possibly can be.

You don't get any deep thoughts at all. It's just the word of God entering the minds of those people. Another good thing about consecutive systematic study of the word of God is when you come to certain passages, people don't think you're singling them out.

Otherwise, they might think that you were thinking of them for criticism. Glorify Christ. Never forget his greatness, the majesty of the message, who he is, and what he has done.

I like, again, Jowett said, Jesus Christ is greater than anything we can ever say about him. He exhausts the language of perfection and greatness, greater than anything we can ever say about. I like this from Ian McPherson.

He said, you will have to assert, that is, in ministering the word, you will have to assert that Jesus was the everlasting God come down, that this infant of Bethlehem, with no language but a cry, was the eternal word that spoke the world out of the womb of nothing. You like that? Spoke the world out of the womb of nothing, that the tiny arms of this helpless child were the limbs of him who laid the timbers of the universe. Does it make you want to get out and tell people about it? It does mean, it really does mean.

Remind your audience that that the Lord Jesus Christ is true God. He's a rock that's higher than we are. He's the light of the world.

He's the bread of life. He's the way, the truth, and the light. He's Emmanuel, God with us.

He's the father of eternity. What a thought, the father of eternity. You can understand that, you won't have any trouble with the rest of the Bible.

He's a root and offspring of David, the Messiah of Israel, the author and finisher of faith, the firstborn from the dead. And I say to you, close your message with words of grandeur and use contemporary language. Use contemporary.

Some of the language that we're used to, many of us are used to, they mean nothing today. If you went to the average young person with no background in the Bible, and you said to him this verse, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia. What? I say close the message in words that are contemporary so people know what you are saying.

And use contemporary, make contemporary applications as well. You know, the Bible is for every situation in life, every problem that can arise in life. We're living in a different world today.

Don't assume that the people know the Bible. They don't. They don't.

I've often spoken to a pilot when I was in the Navy, and one time at Easter time, I was witnessing to him, and everything he'd say, I'd answer from 1 Corinthians 15. And he said, that guy Corinthians knew what

he was talking about. Make contemporary applications.

Today's culture is not that of a generation ago. A generation ago, you didn't use the word pregnant even. You said, well, she's in a family way, you know, which is all right.

That's all right. Today, we have to talk about abortion, homosexuality, premarital sex, incest, AIDS, child abuse. We don't have this in the assemblies.

Fornication, live-in lovers, adultery, wrath. And I don't mean the kind you mow. Cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, and pornography.

That's the language of today, isn't it? And listen, people need the Lord. People caught up in all of that. They need the Lord Jesus more than anything else.

We have to deal with neuroses, split personalities, hidden memories, manic depression, bulimia, anorexia. It's too easy to think that our assemblies are immune from that kind of problem. You've got to face it.

Be enthusiastic about Jesus. Be enthusiastic about him. If a man is really filled with the Spirit, he will be on fire for the Lord.

Fire is one of the types of the Holy Spirit, isn't it? It means fervent, enthusiastic, hot, boiling. Spurgeon said, get on fire for the Lord and the world will turn out to see you burn. And it's true.

It's really true. I want to say to you today, it's a sin to preach a lukewarm message. We have a marvelous message and it should be preached with passion.

I want to tell you about a man named Lewis Thomas. I don't know much about him. I've read some of his books.

This is what he says about a cell, a human cell. There's probably at least a trillion of them in your body right now. You've never seen, I don't suppose many of us have seen a cell, have you? And yet every cell is a world of marvels.

It really is. And Lewis Thomas is just swept off his feet when he thinks about the human cell. He says, the mere existence of that cell should be one of the greatest astonishments on the earth.

People ought to be walking around all day, all through their waking hours, calling to others in endless wonderment, talking of nothing except the cell. It is an unbelievable thing, and yet there it is, hopping neatly into its place amid the jumbled cells of every one of the several billion human embryos around the planet. And that is marvelous, isn't it? How the cell multiplies itself, and this one goes to the lungs.

It knows where to go. And this one goes to the kidneys. Where are my kidneys? I don't know.

But you know, that's what he's saying here. Every one of them popping into its place in endless wonder. Let's see.

It's an unbelievable thing, and yet there it is, hopping neatly into its place amid the jumbled cells of every one of the several billion human embryos around the planet. Just as if it were the easiest thing in the world to do. That's good, isn't it? One cell is switched on to become the whole trillion cell massive apparatus for thinking and imagining the brain, huh? For that matter, being surprised.

All the information needed for learning to read and write, playing the piano, arguing before senatorial committees, walking across the street through traffic, or the marvelous act of putting out one hand and leaning against a tree, it's all contained in that first cell. All of grammar, all syntax, all arithmetic, all music. And then he says, no one has a ghost of an idea how this works.

And nothing else in life can be so puzzling. If anyone does succeed in explaining it, within my lifetime, he says, I will charter a skywriting airplane, maybe a whole fleet of them, and send them aloft to write one great exclamation point after another around the whole sky until my money runs out. Would you say he's enthusiastic about the cell? I would say so.

Listen, we got something better than the cell. We've got the Lord Jesus. And I want to say, if Lewis Thomas can feel that way about a cell, we should feel much more about the one who created the cell.

How much more reason do we have to be enthusiastic about Calvary and the gospel? Keep it simple. I mentioned Calvary Chapel. I don't know if anybody here ever been to a Calvary Chapel, and I don't know where it was I'm going to say next.

I say, don't tell me what the Hebrew word is. Tell me what it means in English, because I don't know Hebrew. And don't tell me what the Greek word is, because I don't know Greek either.

Just tell me what it means, and I'll be quite satisfied. Don't be like the man who had a ponderous way of saying nothing in infinite sentences. That's tremendous.

Our prayer should be, when telling thy salvation free, may all absorbing thoughts of thee, my heart and mind engross. And when all hearts are bowed and stirred beneath the influence of the word, hide me behind the cross. That's it, friends.

Avoid harping on trivia. Don't spend a lot of time on peripheral matters. Don't major on minors, or emphasize the obvious.

And don't adopt spirit quenchers. There are some things, you know, that are spirit quenchers. If I've learned one message, one thing from the book of Exodus, the Holy Spirit of God is sovereign.

He does as he pleases. He does it. And I want that to be true in our ministry, and I want it to be true in our assemblies as well.

Let's not drive away young people. And it's happened, friends, by man-made traditions that aren't that important, and that you don't find them in the word of God. Don't serve tablum, a rehash of what the audience already knows.

Don't scratch people where they don't itch. And don't ramble on with coma-inducing lassitude. I shouldn't say that after saying keep it simple.

Keep it simple. Remember an important distinction. There's a difference between the priesthood of all believers and fitness for public ministry, isn't there? When we speak of the priesthood of all believers, we say that every true believer, male or female, is a priest to God, has access into the presence of God at any time.

But we also add that the Holy Spirit puts controls on the use of that priesthood. First Timothy 2, I suffer not a woman to teach nor usurp authority over a man. It's a control of priesthood.

Good to remember that. Now, another thing, it's quite different, is fitness for public ministry. That's where gift comes in, doesn't it? That's where gift comes in.

I think it's good to give young men an opportunity for a while to see what their gift is, and the elders should be making room for that all the time, but that doesn't mean that they are to be forever doing that. Here's the test. Somebody said this, a good sermon, a good message stretches the mind, warms the heart, cans the hide, and provokes the will.

Isn't that good? A good message stretches the mind, warms the heart, cans the hide, provokes the will. Billy Sunday said, our job is to make them glad, sad, and mad. Glad, sad, and mad.

The test of your message is, as the people are leaving, not that they say, that was a good message. The test is when a person says, I must do something, incites the will. And just in closing, before we open it up for discussion, may it be true of your ministry and my ministry.

The words of Leviticus 6, 13, the fire shall ever be burning upon the altar. It shall never go out. Keep the fire burning on the altar of your heart.

Preach a great Christ. Keep that lens before your audience. Jesus Christ is God.

And you know, that takes care of every other avenue in the Christian life. People just see that worship won't be a problem. Worship will be spontaneous out of a heart that has seen that vision.

That the one on that middle cross in Calvary is there for me, and he was my God, and he died there for me. And take care of the whole matter of commitment to him, Romans 12, 1 and 2, present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reason for service. Dear friends, if that truth, if that vision comes to me, if it's real in my life, that the one who died on Calvary is the one who hurled the planets into space, and he died for Bill McDonald, I can never be the same.

Isn't that right? No wonder C.T. Studd said that. If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. Tremendous.

I'll never forget a night out in Honolulu at the end of the Second World War, and somebody had given me that book C.T. Studd to read, and I read that statement, his life motto, and it slew me. Dear friends, I could never be the same after that. Never be the same.

Up until that time, my world, my vision was the world of stock market, ticker tape, stocks, bonds, make a fortune, retire young. And then I read those words, Jesus Christ be God, died for me, no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him. And I did something that night I had never done before, eight years before I had trusted the Lord Jesus for salvation, eight years before I had never turned my life over to him for service.

And that's the vision that you, first of all, you do it yourself, and then you preach the message, preach it with passion, preach it with majesty, preach it with greatness, and somebody goes forth from your audience to change the world for Christ. Okay, I'd like to open it up now for discussion, and I know that a lot of you have some good thoughts to share. If you have questions too, we've got some very able people in the audience.

Any questions? Who'll be the first? Okay, yes. Well, there's a place for topical. I just finished a topical study, didn't I? Your own words will condemn you.

No, but I'm thinking, is it like in the assembly to have that consecutive moving, going through the word of God? Of course, we should have in our own lives our private study of the word of God too, but I personally don't think there's anything to compare with it. As you know, to me, that's one of the glories of the assemblies. I was brought up in an assembly back in Massachusetts, and they used to have what they called conversational Bible readings, and they would gather together.

Sometimes they just sat around a table, and they would go through the Bible like that consecutively, and they brought their Bible, they brought Darby's Bible too. Bible versions were never a problem to us. We had two to begin with, and I can remember even as a kid sitting there, and they were going through Isaiah.

It's very vivid in my mind even now. They probably thought, oh, the McDonald Brats are here, you know, but listen, the word was getting in too. The word was getting in, and it gave me a taste for a systematic, expository study of the word of God.

I remember men whom I knew like Robert Little and others, and I used to ask them a lot of questions, but I never surprised them with one. I never surprised them with a question. It was obvious they had thought of that before, and they were ready too.

They were ready to give an answer. I think that's thrilling. Hmm.

I can remember standing at the grave of a boy, just as a boy, at the grave of a man named William Huss. H-U-S-S. I used to tell people he was a descendant of John Huss, so I found out that John Huss was single.

But I know, this is serious. Now, when I tell you this, I stood at the grave. I watched that casket going into the ground, and I thought, I wish his knowledge of the word of God could be transplanted into my brain.

That was before the days of transplants. Really was. I meant that.

I meant it seriously, and then the Lord said, you've got to get it yourself, brother. You've got to go and dig for yourself. Okay.

Good question. Anybody else? Yes. Well, I think you're quite, in order to go and ask them, you know, so you know, I would appreciate your evaluation, and you won't hurt me.

You won't hurt my feelings, whatever you tell me. I'll take it from the Lord. So, I don't think I just wait till it happens.

I think it would help them, and would kind of free them up a little if you went and said, look, I'd like you men to mentor me, you know, and tell me, frankly. We did have that discipleship training program at California for 23 years, and you know, that was a feature of that program. Twice a year, we called the fellows in.

Jim Haysmeier was one of them. Are there any others here who went through the program? We called them in twice a year, and we prepared for this meeting ahead of time, and we had a sheet, and here we listed any areas that needed additional help, and here we listed any areas that were commendatory, personal, spiritual, practical Christian work, you know, every aspect of their life. We got to know the fellows very well while they were there, and it was very, very valuable, much better than a report card.

They would come in, and we would sit down with them in an office, and we would go over it with them lovingly. I always told them first what was commendatory, what their strengths were. Blame comes best on the back of praise, doesn't it? Yeah.

Say a few words of praise first, and then any areas, and I can look back and think of a time a young fellow was there, and we went over it with him. It wasn't bad. It was good, because they knew that we loved them, and if he was going out, he had the door partly open, and he turned back, and he said, I just want to thank you men for caring enough about me to do this.

Hmm. Kind of moves me to think about it today. That's what he said.

I just want to thank you men for caring enough about me to do this, critiquing him. Another one, we said to him, another fellow, we said, what did you think about that? And he said, it's just like looking in a mirror. In other words, he agreed 100% with what had been said.

He said, it's just like looking in a mirror, and I often felt that was one of the best parts of the discipleship intern training program, that working closely, discipling men like that. Anybody else? Oh, sorry. Yeah, I would be glad to do it, and I might step in people's toes when they do this, and I'll probably apologize afterwards.

We worked with an awful lot of young people out there, and as I said, they don't know the Bible. What do they know? They don't, most of them never even heard of an assembly. I think one night at Fairhaven, a young lad came, he's just been saved, he came in his bare feet to the breaking of bread.

What do you do? Well, one of the sisters, one of the older sisters gave him what for after the meeting. One of the elders watched what was happening. Jack Davies is with the Lord, and he went to the fellow, and he put his arm around him, and he said, never mind.

He said, I think they're beautiful. The kid said, well, they're original. I like that, don't you? I like that arm put around the fellow.

He didn't come in bare feet the rest of his life. Give him a chance to grow, and you know, we have this too in our assembly, and as I was brought up, like there was nothing between the breaking of bread and taking the cup, right? No prayer, no ministry, nothing like that. But see, our young people have never seen that in the Bible, and they give out hymns between, and I think the Spirit leads them to do it too.

I think the Spirit of God leads them to do it because the worship is real. If you go by the account in Luke of the inauguration of the Lord's Supper, if you go by it and say this is the norm, well then, not more than 12 people should attend. They should all be men, and the same one who gives thanks for the bread should give thanks for the cup, right? So, you can't go by that.

I say allow the Spirit of God to have liberty in the meeting. It's wonderful. I could take you to California, and the assembly is no longer there.

It closed, and this is the reason it closed, because a young fellow did something that was probably unconventional, wasn't wrong in the meeting, and a brother spoke out and rebuked him publicly. He never came back. The assembly's gone.

People just started drifting away, drifting away. So, the idea is to allow the Spirit of God liberty to work in your midst. If it's scriptural, and it's clear in the scriptures, it's important, stick to it, but not in all of those things.

Anybody else? Yes. I would just strengthen what you said. You said if anybody's going to be ministering the Word, whether they are or not, they should be doing it.

Yeah, this is a little story. It was in, recently, it was in Church Bleeding's calendar, a dear young fellow there in Fairhaven. His name is David Reed, and Lord willing, in a few months, maybe a year, he'll be down in Honduras with the brothers down there, Jim.

Every morning he gets on the BART, Bay Area Rapid Transit, to go to work, and he reads his Bible. That's when he gets his Bible readings done. And this day, he was reading his Bible, and then he looked up, and his stop had come, and he went up there, and there was a crowd around the door, and as he stood there, a man leaned over and said to him, did he speak to you today? Did you hear that back there? Did he speak to you today? And Dave assured him that he did speak to him.

The man didn't say, did the Lord speak to you? He said, did he speak to you? The doors opened, and the man disappeared in the crowd. That's the end of the story. I think that's beautiful, don't you? I don't think it was an angel, I think it was a man, but somebody who loved the Lord.

Anybody else? Good. Yes. Mark, is it? Well, usually isn't that set by the assembly pretty much, but everywhere I go, I'm really told.

And sometimes it's very displeasing, too, because a lot of places, like in this place, I went to the stop in 20 minutes. You ought to be through in 20 minutes. I don't think it's right.

I don't know how I could legislate on that, Mark. I really don't. Mostly, it's a decision that's made for you, and here, like here, it's made for you by the schedule, you know? Yeah, well, when I take young fellows with me and ask them to give their testimony, I say 10 or 15 minutes.

It's usually 15, you know, which is good, fine. Yes, Gil. Very good.

Yeah, that's good. So, before you sit down, Gil, um, this is Gil Vargas, and many of you have prayed for his little boy. Luke, is it? Luke, would you give us a little update? I think the folks would just like to hear a little update.

Those who don't know what the trouble was. Any, any one more? Yeah, oh, there's two more here. The breaking of bread we would have at the open meeting.

Is that what you're referring to? Yeah, well, actually, that's very good. It's very good, and it's been practiced, and is being practiced today in many places. I look upon it as something that's ideal, but unfortunately, we live in a world that isn't ideal, and if you have a group of men that are really in touch with the Lord, waiting upon Him as to whether they should speak or not, but then you have abuses of it, too.

Very bad abuses of it. Like, I want to speak, and so I'll give out a hymn, and while they're singing it, I'll rush to the platform, you know. I don't mean that in a caustic way.

I really don't, but I just mean an abuse. Well, God can lead men. I admire a man once that, um, got up to speak, and he started, and he said, the Lord isn't helping me, and he sat down.

I can work with people like that, you know. The Lord isn't helping me. He sat down.

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