

FROM VAPOR TO FLOODS

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Sermons preached in the pulpit of First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana

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Foreword

Someone has said that preaching is pouring back to the congregation in a flood what is received from the congregation in a vapor. The membership of the First Baptist Church of Hammond joins with me in sharing this volume of sermons that we have given to each other. It is my hope that the reader can feel both the flood and the vapor and will receive showers of blessings from these messages.

At the conclusion of each sermon to sinners scores of people have been saved. During the invitation following the sermons to saints thousands of God's people have knelt at the altar, making decisions that deepened their Christian experience.

Not only am I sharing with you, the reader, the great truths contained in these messages, but I am sharing with you thousands of hours of study, gallons of tears, and an immeasurable amount of love that was poured from my pulpit to my people through the spoken word and now to you through the printed page.

I am especially indebted to Mabel Boardway and Gail McKinney, who typed the manuscript; to Elaine Colsten, the proofreader; to Jennie Nischik, Nancy Bewley, and Judith Anderson of the Hyles Publications Department who have helped in the preparation, and will help in the distribution of the vapor received from the congregation, the flood poured back from the pulpit, and the showers of blessing which we trust you will receive from our labors.

PART I: SERMONS TO SAINTS

1. I Have Sinned

I have preached three and a half times a day for sixteen years. I guess I spend three hours a day on my feet talking to crowds. I am as at home, honestly, right now as you ladies would if you were in the kitchen, or as you students would be studying in the dormitory. This is where I live. I spend more time doing what I am doing now than any other single activity. Yet there are three words that I have a hard time speaking. Every time I begin saying them, I feel like a child in the first grade saying, "Mary had a little lamb." I speak to crows several times a day. Yesterday I spoke to a convention, and tomorrow I speak near Washington. Though I speak often, whenever I say, "*I have sinned,*" or "I am sorry," I do not have the eloquence of Apollos. Do you know why? Satan is whispering in my ear, "Don't say that."

I. The Men Who Said, "I Have Sinned."

"I have sinned," said Pharoah in Exodus 9:27 and Exodus 10:16, as he saw the hail mixed with fire running along the ground, as he saw the herbs of the field and trees killed and as he saw the locusts and the crops eaten by them.

"I have sinned," said Balaam in Numbers 22:34 when he realized that he was out of the will of God for his life.

"I have sinned," said Achan in Joshua 7:20 after taking the money and the Babylonish garment from the city of Jericho. He took of the accursed thing not to be taken by God's people. As the Israelites came near the city of Jericho, God said, "*Do not take a thing!*" Perhaps Achan said, "It will not matter if I take a little money and a little garment." He took the money and the garment and hid them in his tent. After the battle of Ai was lost, Joshua called the people together and said, "*Who sinned?*" The lot fell toward Achan, and he and his family were brought before the entire camp and were stoned to death.

"I have sinned," said Saul in 1 Samuel 15:24, 30 when Samuel rebuked him for disobedience.

"I have sinned," said Saul when David had spared his life though Saul was seeking to kill David. Saul went to sleep outside the cave. David and his servants came out of the cave, and there was Saul lying asleep. David could have pulled his sword and pierced the heart of Saul.

Someone said, "David, here is your chance! There is your enemy! There is the man dedicated to your destruction. He is asleep. Kill Him!"

David said, "*I cannot lift up my hand against God's anointed.*"

Oh my, that's a wonderful statement. I made that statement years ago: I will never lift up my hand against God's anointed. He may not be as good a preacher as I think he ought to be, but I am not going to let words come through these lips to try to tear him down. He is God's man. I do not want to hurt him. He may want to hurt me, but if he is God's man, I do not want to hurt him. He may criticize men, but I do not want to criticize him.

Let no one from this church retaliate our critics. Let others criticize us; let us not criticize them. Let others hate us; let us love them. Let others speak unkindly about us; let us speak kindly about them. Let there be no words in our vocabularies to criticize a man who believes this Book or to criticize a church that believes the Word of God.

"I have sinned," said David in 2 Samuel 12:13 after his awful sin with Bathsheba and Uriah.

Nathan said, *"Thou art the man."*

David said, *"I have sinned."*

"I have sinned," said David, in 2 Samuel 24:10, 17 and 1 Chronicles 21:8.

"I have sinned," said Shimei. It was Shimei who hurled dust at King David. It was Shimei who cursed King David as he came toward Mahanaim. When David came back from Mahanaim to sit once again on the throne in the palace of Jerusalem Shimei said, *"I have sinned!"*

"I have sinned," said Pharaoh.

"I have sinned," said Balaam.

"I have sinned," said Achan.

"I have sinned," said Saul.

"I have sinned," said David.

"I have sinned," said Shimei.

"I have sinned," said Job in Job 7:20. Pride had crept into his heart. Job was the best Christian in the world. God said to the devil, *"Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the world?"* Job was the best Christian in the world. Because he was, he became proud. He lost his health. He lost his money. He lost his children. He lost everything that was holy and righteous to him. He was sitting in the ash heap outside the city, scraping his body with a piece of metal, wiping off the corruption that came from the sores on his body, sitting in live coals to keep himself from hurting quite so much through the awful pain that accompanies the awful disease of elephantiasis.

Suddenly Job began to think. "I lost my kids, but I did not yield. I lost my riches, but I did not yield. I lost my wealth, but I did not compromise. I lost the faithfulness of my wife, but I did not compromise. I lost my friends, but I did not yield. I am a pretty good fellow." Pride crept into his heart and he cried, *"I have sinned!"*

"I have sinned," said Micah in Micah 7:9. He looked at his people and saw their wickedness and realized that they were a reflection of his own life. *"I have sinned,"* said Micah.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal son in Luke 15:18 and 21, as he returned home, having spent all. As he came to himself he said, "I will arise and go to my father." He arose and went to his father and the first three words he said were, "I have sinned!"

"I have sinned," said Judas in **Matthew 27:4** as he realized that he had sold the Saviour and his own soul for thirty pieces of silver. Judas looked at his little handful of money. He threw the money on the ground and hanged himself. Before he did so, he said, *"I have sinned!"* He had betrayed innocent blood.

"I have sinned," said Pharoah.

"I have sinned," said Balaam.

"I have sinned," said Achan.

"I have sinned," said Saul.

"I have sinned," said David.

"I have sinned," said Shimei.

"I have sinned," said Job.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal son.

"I have sinned," said Judas.

"But," you say, "Preacher, I am an alcoholic!"

If you will say, *"I have sinned,"* God will forgive you.

"But," you say, "Preacher, I have killed a man."

If any man will say, *"I have sinned,"* God says He will forgive him.

"But," you say, "Preacher, I am a wicked man of adultery, sensuality and perversion." God will forgive you.

"But," you say, "Preacher, you don't know what I have done!"

A man walked into my office a few weeks ago and said, "Preacher, God won't forgive me."

I said, *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* Isaiah 1:18.

"But," he said, "Preacher, you don't understand. With these hands I killed a man!"

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"You don't understand! You don't understand," he said. "These hands have reached around the neck of a little innocent girl, thirteen years of age. I forced her to lie down. I raped that little thirteen-year-old girl. God wouldn't forgive me!"

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

If any man says, *"I have sinned,"* not "if any good man," not "if any non-murderer" not "if any non-drunkard," not "if any non-thief," but "if any man says, *"I have sinned,"* it does not matter what you have done; if you will say and mean, *"I have sinned,"* God will forgive! If any man who is in deep sin, any man who has killed someone, any man who is guilty of treason, any man who is a dirty drunkard, any man who has been a Communist, any man who has been a pervert, any man who has been a homosexual, if any man will say, *"I have sinned,"* God will forgive him. You are just as near to God as the admission of your sin. "I will deliver him from the pit," says God, "If he says, *'I have sinned.'*"

II. The Type of Men Who Said, *"I Have Sinned."*

"David, do you mean that righteous people are supposed to say, *'I have sinned'?*" Oh, yes. David, the man after God's own heart, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, the sweet harpist of Israel, the greatest king who ever sat on the throne in Jerusalem said, *"I have sinned."* If David, the man after God's own heart, can acquiesce and say, *"I have sinned,"* don't you think I ought to be able to say, *"I have sinned"?*

Who said, *"I have sinned"?* Saul, who was the first king of Israel, said it. He was chosen by God above everyone in Israel to be the king. Saul, who was chosen by God as the greatest man in all of Israel, said, *"I have sinned."*

Who said, *"I have sinned"?* Job, the best Christian in all the world said, *"I have sinned."* God said to Satan, *"Hast thou considered My servant Job? Have you looked at him? He is a mature and upright man. He hates sin. He reared his children for God. He stood up for God."*

Job found one day that all of his children had been killed at the same time. Yet he said, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."*

See him as he sits in the ash heap at the city dump. See him as he scrapes himself with the piece of potsherd removing the corruption running down his body. See him as he hears his wife say, "why don't you just curse God and die?" See him as his friends come and say, "See what you get for your sins!" See him lose everything that is holy. See him as his riches, his cattle, his sheep, his donkeys and his oxen are taken. Yet Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." That is the kind of man who said, *"I have sinned,"* in the Bible.

Who said, *"I have sinned"?* Micah, the one who looked down through Heaven's telescope 500 years before Christ and saw Bethlehem's manger and birth of the Christ child. Micah said, *"I have sinned."*

Who said, *"I have sinned,"* in the Bible? Balaam did. Balaam was a great preacher. Yet he said, *"I have sinned."*

Let me ask you a question, ladies and gentlemen: Do you think Balaam was a great Christian because he could say, *"I have sinned"?* Do you think that it may be that one cause for Balaam's greatness was his willingness to say, *"I have sinned"?* Do you think that Saul became a great man because he could say, *"I have sinned"?* One of the reasons Job was a mature and upright man, perhaps, was that he was willing to say, *"I have sinned."*

Let me say, my dear friend, you will never in the world be all that God wants you to be, you will never do all that God wants you to do until you have learned to quit talking about others and start talking about yourself. There is nothing so little, so wicked, so vile, so un-Christlike, so Satanic, so unscriptural, so hurtful and deadly as God's people criticizing each other. Away with that kind of garbage! What kind of Christianity is it that slanders others? Would God we would realize that as long as liquor runs like a river, we do not have time to criticize each other! Would God we had enough intelligence and spirituality to realize that as long as dope is in our schools, we do not have time to fight each other! As long as the dirty Communists are trying to destroy this nation as long as the hippie crowd is trying to destroy our freedom and our capitalistic society, we do not have time to fight each other. It is time we stood shoulder to shoulder and said, "By the grace of God we are not going to tattle, talk about and criticize fellow Christians." In God's dear name, learn to say, *"I have sinned,"* not "She has sinned!" Learn to say, *"I have sinned,"* not "He has sinned." Learn to say, *"I have sinned,"* not "They have sinned." Learn to say, *"I have sinned,"* not "You have sinned."

May I fall on my face and say with Job, *"I have sinned."* May I say with Balaam, *"I have sinned."* May I say with Saul, *"I have sinned."* May I say with David, *"I have sinned."* May I say with Micah, *"I have sinned."* May I say with the prodigal son, *"I have sinned."*

I go all across the country preaching and when I do, I hear others preachers preach. I kneel at the altar like you do. I would not ask you to do anything that I would not do myself. I kneel like you do. I have wept at altars all over this country. I get so busy trying to raise money, building a Sunday school, taking care of the business of the church, building a school and taking airplane trips that my heart sometimes grows cold, not because I do not love the Lord, not because I do not believe the Bible, not because I do not pray, but just because I get so busy! Oh, time and time again I have heard a man of God preach, and I have knelt and said, "Oh, God, I have sinned." We never get too high to do that.

May I say to the administration of the grade schools, high school and college, learn to say, *"I have sinned."* May I say to the professors in our college, learn to say, *"I have sinned."* May I say to teachers in the grade schools and high school, learn to say, *"I have sinned."* May I say to men whose signatures can sway huge business deals, learn to say, *"I have sinned."* I say to the 100 deacons on our board, Learn to say, *"I have sinned."* I say to the choir, learn to say, *"I have sinned."*

Oh, if Job, the best Christian that ever lived; if David, the best king that ever sat on the throne; if Micah, who saw with Heaven's telescope the coming of the Christ child 500 years before He came; and if Saul, the one chosen as the first king of Israel, learned to say, *"I have sinned."* how much more should Jack Hyles learn to say, *"I have sinned."*

May I never become so proud that I cannot say, *"I have sinned."* I do not care how many degrees you have, how big a preacher you are, how long you have been saved, how many Bible classes you have taught, how important you are in the church, there is not a person in this room tonight, including this speaker, that ought not come to God regularly and say, "Oh, my God, I have sinned! I have sinned! I have sinned!"

III. The Things That God Used to Lead These Men to Say, *"I Have Sinned."*

Notice why they paused and gave recognition to their sins. Notice why they said, *"I have sinned."*

In the case of David, it was preaching. I like David. Nathan was asked to speak at the "President's Prayer Breakfast." Nathan pointed his finger at King David and said, *"Thou art the man!"*

Say what you want to say, but there is nothing that will put conviction inside the heart of man like Spirit-filled preaching. Someone has said, "Preaching is teaching with a tear in the eye." He also said, "It is pouring to the congregation in a flood what they have sent up to you in a vapor." May it ever be said, may it ever be true, that as long as there is a First Baptist Church of Hammond, from this pulpit there goes forth preaching!

What else causes people to admit they have sinned? The dregs of sin do. The prodigal son got into the hog pen and filled his own stomach with the food the hogs would eat. He tasted the dregs of sin. Ladies and gentlemen, sin has beautiful lights at the front door, but the back door is a dark, lonely place. Sin has a pretty beginning but it also has an ugly end. The first day in sin is the nicest day you'll spend, so enjoy it. Every day in sin is worse than the day before, but every day with Jesus is better than the day before!

A man sat in my office this last week. He looked at me across the desk and said, "Sir, I am a homosexual." His lips began to quiver as he said, "I don't want to be one." I talked to him for awhile. He pleaded, "Would you help me? I don't want to be one. Won't you help me?"

I told him, "I will meet with you. I will talk with you. I will do all that I can."

He said of his homosexuality, "I didn't enjoy it much after awhile. At first it was fun. The appetite is made, but it doesn't satisfy like it used to. It gets worse all the time!"

Sinner, it does get worse all the time. Hear it, wicked man, it gets worse all the time! Hear it, dope addict, it gets worse all the time. Hear it, drunkard, it gets worse all the time!"

Hear this, Christian people, it gets better all the time!

The dregs of sin are what cause people to say, *"I have sinned."*

Judas Iscariot held in his hands thirty pieces of silver, looked at them and said, *"I have sinned."* How pretty that silver looked to him until he got it. It is an amazing thing. When he saw the silver at first, he thought, "Boy, what I could do with that! I want it! I want it! I want that money!" Then he got those thirty pieces of silver in his own hands and hated it.

It is amazing, ladies and gentlemen, how much fun it appears before you get there, and how empty it is once you are there.

The righteousness of God's people also causes some to say, *"I have sinned."* Saul saw the righteousness of David and said, *"I have sinned."* Shimei saw the righteousness of David and said, *"I have sinned."*

The presence of God also causes folks to say, *"I have sinned."* When Balaam saw the presence of God he said, *"I have sinned."*

IV. The Sins They Committed.

What were the sins of these men? One was the sin of hurting God's people. Saul, Pharoah and Shimei had done that. Let me just stop and say again, I don't know why any of us should want to try to hurt the rest of us.

There is a famous preacher in this country who made a careless statement about a few other churches. He did not mean to hurt us. He just spoke carelessly. I wrote him a letter and said, "My dear brother, I am not writing in defense of myself, but I am writing in defense of thousands of young preachers who look to both of us as leaders. I am begging you, for the sake of those young men in our country, let's present a solid front." That famous preacher, the big man that he is, said, "I have sinned. I did wrong. I know it. Forgive me. I'll ask others to forgive me."

I know the best preachers in America. I know the pastors of the largest churches in America. There is not a big shot among them. There is not a proud and cocky one among them. They are just a group of men who are sinners, who have learned to say, "I have done wrong. I have sinned."

You have heard me tell about the day my second daughter, Linda, was about to bleed to death at Dyer Mercy Hospital. Her tonsils were taken out, and they couldn't stop the bleeding. The nurse picked up her little bloody body and ran down the hall calling, "Doctor! Doctor! Doctor!"

I went in a room alone and said, "Oh God, what is it?" I saw the face of a man to whom I wouldn't speak. I said, "I will make it right." A few months later God gave me the chance to make it right. I met that man at the altar of a church and said, "Sir, I have sinned."

What sins caused men to say, *"I have sinned"*? There was the sin of criticizing God's people. There was the sin of leaving the will of God. What other sins did they commit? Saul committed the sin of disobedience. Job committed the sin of pride. David committed the sin of a sensual life and murder. The prodigal son committed the sin of a wasted life. Achan stole from God. They all said, *"I have sinned."*

"I have sinned because I have robbed God." "I have sinned because I have not tithed." "I have sinned because I have taken something that was accursed." "I have sinned because I wanted something for myself." "I have sinned because I have not given God what is His." "I have sinned because I have not kept a pledge." "I have sinned because I lived a sensual life." "I have sinned because I left the will of God." "I have sinned because I was stiff-necked and rebellious." "I have sinned because I have criticized the people of God." "I have sinned because I was proud." These are the sins of many of God's people.

I was in East Chicago, Indiana, several years ago. I knocked on a door. A lady came to the door. I said, "I'm Pastor Hyles."

She said, "Yes, I know who you are." Then she said these exact words (I'll never forget it): "I was in your church last Sunday. I have just got to say three things to you."

I said "What are they?"

She said, "Your pianist played too fast, and your singer sang too fast, and you preached too fast, and I couldn't get out of that place fast enough. And besides, if all I've heard about you is true, you're not much anyhow!"

"Lady, they are all true."

"What?"

"They are all true. I am not much. Really, I mean it. I am just a sinner. Lady, I hope you will pray for me. I want to be better. I hate me worse than you do. If you will just let me come in, I will tell you some of my sins. I want you to pray with me that I will do better."

She opened the door all the way, and tears began to roll down her cheeks. She said, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." In fifteen minutes, she was a child of God. Then she came to our church the next Sunday and was baptized.

Do you know why? It was because the preacher said, *"I have sinned."*

"I have sinned," said Job.

"I have sinned," said Balaam.

"I have sinned," said Saul.

"I have sinned," said David.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal son.

"I have sinned!" you say.

What can you do? Confess it! 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

When Becky was a little tyke, she got in the chocolate brownies before they were cooked. She got a handful of that stuff and tried to get it into her mouth. A little of it got in! There were fingerprints and chocolate all over her face. She got another handful. It dripped down her neck, her dress, and her legs.

I walked in. "Becky, have you been in the cookies?"

"No sir."

That is the way most of us are, isn't it? Pride shows all over our faces and we won't bring ourselves to say, *"I have sinned."*

You have not prayed five minutes today. Have you sinned? You have not read a chapter in the Bible today. Have you sinned? The first step toward forgiveness is confession. Admit it. Face up to it. Confess it.

After you have confessed your sin, ask for forgiveness and forsake it.

Wednesday night, thirteen years ago, I looked in your faces for the first time as your pastor. Do you know what I have tried to do from this pulpit? I have tried to get you to be the kind of people who are willing to fall at the old-fashioned altar and say, *"I have sinned."*

2. Pleiades and Orion

"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" Job 38:31

I want to speak this morning on Pleiades and Orion. Now in order to understand completely we must understand the condition of Job. Job was the richest man in the East, and he was the best Christian in the entire world. Such a good Christian was he that God said to Satan, *"Hast thou considered my servant Job? There's not a one like him in all the earth."*

Then calamity came to Job. He lost his wealth. He had ten children. Every child was taken in death. His health broke; he had the awful disease of elephantiasis, leaving him scraping himself with a piece of metal, sitting in the ash heap of the city dump. Job's wife failed him. She said, *"Why don't you curse God and die?"*

So here's Job, our hero. All of his health is gone; all of his wealth is gone; all of his children are gone; everyone in his household is gone; his wife's loyalty is gone; everything bad has happened. The Lord says to Job in this hour, *"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"* I'll be quite frank. I could care less about Pleiades or Orion if I were in the condition in which Job found himself, but there is a spiritual teaching that God gave to Job that I want to leave with you in the message this morning.

Pleiades is a constellation of stars in the heavens. Greek mythology says, however, that actually these were the seven daughters of Atlas. The seven daughters of Atlas were pursued by the giant Orion, and Orion was a great giant of a fellow. They were pursued by the giant Orion, causing them to come to Zeus to appeal to the great god for protection. Zeus changed them into a constellation of stars, so no longer were they the daughters of Atlas. However, during the destruction of the city of Troy, one of these daughters could not stand to see the destruction of the city and was given a leave of absence from the constellation. That daughter has not been heard from since, so nowhere are only six daughters shining in the skies as stars forever and ever. These remaining six stars are supposedly not as bright as they used to be because they too were humiliated at the defeat of the city of Troy.

Now let's look toward Orion. Orion, in Greek mythology, was a great giant, the son of Neptune. He was a mighty hunter; and while out hunting one day, he noticed a beautiful girl. Her name was Diana. He wanted Diana and began to chase her. The day came when Diana's brother, Apollo, decided he was going to do something about this giant who was chasing his sister, Diana. Apollo took Diana down to the sea and found Orion swimming in the sea. All that could be seen was his black cap. "Now," said Apollo to Diane, "you're pretty good with a bow and arrow, but I bet you couldn't hit that black speck out there on the sea." It happened to be the head of Orion. She loved him, but she did not know that the black spot was his head showing above the water. She took her bow and arrow and shot him in the head. She killed him. (Don't cry about this; this is not a true story.) Orion was brought to shore with the tide, and the beautiful Diana came and saw that she had killed her pursuer. In so doing, she transformed him into a star and placed him in the heavens. From that day till this, Orion has been chasing the six daughters of the Pleiades.

What was God telling Job? The story of the Greek mythology was not even known in the days of Job. The honest truth is this: The Pleiades is a small cluster of stars that make themselves more visible in the springtime. When the Pleiades become more visible, it is obvious to the ones who know the stars and know the bright cluster of stars that springtime is coming soon. Orion is a constellation that announces the coming of winter.

So the Lord is saying, "Job, there is nothing you can do about the stopping of spring or the coming of summer. There is nothing you can do about preventing the snows of winter or the chill of the winter winds or the deadness of the autumn. Job, you're going to have to take the spring, the summer, the autumn, the winter. They're going to come. There's nothing you can do about them."

Job was in springtime. He had a wife. He had ten children. He was the richest man of all the East. He was the best Christian of all the earth. He was a picture of health. Springtime was there. When the deadening of autumn and the chill wind of winter begin blasting upon Job's soul, he finds himself in wintertime. The children are dead; the riches are gone; his health is gone; his wife has forsaken him. All of the spring is gone, and now Job is complaining about the conditions of wintertime. He is no longer enjoying the balmy breezes of summer that have been beckoned and announced by the coming of the spring. Now Job is shivering and suffering in the chill in the awful hardness of winter. Job complains.

God says, "Stop it. You can take it. You can't stay in the springtime always. You can't prevent the autumn and winter from coming the tough days are going to come." God is saying, "*Job, canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades? Can you capture Pleiades, springtime, and keep it all the time? You're going to have to have some wintertime too, or you won't enjoy the springtime.*" God says, "Can you loose the bands of Orion? Can you stop Orion from coming? Can you thwart the chill of winter? You can't stay in springtime always. You've got to take it now. You've got to know that the sun doesn't shine all day; the darkness comes. You've got to know that the summertime doesn't last the entire year; wintertime must come. You've got to know that the flowers that bloom in the springtime must wilt in the fall. You've got to know that the grass that is green in summer becomes brown in the fall. You've got to know that the life of the springtime becomes deadness in the fall. You've got to learn to enjoy the springtime and know that the fall must come. You've also got to learn that when winter does come, spring is going to come back again. Job, you take it now, whether it's the chill of winter or the warmth of summer. You learn to take it." That is what God is teaching to Job.

Now let me give you four lessons very quickly this morning.

I. You Will Face All Seasons.

You, like Job, will face all seasons. Young people, you're still in the springtime of life this morning, but the autumn is going to come. Nothing is wrong now; you have no problems. You have not spent much time beside the casket in the funeral home. You know not the name of an undertaker. You know nothing about the chill of winter yet, but winter will come; autumn will come; it won't always be springtime.

I say to those of you who are in wintertime, if the chill of winter is causing you to pull your wraps around your chest this morning, if you are lonesome, if wintertime is here, blessed be God, winter always precedes the spring! It won't be long till warmth will come. It won't be long till life will come again. It won't be long till spring and the warmth of summer shall come. If you are in the summer, fall is coming. If you are in the winter, spring is coming. That's what God is saying to Job, "You will face all the seasons."

I have been pastor of this church now for eleven years. Eleven years ago last night was one of the darkest nights, if not the darkest night of my life. Eleven years ago last night I got in my car and rode around the city of Garland, Texas. I had pastored there for a number of years. We had seen the church grow from 44 people to 4,000. Almost everyone there I had won to Christ myself. I knocked with these knuckles on every door in the city of Garland, a city then of about 35,000

people. Not a person had moved to our city in all those years I was pastor there but that I went by to see them, welcome them to the city, and try to win them to Christ.

Suddenly God said, "You've got to leave." The chill of Orion came and the warmth of Pleiades left. I found myself in the dark hour. I came here and the winter got colder and colder and colder and colder! Then it wasn't long and we saw a little ray of springtime and the Pleiades were coming. Orion was leaving, but just as sure as I am here, Orion is coming again sometime.

You know, as pastor now for eleven years, many of us have been through Orion and Pleiades time and time again, haven't we? I was thinking last night as I was rehashing the message and thinking about some families in the church. There are many families here with whom we have seen many victories. We have stood at the wedding altar together, and in a few months we have stood in the cemetery together. We have ordained your young people; we have prayed for your babies; we have sent them to college when they became teenagers. We have counseled with them. We have seen the sun shining in the springtime; we have felt the warmth of summer. As pastor and people we have also felt the deadness of the autumn and the chilling winds of wintertime. It is all a part of life. People have to take it.

We at First Baptist Church, felt the warmth at the dedication service, but we will never forget when Orion came, that cold, cold day, spiritually, when we watched our building burn. God said, "Job, you have had it well; springtime was awhile ago, but Orion, wintertime, is here now. Job, don't despair because the chill of winter is discomfoting now. Springtime will come again, but don't get too comfortable in springtime, for autumn is going to come."

So it is you will face all seasons.

II. In the Spring Time, Prepare for the Winter.

You know winter is coming. Right now, get some snowshoes. Get an overcoat. Before I came to Hammond, I thought cold was 50. I had a nice coat that cost me \$10.95 at J.C. Penney Company in Texas. I thought that it would take me through the winter. I was driving over the bridge on Columbia and I ran out of gas on the top of the bridge. I had to walk to the service station. It was -5. I was wearing that \$10.95 coat, and before I got to that service station, I was crying. The tears were icicles by the time they got to my cheek. I was freezing to death. I said to the fellow at the service station, "I'm about to die." I was literally shaking.

He said, "You're having a chill."

I said "Having a chill, nothing! I'm having a freeze!"

I got some gasoline, put it in my car, came down here to the Minas store, walked in, and bought a topcoat. I had not gotten ready for winter. You have to get ready for the wintertime. Put anti-freeze in the car. Get some warm clothes. Get long flannels or insulated underwear, but get ready. You folks who came here from down South to teach in our school, let me warn you now, buy them today. We have worn our overcoats on the Fourth of July and built snowmen on Labor Day. Get ready! That's what the Lord is saying to Job. He is saying, "Job, okay, look. In the springtime, you should have gotten ready for the Orion to come. You can't have Pleiades all of the time."

The springtime is wonderful. Everybody loves it. You know, I have been here for eleven years, and now I would hate to live where there is no snow. I hate to say it, but I love the snow. You've got to prepare for wintertime.

Last Saturday night when Becky was married, people said to me, "I didn't know you could do it so well. You didn't cry but one time in the entire ceremony. We thought you would break down. How did you make it?" I had learned something in Twin Falls, Idaho, a few years ago to help me make it. I always said, "I couldn't marry one of my children." I always said, "I couldn't stand it. I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it." I was with Dr. John Rice in a Bible conference in Boise, Idaho, and Twin Falls, Idaho. We had two conferences going at the same time. I'd preach one night in Boise and a doctor would fly me down in a private plane to Twin Falls the next night, and Dr. Rice and I would switch places. When the conferences were over, I flew from Boise to Twin Falls and Dr. Rice was there with his oldest daughter, Grace. At the airport I say Dr. Rice say good-bye to Grace and Allen (his son-in-law) and their children. He got on the plane and wasn't crying. I asked, "Dr. Rice, how could you do that?"

He said, "What?"

I said, "You probably won't see her for a year or more and yet you weren't crying."

Dr. Rice looked at me and taught me a lesson I'll never forget. He said, "Brother Jack, 45 years ago I picked up that little bundle of flesh in my hands and realized the day would come when I'd give her away. I started preparing myself for that moment and for the good-bye at the airport awhile ago."

I learned something. I learned that in the summertime you have to prepare for winter. I learned that when the warmth of the Pleiades is shining upon you and the joy and warmth of the summer is yours, you must realize that Orion is on his way. There will be days of loneliness, days of heartache, days of sorrow, days of travail, days of suffering and days when the chill, cold, snow and ice of winter make you wonder if Pleiades will ever return. If you check the skies, you will find that Orion is still chasing those daughters. You will find that Orion is there and Orion will come, but you will also find that the Pleiades will return again. Springtime will come again. So I say, prepare yourself.

That's the reason why many parents come to the place in life where all is gone. They "place all their eggs in one basket" and before they know it, everything is gone. May I say to you, "Prepare yourself for the coming of winter. You have to learn to take it. Of course, you could take it back yonder when everything was well; your health was good, you were rich, your children were there at home, your wife was faithful." Job, you could take it then. Job, you have to learn to take Orion as well as Pleiades.

III. In Wintertime, Look for the Spring.

Do you know how I take these winters here? I look to the spring. I look to the summertime. When you're snowed in, you're about to freeze to death, your ears have frostbite and you wonder if you'll ever live through it, you need to realize that spring and summer are coming. Yes, just as sure as there is a God, the warm sunny days of summer are going to come.

God said to Job, "Job, I know you don't have much now. I know your health is gone. I see you there in the ash heap, in the ashes of the city dump. I see that potsherd which you are using to scrape your body. I see that, but Job, summer will be coming again."

One day summer did come. Job was restored to his health. He had ten children again. You know, I've always laughed about that. I think that's one of the funniest things. I think justice was meted out there. Job's wife got mad at him and said, "*Curse God and die.*" When Job got rich again, she

had to have ten kids. To me, that is funny! That's good enough for her. That's ninety months of eating watermelon for breakfast and cucumbers for lunch!

Summer came again. Job got twice as many camels, twice as many sheep, twice as many donkeys, twice as many oxen as he's had before, and as many children. It used to worry me. Why didn't Job have twice as many kids? He had twice as many asses, oxen, sheep and camels; why didn't he get twice as many children? Then one day it dawned on me that when camels die, they are dead; when sheep die, they are dead; when oxen die, they are dead; when asses die, they are dead; but when children die, they yet live! Job did have twenty children; he had ten on earth and ten in Heaven. Once again the Pleiades were back. Spring and summer were back. God said, "Job, while you are in Orion, don't forget, the Pleiades will come again."

IV. There Is Joy in Winter.

There's the comfort of a cup of hot chocolate beside the hearth in the wintertime. There's the popping of the corn, the games on the floor, the warmth of the home in the wintertime. I don't know so much about winter that is so bad. I've lived a long time. I have preached a long time for a fellow who's 43. I have been preaching for almost 25 years. Twenty-three years ago this month I became a pastor for the first time.

I look back over my life. I can recall the sunshine. I can recall the Pleiades, the warmth, springtime, flowers, gaiety, laughter, fun, joy, frivolity, victory, success and mountain peaks. However, as I look back over my life I can also see Orion. I can recall the chill of the wintry blasts. I can recall the discomfort of the ice and snow. I can recall lonely hours and the times when it seemed like the Pleiades would never return. Yet I'm not so sure as I look back but that the hot chocolate of Orion was better for me than the sunshine of the Pleiades. So wherever you are this morning, if you're in the Pleiades, springtime, laughter, gaiety, success, victory, mountain peaks, sunshine and cloudless days, start gathering for the Orion. Winter is coming. Get your spiritual coat. Prepare yourself. Don't be knocked off by the coming of the chilly blasts of Orion.

Maybe this morning you are in Orion. Maybe there is no victory for you but defeat, no warmth for you but cold, no joy for you but sadness, no laughter for you but tears, and that is your lot in life this morning. May I encourage your heart? Orion has never come without the Pleiades being around the corner.

There is coming a place where there'll be no Orions, only Pleiades!

Oh, they tell me of a land far beyond the sky;
Oh, they tell me of a land far away.
Oh, they tell me of a land where no storm clouds rise.
Oh, they tell me of an unclouded day.
Oh, the land of cloudless day.
Oh, the land of the unclouded day!
Oh, they tell me of a home far beyond the sky;
Oh, they tell me of an unclouded day.

There is a place where we who are saved are going. There we will have no clouds, only sunshine; no chilly blasts only spring warmth; no dying flowers, only blossoming blooms. There is coming a place where we will never grow old. We will never say good-bye to Mother, never feel the pain of a heart attack, never feel the eating away of cancer, never feel the tear on the cheek of a sad good-

bye. There the shoulders shall never stoop, brows shall never furrow and the skin shall never wrinkle. Oh, they tell me of a land far away!

I hope this morning that you are prepared for death. I hope that Heaven is yours because you have put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Strength and Beauty

Text: Psalms 96:6, *"Honour and majesty are before Him: strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."*

Dr. Slade, Faculty, Trustees, Student Body and Interested Friends:

This is my second visit to your fine institution and to this famous church. I am delighted, honored, and thrilled to share with you the blessing of this occasion. The last time I was here, I brought the Commencement address, and this time I will start you off, and I trust God will meet with us and speak to our hearts. It was a real joy today to renew fellowship and communion with the brethren here. I often think of Dr. Slade and this great church and the School and faculty members, and very often one of your faces will cross my mind and I will think positively and gratefully of this place and the work that is being done here.

Now notice the 96th Psalm, verse 6, *"Honour and majesty are before Him: strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."*

I. Strange Combinations

Strange companions are these walking together in the 96th Psalm, *"Honour and majesty are before Him."* Think for a moment how seldom you see honour fellowshipping with majesty. In political offices, people of high estate who have majesty so seldom have honour. When we think of honour, we do not think of majesty. When we think of majesty, we seldom think of honour.

In the Word of God there are several such pairs that are seldom seen together. For example, the Apostle Paul speaks about "zeal and knowledge." How rare it is to find in the same package both zeal and knowledge! Somebody has said, "Scholarship and fire seldom walk together." How wonderful it is to find some scholar who has the fire of God in his soul. As he secures his education and training and gains his scholarship, he keeps the same zeal and fire of his youth.

There is still another pair that seldom walks together. It is said of Jesus in **John 1:14**, that He was *"full of grace and truth."* Did you ever stop to think how difficult it is to mingle grace and truth? Dr. Slade, you are a great defender of the faith. You and I know what it is to fight the battles for the truth. Have you noticed about the time you get enough of the truth, you lose your grace? Just about the time that I get courageous enough, I get mean. Do you have that problem, Dr. Fletcher? About the time I take the stand that I ought to take for this blessed old Book, I find myself losing my warmth and love. I have truth, but not grace. So I work on my grace, and I become a sweet, gentle preacher. Then I find I have lost the truth; I want to join the National Council of churches! (Ha) The Honest truth is these seldom go together.

Now here is another pair, just as rarely found together as grace and truth, or majesty and honour, or zeal and knowledge. "Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." What a strange combination! The Psalmist looks at the temple and lists two qualities he sees that seldom travel together. The entire Psalm, I think, is a picture of the Psalmist looking at the temple, the center of all Jewish life. As he looks at the temple, he says, "Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." We think of the strength, with its solidity, and find it difficult to associate with it grace and loveliness. When we think of strength, we think of someone who has few manners or little ethics. We oftentimes disassociate anything lively with anything strong. Conversely, when we think of the beautiful we think of it as fragile and delicate. We hardly ever think of anything beautiful being strong. I am advocating this evening strength AND beauty, honour AND majesty; zeal AND knowledge, grace AND

truth. I am saying that I do not believe one need sacrifice grace to have truth; one need not sacrifice honour to have majesty; one need not sacrifice zeal to have knowledge; and one need not sacrifice beauty to have strength or strength to have beauty. The Psalmist looks at the strength of the marble pillars and sees the under girdings of the temple and the strength of the pillars, and then he looks at the exquisite carvings and says, "Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." I look around this lovely building tonight, and I see the strength of this building and the delicate carving and beauty contained therein, and I say with the Psalmist, "Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."

II. Strength and Beauty in the Temple

The Psalmist looked at the great porch upheld by the two famous pillars of bronze, cast by the most skillful workers, and on the top of the pillars was lily work. How beautiful! Realizing the strength of these two bronze pillars of the porch and viewing the delicate, dainty needlework at the top, the Psalmist said, "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*"

The Psalmist looked at the massive stones and cedars of Lebanon. Then as he compared them to the delicate carvings of cherubim, he said "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*" He looked at the immense stone foundations, and at the same time, at the interior overlaid with pure gold, and said, "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*" He looked at the immense size of the temple, and then at the figures of cherubim, palm trees, and flowers and said, "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*" He looked at the beautiful architecture and the strength upholding the great massive building. At the same time he noticed precious stones gleaming midst the gold, and said, "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*" He looked at the high walls and compared them to the woven tapestry that was hanging on every side. As he say the strength of the walls and the beauty and loveliness of the tapestry, he said, "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*"

Now all of this is to say this: We face a generation that does not compare strength and beauty. We face a generation that says, "You must be strong, you must stand, you must fight, you must not yield, you must not give." On the other side, we see there are other people who believe in the arts, who believe in the beauty of nature, who believe in beauty as opposed to strength. What is wrong with fundamentalists having strength AND beauty? What is wrong with fundamentalist having zeal AND knowledge? I was in Canada, in your capital city, preaching at a series of holy week services for the local Fundamental Evangelical Ministerial Association and the churches that they pastored. A pastor who was up in years came to me and said, "Dr. Hyles, I admire you; I admire your zeal. When I was a young man I, too, chose between zeal and depth." That spoke volumes to me! He said, "When I was a young man, I looked on one side, and I saw the depth of teaching the Word of God, and exposing the Scriptures. On the other side, I saw those who had zeal; they passed out tracts, and they had fervor and fire and zeal, and I decided I would choose to be deep instead of zealous."

I said, "My dear sir, if you will forgive me for being a little bit rude and a little bit unkind, I would like to say, if I could have talked to you for five minutes back then, I could have saved you from having to make that decision."

"Well," he said, "I am not the hollering type. I just expound the Scriptures and expose the Word of God."

I said, "All right, if I had talked to you, I would have reminded you that you could read the Scriptures, then stop and say 'Glory to God!' and then read the next verse."

Now, I am simply saying this: Why should there be a choice for a young man to make? Could not a young man have the zeal of youth and the wisdom of age? Could not a young man have a compassion for souls and a zeal for the Word of God and the work of God, and at the same time, experience what it is to know the Scriptures and teach the Word of God? I commend to you, and I recommend to you that you consider strength and beauty.

So the Psalmist looked at the sanctuary, at the beloved temple, and as he examined the strength on one side, and the loveliness on the other, the strong pillars with their lily work at the top, the strong sides, the walls, with their exquisite carvings and interior covered with gold, the Psalmist shouted, "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary!*"

III. Strength and Beauty in Our Ministry

Now there is a temple today. In 1968 there is another temple. It does not stand in Jerusalem on the site of Solomon's temple; it sits in this auditorium this evening. This temple of today will be walking the halls in this Seminary, sitting in the chairs provided by the Alumni, studying at the feet of you professors, for this temple of today is the body of the Christian. If you check the New Testament very carefully, especially Paul's writings, you will find that the temple of today is the body of the believer. Now this body, this temple, should have in it both strength and beauty. Maybe there is some young preacher in the student body who this evening is trying to decide what he ought to be—a Bible teacher or an evangelistic, compassionate preacher. I commend to you: Be both! Have both strength AND beauty. Have both grace AND truth. Have both honour AND majesty. Do not trade one for the other, or the other for one, but rather combine in your ministry the depth of the Word of God and the zeal that God would want you to have in the propagation of that blessed Word.

I heard a beautiful story about Dr. George W. Truett, who served for many years as Pastor of the great First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas. (I think he served for over forty years in Dallas, my home town.) One day he was in his study preparing his message for the next Lord's Day. His little five-year-old granddaughter was bothering him, as most five-year-old granddaughters do well. "Grandfather, I want a drink," she said. As most grandfathers do, he spoiled his granddaughter. He got her a drink. He sat down to study his sermon, when suddenly, just a few moments afterwards, she said, "Grandfather, I am thirsty again, may I have a drink?" He got up again and gave her a drink. In just a matter of five minutes she said, "Grandfather, may I have a drink, please?"

(That reminds me of a little girl who said, "Daddy, may I have a drink?" He said, "If you ask me for a drink one more time, I am going to get up and spank you." She said, "Daddy, when you get up to spank me, would you bring me a drink, please?")

Dr. Truett got her a drink, and then he said, "Honey, leave Grandfather alone. I am busy. I have to preach Sunday and I need to be alone." So he happened to think—there was a jigsaw puzzle of a map of the world in his office. Dr. Truett got the box that contained the puzzle, and he said, "Honey, do you like jigsaw puzzles?"

She nodded her head.

He asked, "Would you like to put a jigsaw puzzle together?"

She said she would. Dr. Truett put her in the outer office, gave her the jigsaw puzzle, the map of the world. He thought, "That will take care of a five-year-old for awhile."

Five minutes passed, and she said, "Granddaddy, I am through with the puzzle, and I want a drink."

"You're through?"

"Yes, I am through."

Dr. Truett said, "How could it be that you could get the world all fixed up? You do not know where all the countries are." He walked to the outer office, and sure enough, every country was in place. She had taken hundreds of pieces and put them perfectly together in five minutes. Dr. Truett said, "How did you do it?"

She said, "It was easy, Granddaddy. On the back side was a picture of a man's face. I didn't work on the world. I worked on the man. When I got the man right, the world took care of itself."

That is what you need to work on, my young friend. Great societies and poverty programs may or may not be well and good, but those will be unnecessary when preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ return to preaching the Gospel to men. The need of our day is to reach men. As Dr. Slade said awhile ago, we need men! If only we had the intelligence and sense of the little girl, who at five said, "I worked on the man, and the world took care of itself."

Faculty members, those who lead these students, I commission you not to use these students to build a school, but use your school to build these students. It is so easy to use patients to build a hospital, or use members to build a church, or use students to build a school, but our job is to use buildings, faculty, trustees, administration. Books, and all the rest of it to invest in the lives of individuals, that they may have grace and truth, honour and majesty, zeal and knowledge, strength and beauty.

IV. Strength Comes First

Now I want you to notice this. In the first place, the Psalmist said, "*strength*." He did not say, "beauty and strength," for beauty without strength is worse than strength without beauty. The first thing he said was "*Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary*." It's better to be strong than ornamental. Do not do wrong rightly; do right wrongly if you have to make the choice. I would rather do right rightly. If I could, I would like to take the Word of God, Dr. Slade, and stand on it, and say, "I believe it, I will fight for it, I will die for it," and do it with beauty, grace, love, kindness, meekness, and humility." If I had to choose between being cantankerous and hard to get along with and standing for the truth, and being sweet and kind in denying the faith, I would ten thousand times rather stand on this Bible wrongly, than stand off this Bible rightly. Strength comes first!

Character is more important than talent, for character will seek talent, and talent oftentimes will flee character. True character, when it is instilled in the lives of young people, will find the talent necessary to perform a task. Oftentimes excessive talent makes one think he needs not character, and so he runs from character and loses the thing that he needs the most, when character is far more vital to success than his talent.

I have often made this little statement: I do not care who hates me because of my position, but I do not want anybody to hate me because of my disposition. Now, if I had to choose, however, between the right position and the right disposition, I would choose the right position. I am simply saying strength and beauty should adorn every Christian, but the first thing that ought to adorn us is strength, character, and standing for the truth, the Bible, Christ, and soul winning.

I recall a Texas farmer whose boy went off to college. Nobody had ever been to college from that area. Everybody was impressed because one of their own farm boys had gone off to college. Well, the boy came home from college the first time, and the dad was ploughing in the field. The neighbor at the next farm said, "Hey, Zeke! How did your young'un do in college this year?"

He said, "You'd never believe it. Why, it used to be when my boy ploughed a row with the mule, he would look at the mule and say, 'Whoa, Red, turn and giddap.' Do you know what he says now? He says, 'Halt, Rebecca! Pivot and proceed!'"

Now, I think it is best to say, "Halt, Rebecca! Pivot and proceed!" but I think it is better to get Rebecca turned around than to know how to speak good English. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "I would rather a fellow say 'I seen' that seen something, than say 'I have seen' who ain't seen nothing."

V. Strength and Beauty in Creation

I suggest to you, and I recommend to you, that you get all the Christian grace, charm, ethics, and principles you can, that you adorn the Gospel of the grace of God, but let me say before you do get the polish, you be sure you get the merchandise. You be sure you have the strength before you work on the beauty. You decide you believe the Bible is the Word of God! Every word of it, every page of it, and every line of the Bible is inspired by God. You live for it, die for it, live by it, die by it, stand for Christ, stand for the Bible, have no patience with error, stand for the truth that is in the faith; and once you get that, then you can look at the next word, which is beauty. ***"Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary."*** Someone has said, "Never mind about the beautiful; give us the useful and the durable." Let that one look at the yellow gold of the grain field, the emerald green of the meadow, the silver white of the lake, the purest blue of the sky, the fresh green of the spring, the snowy white of the winter, the glory of the sunset, the sevenfold beauty of the rainbow, the towering mountains with their ceaseless lights and shadows. Let him look at God's creation; the strength of a mountain range, and yet the beauty that is incomparable, strength and beauty. God has a wonderful way of adding the beauty to the strong. Look at a tree sometime. Look at the strong, durable, sturdy trunk of that tree; then at autumn time, look at the fading of the leaves and the foliage, and notice how God blends the strong and the beautiful in the same tree. Look sometime at a hill. Look sometime at a river-the beautiful flowing river with its strength, power, and potential.

Once you have gained the strength may you then add beauty. Once you have become a fundamental believer with the zeal of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, then add love, grace, gentleness, kindness, and all the Christian graces, but be sure the strength is there first.

VI. Strength and Beauty in Character

Faculty members, out there waiting to come here, is a young lad. He is a farm boy. He is spiritual and he is strong. He has strength, but his English is atrocious. He hangs his gerunds, splits his infinitives, dangles his participles. He comes to you. He has strength, he has character, but he needs beauty. I charge you: Give him beauty, but don't tamper with his strength.

When I was a young preacher, I had two sermons: One was on cigarettes and the other was on movies. I would preach to my little church on cigarettes on Sunday morning and on movies on Sunday night. I wanted to be varied in my subjects, and so I preached the next Sunday on movies in the morning and cigarettes at night. I guess I was the crudest preacher that ever came off the

East Texas sand hills, but I had conviction. I believed this Book was the Word of God, and I believed that Jesus Christ was God's Son. I knew I was born again, and I belonged to Jesus Christ. I knew right was right and wrong was wrong. I knew black was black and white was white, and I was dedicated not to make it gray. I thank God for my teachers and helpers and those who prayed for me and tried to lend a little bit of beauty along with it. Still my beauty fades oftentimes when compared to my conviction. I thank God for those teachers who gave me a few of the graces and taught me you could hold a teacup on your knee, do it properly, and still be a fundamentalist. I thank God for those that tried to make something out of me, and taught me that proper English could robe fundamentalism. I thank God for those who helped me and taught me that a person could say, "Good morning," and smile and still be a fundamentalist. you do not have to trip old men when they walk across the street to be a fundamentalist. I thank God for those people that taught me that love, grace, beauty, honour, and majesty are important. At the same time, they did not tamper with the strength.

Faculty, out yonder waiting to come before you some day is a high school lad. He is intelligent, and he is spiritual. He is gentle and he is kind. He has love and he has charm, but he needs intestinal fortitude. He needs strength. He has the beauty. Don't steal his beauty. Let him keep his kindness, let him keep his gentleness, let him keep his goodness, but when he comes here, instill in his heart strength for the Word of God and the work of God.

Out yonder is someone who will be before you, a young lady. She is lovely and talented, but she needs conviction. She comes to you to get it. Out yonder there is a preacher lad who has conviction and potential, but he needs love. Don't cast him aside. Add love to his conviction, add kindness to his courage, and make him full of strength and beauty.

As I look to you students this evening, most of you are far younger than

I. As I look in your eyes and think about the potential for the future, I exhort you to earn a degree while you are in Toronto Baptist Seminary. We shall call it the S.A.B. degree: Strength and Beauty! As you walk across this platform and receive the diploma for which you are working, as you walk out the doors, take off your caps and gowns, go out to your place of service, may people know you are someone of strength. May they always say, "There is a man who believes the Bible; there is a man who has convictions for which he would live and die," but at the same time, "There is a gentleman; there is a man who pays his debts, and pays them on time, there is a man who has the love of Christ in his heart, there is a man who walks with God, there is a man who has strength and beauty."

Maybe it is like the Quaker who kindly said, before he killed a man, "I would not hurt thee, nor harm thee, nor lift up my hand to do thee wrong, but thou art standing where I am about to shoot."

Dr. Frank Norris said of Dr. John Rice, "He is the kindest, gentlest man that ever scuttled a ship or slit a throat." There ought to be some of that in God's people. There ought to be that as we teach our students.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army shall He lead
Till every foe is vanquished

And Christ is Lord indeed.

As you stand for the truth, may you have grace, and as you seek grace, may you never leave the truth. As you have strength, may you have beauty; but as you add beauty, may you never lose your strength. As you have zeal, may you have knowledge; but may your knowledge never dampen your zeal. As you have majesty, have honour; but may your honour never take your majesty, nor your majesty rob your honour. May it be said of you that you are simply "Strength and Beauty."

That is what this old world needs tonight. The world is dying for the Gospel of Christ and preachers to preach that Gospel. It does not take a brilliant person long to find that we are in dire need of the Moodys, Sundays, Jonathan Edwards, and Charles G. Finneys. It does not take this old world long to find that we need some Wesleys and some Spurgeons. It does not take this world long to find that we need some George Whitefields, some Sam Joneses with their strength, some R. A. Torreys with their culture and refinement and yet spiritual zeal.

Dr. John Rice, as a young preacher, went to the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, one afternoon to hear the famous Gypsy Smith. At that time, Gypsy Smith was in his heyday and in demand all across America and all across the world. He spoke on soul winning. He said, "We ought to take every advantage to witness to others about the Saviour." Then he said, "We ought to leave this building this afternoon to cover this town with the Gospel of Christ."

Dr. John Rice said, "Dear Lord, when I leave this building, I am going to witness to the first person I see." The service was ended, the benediction pronounced. Out the back door went this young preacher, John Rice, in his early days. Around the corner from the First Baptist Church of Dallas, was a taxicab, with the driver standing beside his cab. "Taxi?" he said.

Dr. Rice said, "No, I do not want a taxi, but I want to ask you a question, 'Sir, are you a Christian?'"

The cab driver moistened his eyes and quivered his lips as he said, "Yes, I am."

Dr. Rice said, "Good. When did you become a Christian?"

The taxi driver said, "Just a minute ago. A Gypsy fellow walked out the speakers' door and led me to the Lord Jesus Christ."

Emerson wrote the following:

So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, "Thou must,"
The youth replies, "I can."

Oh, for revival of fundamentalism! Oh, for revival of old-fashioned hell-fire and brimstone preaching of "Ye must be born again" with the altar call, the mourner's bench, the sawdust trail, and sinners repenting; and the old-fashioned Gospel of Christ where hundreds are saved, buildings are filled, the power of God comes, people repent, mourners mourn, folks turn to God, and we have real genuine, old-fashioned revival back in America and in our country! But-it will come only when we have Christian people who mix genuine grace with the blessed truth.

May God give us, may God give me and you a knowledge burning with zeal, a majesty built on honour, a grace founded by truth, and a beauty built with strength.

4. I Am Not My Own

Back in the days when most everybody who traveled great distances traveled by train, a Christian layman was sitting with three other men who were traveling together. During the train ride, one man pulled out a deck of cards, began to shuffle them, and said, "Let's play cards."

The second man said, "Wonderful, wonderful."

The third man said, "Good."

The fourth man said nothing. One of the fellows said to him, "Would you like to play cards?"

The Christian layman said, "Yes, I would." The cards were shuffled and dealt. The Christian just sat there motionless.

He was asked, "Aren't you going to play?"

He replied, "I can't."

"Well you said you wanted to."

"I do."

"Well, why don't you play?"

The man said, "I have no hands."

"Oh," said one of the men, "I did not know that you are an amputee."

"I'm not," was his answer. "I'm a Christian. I'd love to play cards. I'd like to join you, but these hands are not mine. They belong to someone else, and He does not want to use them to play cards. I have no hands of my own."

What a truth! Do you know that all unhappiness is caused by one word-anarchy? When a person does not yield himself to God he is unhappy. The unhappy child is one who is so unfortunate as to grow up in a home under Dr. Spock's philosophy. Happy is the child who is taught that what Dad says and what Mom says is what goes! Why? He is not his own.

You say, "Brother Hyles, I am little child. How can I belong to God and my mom and dad? How can God own my body and my mom and dad own my body?"

God does own you when your mom and dad own you. You obey God when you obey Mom and Dad. The happy child is the child who says, "I am not my own. I belong to those who are over me."

The unhappy bride is that young lady who does not want to give herself in complete obedience to her groom. The unhappy citizen is that citizen who says, "I will do what I want to do. I will disregard the laws. I will have nothing but my own convictions reigning over me."

The unhappy student is the student who will not obey the teacher. The unhappy Christian is the Christian who will not obey his God.

Listen to me tonight. Listen to me, beloved. You will never be happy in the Christian life until you come to the place where you say, "Dear Lord, I have no eyes; they are your eyes; they are not mine."

A Christian should say, "I have no ears; they are His ears. My eyes are His eyes. My hands are His hands."

I got this truth years ago before I went into the army. One time they called me up and said, "Hyles, listen, would you like to go down to the dance at the armory?"

I said, "I love to."

They said, "We'll pick you up."

"No, I'm not going," I said.

"Why?" the fellows asked.

"Because, I don't have any feet."

"Oh, what happened to your feet?"

"I haven't had any feet for seven years. My feet are His. I am not my own. I am bought with a price."

Kids, you will never be happy until you take your hands off of your life and say, "I am His. My feet belong to Him. My eyes belong to Him." That will solve your bad literature. That will solve your dancing at school. That will solve your cursing. That will solve your dirty language. That will solve your suggestive speech. That will solve your rock music. That will solve it all. You ought to say, "These ears are not mine; they are His. I have no right to hear what I want to hear. I must hear what He would want to hear. They are His ears. I have no right to say what I want to say. I want to say what He would want me to say. My tongue is His. I have no right to go where I want to go. I must go where He wants me to go. My feet are His. I have no right to take what I want to take. I must take what He would want to take. My hands are His. I have no right to say what I want to say, be what I want to be, do what I want to do, go where I want to go or see what I want to see. I belong to Him. I am not my own!"

All your problems tonight, men, women, teenagers, boys and girls, revolve around one thing: You are taking somebody else's members and using them for your own pleasure.

Suppose I said tonight, "You are going to drink whiskey."

You say, "But, Preacher, I have never tasted whiskey. I don't want any whiskey."

"Well, you are going to have it whether you want it or not. I will pry your mouth open and pour it down."

Let me ask you a question? Is that right?

You say, "Of course, it is not right! This mouth is mine and this stomach is mine."

That is the reason the Apostle Paul could say in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* Why? This is His mouth, not mine. These are His eyes, not mine. These are His ears, not mine. These are His hands, not mine. These are His feet, not mine.

All of your problems, your unhappy days, your frustrations, your nervous breakdowns, your burdens, the things that make you unhappy, and all of your maladjustment is wrapped up in one problem: You are using Somebody else's members and doing what you want to with them. You are a thief!

I have given just enough of myself to Christ that I realize that I belong to Him. I am His. I am not my own. I have no right to choose what I do. I have no right to decide where I go. I have no right to decide what I eat or drink. I have no right to decide what I read. I have no right to decide what I hear. I must hear only that which He would hear; these are His ears. I must see only that which He would see; these are His eyes. I must go only where He would go; these are His feet. I must take only what He would take; these are His hands. All of my problems and all of yours are wrapped up around the rebellion of taking the members that belong to Him and using them for ourselves.

I was on maneuvers one day in the army. We had to walk 26 miles. We were 13 miles out and had 13 miles to come back. I was so thirsty, and my canteen was dry! A man came with a big truck and said, "We have something for you to drink: a big case of beer." There was no water, only beer.

I looked at that beer and said, "You sure look good. I sure would like to have you."

You say, "Preacher, have you ever wanted to take a drink?"

Sure, I wanted to take a drink.

"Why didn't you?"

I didn't have a mouth. I don't have one now; the one I use is His.

Sometimes I would like to criticize people, but I can't; I don't have a tongue. I would like to make money, but I can't; I don't have any hands. Sometimes I would like to fight, but I can't; I don't have a fist.

Beloved members of First Baptist Church, grasp this truth tonight: You are not your own. **YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN.**

A young lady came into my office not long ago to talk about her future. She was a senior in high school. She said, "What I want to do is this!"

I said, "You have no choice in the matter. You cannot do what you want to do."

She said, "I can do what I want to do!"

I said, "You have no right to do what you want to do. You are not your own."

I. I Am Not My Own Because He Created Me.

I am His because twice He created me. In Genesis in the story of creation we find that He created our bodies. He took the dust of the earth and from that dust He created man. He spoke and we came into existence. He made these eyes; they are His. He made these hands; they are His. He made this body; it is His. He made these feet; they are His. He made this mouth; it is His. He made these ears; they are His. He made me, and I am His because of creation.

I am His because of another creation. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation)."* So I am His twice.

Years ago I made a slingshot. I went out to a big tree. I found a limb that had a fork in the branch. I sawed it off. I got my knife and whittled it. Then I took some sandpaper and sanded it. I found an old inner tube and cut off two rubber bands. I tied some string on the ends of the rubber bands. I put a piece of leather on the end of the twine. I tied a couple of strings to the ends of the branch and put the rubber on the end of the strings. Then I put the strings on the back of the rubber and I put leather on the back of the strings. I went down to the gravel pit and got a sack full of rocks, and I had a slingshot!

Across the street from me there was a kid named Robert. He was the meanest kid I ever met. He saw my slingshot. He took it. I saw him with it the next day at school. I went to the teacher and said, "Teacher, Robert has my slingshot."

She asked, "How do you know it's yours?"

I said, "I made it. It's mine!"

Robert said, "Finders keepers; losers weepers." Big bully!

I said, "Robert, that's mine. I made it."

The teacher said, "What proof do you have?"

I said, "Well, I..." Then I said, "Robert, whose is that?"

He said, "It's mine."

I said, "You know it's not yours! I made that!"

After school, he got me and beat me to a pulp. (The big bully was three or four years older than I was.)

It wasn't long until I made a scooter. Did you ever make a scooter? First, you find an old pair of skates. Then get a two-by-four. Attach the skates under the two-by-four making a set of wheels in the front and a set in the back. How many of you ever made an old scooter like that? God pity you young folks who buy scooters. Then you put a one-by-four in the front, build some handles, and you have a scooter.

One day I saw Robert on my scooter. I said, "Hey, Robert, that's my scooter!"

He said, "No, it's not. It's my scooter!"

"No, it's mine. I made that."

"Finders keepers, losers weepers."

"Robert, that's mine." I went in and I told my mother. "Mama, Robert has my scooter!"

Mama said, "Why don't you just go get it?"

"Because I can't! He's bigger than I am."

"Well, how do you know it's yours?"

"I made it myself; it's mine."

Robert beat me up again!

It wasn't long before I made what we called a "roller coaster." I got some old tricycle wheels, built an engine hood, and made a soapbox car. Down the hill I would go. After spending several weeks building my car, one day I looked out and saw Robert in my little soapbox car. I said, "ROBERT!"

"WHAT?"

"That's mine."

"Finders keepers, losers weepers."

"Robert, that's mine." I went back home and told my dad. I said, "Robert has whipped me three times because I wanted things that I had made. I made the slingshot, the scooter and the soapbox. They are mine. I made them!"

Dad said, "Why don't you sort of let Robert know who's boss?"

I said, "He already knows, and I do too!"

Dad looked out in the backyard. There was a good-sized two-by-four. Dad said, "That might make you the boss." Though my dad was not a Christian, he always taught me that a man will not let anybody push him around. He wanted me to keep my manhood, anyway. I got that two-by-four and carried it behind me everywhere I went. One day Robert got my bicycle. That did it! He said, "Finders keepers, losers weepers" long enough! He came by the house, looked at me and said, "Hey, I got you now!" he decided he was going to get off and whip me for the fourth time. I took that two-by-four and threw it at Robert. As he turned around, it hit him right in the back!

That is sort of crude, but you know, that is exactly what God does. God says, "You are not your own. I made you. Those are My hands; I made them."

"But I'll play cards, and I'll gamble, and I'll grasp the liquor bottle and I'll have my hands touch things that are unholy."

God says, "I made those hands."

"Finders keepers, losers weepers."

We use them like we want to use them. We trod unholy paths and go unholy places.

God says, "I made those feet. They are My feet. They are not yours."

We say, "Finders keepers, losers weepers."

This is why you ladies ought to wear your skirts down to your knees. Those are not your thighs you are showing. They are His. He has a right to tell you how to dress. You have no right to expose your body to the lustful eyes and evil minds of wicked men. Your body is His. You are His. You are not your own.

The day will come, ladies and gentlemen, when He will say, "Okay, I'll get a two-by-four and knock the fire out of you." You will hear the squeaking of brakes on the pavement or you will feel a pain in the chest, and you will be rushed by ambulance to the hospital. Then the Lord will say, "You have used My hands long enough; I will take them. You have used My feet long enough; I will still them. You have used My tongue long enough; I will hush it. You have used My eyes long enough; I will shut them. You have used My body long enough."

You won't get by, Christian friend, on being your own. You are His! I am not my own because He created me.

II. I Am Not My Own Because I Was Born to Him.

I was born to God's family. That which is born to you is yours until it is grown. So I am His until I mature. I am His until I am grown. I am His until I am no longer a minor. That means until I become grown in the Lord I have no say-so over what these ears hear, where these feet go, what these hands do, or what this tongue speaks.

"Well, you say, "I'm already grown in the Lord."

Nobody becomes mature in the Lord until He becomes like Jesus. In **Romans 8:23** God talks about *"...the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* There came the time in the life of a Jewish boy when he became a major and was no longer a minor. His father took him to what was called a "Bema," the great public place, the judgment place, the announcement place, the community place, etc. He took his boy there when he became an adult. He would call all the neighborhood together, put his arm around his son, and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, I have some declarations to make. This is my son. Today he becomes a major." The son wore what was called a "toga virilis," which was a coat showing he was a minor. He would then give his son the coat worn by adults. A little boy looked forward to the day when he could exchange coats so all the people would know that he was a grown man.

Then the father would say to his son, "Son, before all these people, inherit my name. Son, before all these people, inherit all my wealth." The son then was no longer under his father. His eyes ceased to be his father's eyes; they were now his own eyes. His hands ceased to be his father's hands; they were now his own hands. His feet ceased to be his father's feet; they were now his own feet. Now the son could decide what he would see. Now he decides what he hears. He decides where he goes. He decides what he speaks. He decides what he feels. Why? He is an adult.

When do we become adults? The Bible says we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." We are not called the adults in the family of God until we "rise and seize the everlasting prize, and shout while passing through the air, 'Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer.'"

I am not an adult tonight. I am Pastor of this church but I am not an adult. I am one of God's little ones. He calls me in the Bible a little child: *"My little children."* (1 John 2:1) Now there will be a day I can decide what my own eyes see, what my own ears hear, where my own feet go, what my own hands feel and what my own tongue says. That will be on the day when I am grown. That day will come when I shall wake in His likeness and my body shall no longer be bent to sin. Then Jesus shall say, "You decide." Why? I will be like Him. Until the day when I cast aside the flesh, until the day when I am not tempted to see that which I should not see, I must look up to Him and say, "I am not my own. I am one of Your born ones."

I can recall years ago when David was a little fellow and I tried to teach him how to play ball. I said, "Now, son, you put the bat in your hand, like this. Hold the bat." David would get the bat, and I would say, "No, son, let Dad put his hands on yours." I would get over in front of him, put my left hand over his and my right hand over his, and I'd say, "Now hold it like this. When the ball comes, swing the bat."

The only time he got in trouble was when he would swing it like he wanted to swing it. Time and time again he would swing that bat around and keep on swinging until the bat came right around and hit him on the back of the head. Why? He would say, "I want to do it myself!"

That is where you get into trouble too. "I want to do it by myself." That is where you get into all your trouble.

I taught David how to box. I put the gloves on him, put my hands around his and said, "Now, box like this...and like this...and this! Let him have it!" I taught David how to drive. Time and time again he would say, "I want to drive. I want to drive all by myself."

Now listen to me. Until we awake in the likeness of Jesus Christ, and our bodies are perfected and we are like Him, we had better let Him tell us where to drive. We had better let Him tell us what to see, where to go, what to say.

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see,
Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see;
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.

Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear,
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear;
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear.

Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say,
Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say;
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
Oh, be careful, little tongue, what you say.

Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.

Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go;
For the Father up above is looking down in love,
Oh, be careful, little feet, where you go.

The happiest Christian in this room tonight is the one who has said, "I will not go where I want to go; I will go where He wants me to go. I will not say what I want to say; I will say what He wants me to say. I will not see what I want to see; I will see what He wants me to see. I will not hear what I want to hear; I will hear what He wants me to hear.

Only to be what He wants me to be,
Every moment of every day.
Yielded completely to Jesus alone,
Every step of this pilgrim way.
Just to be clay in the Potter's hands,
Ready to do what His Word commands;
Only to be what He wants me to be,
Every moment of every day.

Why am I not my own? He created me.
Why am I not my own? I was born to Him.

III. I Am Not My Own Because He Purchased Me.

I am bought with a price. What price? The price was His own dear Son. He ransomed me. He purchased me. He paid the penalty for my sin. These hands are not mine; they have been purchased by Him. He owns them. He paid the price.

If Dr. Billings were to come to me and say, "Give me that suit of clothes!"

I would say, "Hold it, Doc. This coat would be an overcoat for you. You could walk a half block in these trousers and they wouldn't move at your size. Doc, this is mine. This is my suit."

Why? I paid for it. That is why it is mine. I went down to Jack Fox and Sons and I paid for it. It is mine.

Jesus bought you.

You say, "Well, it is my business what I do."

No, what you do is the business of the One Who purchased you. If you are Saved, you are saved because you have been purchased. A young man sat in my office not long ago and said, "I want to get married now!"

I said, "It isn't right to decide whether you're getting married now or not. What would He have you do?"

"Well, I'll run off and get married."

"Go ahead, but you'll come back to my office one of these days wishing you had done what He wanted you to do."

You girls may say, "Well, I'll tell you, I'm going with an unsaved boy, and he's the star of the football team. He's my 'dream boat.' Oh, those broad shoulders! That bushy hair! That countenance! Those strong arms! What a man!"

"I know, but he's not saved."

You say, "It's my business whom I marry."

It is not your business whom you marry. It is His business. You have no right to marry whom you want to marry. You have no right to go where you want to go. You have no right to say what you want to say. You have no right to hear what you want to hear. You have no right to be what you want to be. You have no right to live where you want to live. It is His business what you say, what you hear, what you do, where you live, where you go. It is His business! He purchased you. He owns you. You are not your own. He created you. You were born to Him. He purchased you.

The result of realizing you belong to Him is real peace and joy. Check back in your life for a minute. Relive it. Think of the bad times. Think of the times when you absolutely could not face the next day. Right now, think about the times when you thought you could not live another day. Think of the times when you wanted to die. Those were the times you refused to let Him use you as He pleased.

My son, Dave, said last night, "Dad, out soul winning in the ghettos in Chicago the kids say, 'We're having hell right now.' We'll ask them, 'What if you die?'"

They'll say, 'I'd just as soon die as live.'"

That is why they have the gang wars. Life means nothing to them. They are in hell anyway. Death would be a relief to many of them, they think. Why? I'll tell you why. All of the frustrations of life are a direct result of the times that we decide to take over the reins of our lives.

One night an old preacher, near eighty, said to me, "Dr. Hyles, would you pray with me?"

We knelt at the altar of a big tent; nobody was there but the two of us. He began to pray, with tears falling in the sawdust. He prayed, "Dear heavenly Father, I hate flour."

I thought, "That's not in the Westminster Catechism."

He said, "Dear Lord, I hate flour. Oh, I hate flour!"

I thought, "Good night, the fellow is senile."

He said, "Dear God, I hate baking powder. Oh, I hate baking powder."

I looked at him while he was praying. His eyes were filled with tears; tears were dropping on the sawdust. He kept on praying. "Dear Lord, I hate shortening. Oh, I hate shortening. Dear Lord, I hate salt. Oh, I hate salt!"

I watched him while he prayed. I didn't bow my head any more. I figured that somebody ought to watch.

Then all of a sudden, he lifted his hands toward Heaven and a smile came across his face while his eyelids were still shut and he said, "But, dear God, You put them all together, mix them up, and put them in the oven, and I sure do like hot biscuits."

I understood what he meant. He was giving me a lesson in Romans 8:28, *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."*

Beloved, when you give you hands and your eyes to Him and you do what He wants you to do with every member of your body, it all works out okay. There are kids who come to my office and say, "I'll do whatever God wants me to do. Brother Hyles, if the Lord tells me what to do, I'll do it. I'll do what you say if God speaks to your heart." They never come back again with broken hearts. They never come again wanting to die. Why? They have found that the secret to the Christian life is doing what He would have them do and being what He would have them to be. Everything then works out right.

That is one reason why I don't fret a great deal. I am going to Detroit after a while. Tomorrow morning, tomorrow night, and Tuesday I preach at the Midwestern Baptist College in Pontiac, Michigan. The streets will be glazed outside, I guess. As bad as the weather is, I'm sure the runways will be glazed. I will be taking off before midnight, God willing, from O'Hare Field. I do not fret about it. If He wants to still this body in death, that is His business. This is His body. If He wants to hush these lips and still these eyes, that is His business. I am His. I was flying to Detroit one day, and a lady beside me said, "Do you fly often?"

"Yes, I fly often."

"Do the engines always look like the one here on the right?"

I looked out and it was on fire. She said, "Is that the normal way they look?"

"No, ma'am, do you see the one on the end that is not burning? That is the normal way."

"Is something wrong?"

"Yes, something is wrong."

The stewardess came running down the aisle of the plane and locked herself in the rest room. The pilot came on the P.A. and said, "Engine #2 is on fire. We are going to land just as soon as possible in the Metropolitan Airport."

I looked down and there were fire engines lined up along the runway. I said to the fellow on the other side of me, "See all those fire trucks down there?"

"Yeah, yeah, yeah!"

"They have us in mind. They are going to free us."

"Why aren't you nervous?"

Now, I will be honest with you. I would rather live than die. (When we finally landed, I had enough strength for them to carry me off!) I told him and I will tell you, once you give your life to Christ, you are His. It is up to Him to take care of you. Because your body is His, you are not your own.

I can also find life's purpose when I let Him have what is His own. I want to fulfill my purpose in life. I want to say with Paul, "I have finished the course." When I lay down the Bible, walk out of the pulpit for the last time, and somebody else stands where I stand and somebody else sits where I sit, I want to be able to say, "I have finished the course. He had something for me to do while I was there, and I did it." What else matters?

You knelt at the altar or in your living room and said, "I want Christ as my Saviour." From that moment forward, you have not belonged to yourself.

You say, "Well, I haven't decided yet whether I ought to get baptized or not." I have news for you. It is not your choice.

You say, "I will decide soon if I will get baptized." You do not have a right to decide. He has already decided for you. If you don't obey and get in that water, you will be rebelling against the will of God. That is not your body, it is His. It is not your right to decide; it is His right to decide. Get out of your seat, get down the aisle, get up in the baptistery and follow Christ! Why? He said to do it! It does not matter what you think about it.

"Well," you say, "I haven't decided whether to join a church or not." Join anyhow, whether you have decided or not. Why? He has decided it. It is not your business; it is His.

You say, "I can't decide what church to join." You don't have a right to decide. I often hear some entertainer say, "Tomorrow is Sunday. Go to the church of your choice." His talking is unscriptural! You don't have a right to go to the church of your choice. You have to go to church of His choice. Let me ask you some questions: Have you been driving your own car? Have you been deciding what you read? Have you been deciding what you say and where you go? You are a thief! You are not your own.

"Brother Hyles, wouldn't you ever like to curse?"

"I might, but I don't have a tongue."

"Do you ever think you would like to dance?"

"Maybe so, but I don't have any feet."

"Do you ever think you would like to hear some dirty music?"

"Maybe so, but I don't have any ears."

"Do you ever think you would like to read a dirty magazine or watch a dirty tv program?"

"Maybe, but I don't have any eyes."

"Do you ever think you would like to play cards?"

"Maybe, but I don't have any hands; they are His! I am not my own!"

5. Seven Bible Valleys

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Psalm 23:4

I met a lady on the airplane several years ago. I was flying, as I do every week. I was coming from Cleveland, Ohio, to Chicago. I sat down in a seat next to the aisle. The seat next to me was empty, and a lady was sitting in the next seat. I guess she was about my age. I spoke to her, and then I got out my Bible and began to read. When she saw the Bible, she began to weep. She said nothing for awhile, but when she saw the Bible she began to weep. She said, "Mister, when you get through with that Bible, can I read it?"

"Lady, I have two others in my briefcase. You can have one of them." I took out a Bible and gave it to her. She began to thumb through it. I could tell she couldn't find what she wanted. I said, "May I help you?"

"I want to read the **twenty-third Psalm**."

I said, "Let me read it to you." So I opened my Bible to **Psalm 23** and began to read it, as tears streamed down her face and her lips began to quiver. I said, "You have a broken heart, don't you?"

She said, "Yes, my father is dying in Houston, Texas. I don't know if I will get there before he dies. I love the **twenty-third Psalm**."

In just a few moments, I told her about the Shepherd of that Psalm, and she received Him as her Saviour.

I guess of all the passages of the Bible that have comforted the hearts of troubled souls, strengthened the backs of weary travelers and encouraged the spirits of broken hearts, the **twenty-third Psalm** has done it the most.

"The Lord is my shepherd...", as the little girl said, "and that's all I want."

The Psalmist goes on to say, and here is the text, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."* Why? *"For Thou art with me."*

There are seven great valleys in the Bible: Siddim, Eschol, Kidron, Elah, Achor, Gehenna and Jezreel. I want you to look at each of these. I want you to notice this morning that in each of these valleys God is with us. *"Yea, though I walk through the valley...I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."*

I. The Valley of Siddim

This is the valley of the slime pits. Why? The valley of Siddim is on the very spot where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were. You recall the awful story in the Bible of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. God looked down and saw the wickedness of those wicked and vile cities and said, "I am going to rain fire and brimstone on them." This is a valley where sin abounded. This represents a valley in our lives, the valley of sin.

Do you know that when you go out to the nightclubs and the pubs and go into the depths of sin, God still loves you and God is still there? Do you know that when you go down to the very bottom of

sin and taste the last drop in the cup of the dregs of sin, God is there? Do you know that when you have gone to the bottom and no one else cares and you have spent all and have begun to be in want, God is there? When you come to yourself and have nobody to go to and you arise and say, "I will arise and go to my Father," God is always there.

God is here this morning. If you are not saved, He knocks on the door of your heart. He wants to be your Saviour. He wants to forgive every sin. He wants to come into your life. He wants to write your name in Heaven. He wants to make you His child. He wants to take you to Heaven when you die. God wants to make you a new creature. God wants to send His Holy Spirit to indwell you. God wants to say to you, "Your sins are forgiven." God wants to come into your life.

When I finished preaching recently, a little lady came to me and met me at the office. She was a lovely girl. As the world counts attractiveness, I think she would have been called beautiful. She said, "Could I see you for a minute, Mister?"

I said, "Yes, come in." She came into my office, was seated, and said, "I am what you call a 'call girl.' I wear the nicest of furs." She said that several men had gone together and rented an apartment for her. They bought her nice clothes and a Lincoln Continental. They would give her anything she wanted. When those wicked men would want her, they would come to her apartment, one after the other, to commit sin.

She said, "I'm on dope. I don't have anybody that loves me. I heard you preach and I heard you say that God loves everybody. Brother Hyles, do you think that God could forgive me?"

I said, "Why, of course, He will forgive you. He loves you. He gave His son for you. God gave His Son for sinners. He died for you. Jesus went to the cross for sinners. Jesus came to earth for sinners. Jesus dipped His own soul into hell for sinners. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit for sinners."

It does not matter where you are this morning or how deep in sin you have gone; He is there. Are you in the valley of Siddim? Are you in the city of Sodom this morning? Are you in the city of Gomorrah in deep awful sin? Have you gone to the bottom? Is your life empty and friendless? Are you without anybody who seems to care? He says, "I am there."

This morning He knocks on your door and says, "If you will just trust Me as your Saviour, I will forgive you your every sin. I will make you My child. I will write your name in Heaven." Oh, dear unconverted friend, if you are in the valley of Siddim, come to Christ this morning!

II. The Valley of Eschol

Eschol is located just inside the Promised Land. Do you recall the grapes of Eschol? The Israelites came to the door of the Promised Land at Kadesh-Barnea and they appointed twelve spies. Those twelve spies went over into the Promised Land. They said it was a land that flowed with milk and honey. They brought back some grapes that were so big that it took two men to carry one bunch. Those were the grapes of Eschol. They were gotten in the valley of Eschol, one of the seven great valleys of the Bible.

What is the valley of Eschol? Eschol is where the Jews made the decision of their life. It was at Eschol where they had to decide, "Shall we go forward or shall we go backward?" It was in the valley of Eschol where they decided, "Shall we obey God, or shall we go back into the wilderness?" It was at Eschol that they decided, "Shall we be at our fullest or shall we be less than we ought to

be?" The Valley of Eschol is the valley of decision. Yea, though you walk through the valley of Eschol, He is there in that valley of decision!

This week 103 people came by my office. Of those, at least 50% were young people with decisions to face. Oh, my young friends, right now you are in the valley of decision. Oh, God wants to make your choices! A young girl came by the other day, and I knew what she ought to do. I knew that she ought to give her entire life to God, but I was afraid she would not do it. I got on my knees by my office door and I said, "Oh, God, don't let her make a mistake."

Whenever you come to the valley of Eschol, the valley of decision, always do what God wants you to do. Ask God to help you. Ask God to lead you. Do His will!

III. The Valley of Kidron

The valley of Kidron is called now the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is the valley just outside the east wall of the city of Jerusalem. It is the valley between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. The valley of Kidron is a big, deep valley.

How many of you have been to the Holy Land? Several of you have. Do you recall what is mainly in the valley of Kidron between the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem? There is a cemetery there. Ever since the time of Josiah, it has been a cemetery. Samson is buried there. Samuel, I think, is buried there. James is buried there. Absalom is buried there. Many others are buried there in this cemetery in the valley of Kidron. This is the valley of suffering. David says, *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."*

God is in the valley of Siddim, the valley of sin. God is in the valley of Eschol, the valley of decision. He is also there in the valley of suffering.

This morning, in the service, there are people who think the sun will never rise. There is a young man in this service this morning and who has cancer all through his body. He is taking radium treatments. He is a fine young man who grew up in our church. He has a wife and a little baby. As I was saying, there are many here this morning that are in the valley of suffering, but our Lord is also there in the valley of suffering.

Have you come to the place in your life where you are at the bottom of sin? If you face a decision, if you are in the valley of decision, God is there. If you face suffering and heartache, our Lord is there.

A young preacher boy said to me the other night, "Brother Hyles, I am too critical."

I hate criticism. I mean it. There is nothing so unbecoming a child of God as criticizing. There is nothing as wicked as complaining, being critical, gossiping, etc. It is pride at its height. It is you putting down another. Folks do not need to be put down; they need to be encouraged. I often say on our radio broadcast, "This is not a broadcast with a kick in the pants but with a pat on the back."

The young man asked, "How do you keep from being critical?"

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, you preach hard against sin. How can you help but be critical of people? How do you look at your people when they go into sin?"

I said, "I look at them the same way you look at your child when you know he has done wrong. It is the same way a mother looks at a child who has a high fever at night. The mother rushes to the bedside; she hates the germ, hates the sickness and hates the thing that would wreck the child, but she loves the child and tenderly watches him." I told him, "The other night I was asleep and began to dream. I dreamed about two couples in our church. (I won't call their names.) I know they have burdens and sorrows. I dreamed about them. I woke up crying, 'Oh God, help them. Oh God, help them.' I woke up, got down on my knees and prayed for them and their need for help."

Oh, young people, maybe you do not know about this valley yet. To you life may be one big ball game. To you life is one big laugh. It will not always be that way. The day is going to come when you will have heartaches, burdens, problems and valleys. You will be in the valley of Kidron, the valley of heartache. When those days come, our Lord is there!

IV. The Valley of Elah

Elah is where David looked out and heard Goliath shout his challenges across the valley. David with his slingshot met Goliath in the valley of Elah. There he felled Goliath.

In the valley of Elah, the valley of battle, God is there. In the valley of decision, God is there. In the valley of suffering, He is there. In the valley of battle, He is there.

"What do you mean, Preacher?"

Is some battle or some sin about to conquer you? Is there one temptation you feel you cannot resist? God is there. ***"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*** I Corinthians 10:13

There is a young lady here this morning who has been into sin. She is just a teenager. I think very much of her. Her life was about ruined. I have been meeting with her and trying to help her. She has been facing the tempter. Every day she is facing two or three temptations to which she has been yielding. I am trying to help her. Each day I pray with her, encourage her and try to help her.

Do you go back to the job since you have been saved and find they are laughing at you and making fun of you? Lean heavy upon God. In the valley of battle, He is there!

V. The Valley of Achor

Achor is the valley of punishment. Achor is the valley where Achan was stoned to death. The Lord said, "Do not take anything that is in Jericho."

Achan saw a coat and said, "My wife sure would like to have that coat." The Lord said not to take anything. He knew he shouldn't. Achan saw \$185 and said, "I sure could use that." Achan took the money and the coat, and sin came into the camp. Then the battle of Ai was lost. Joshua called all the people and cast lots. The lot fell on Achan. God said, ***"Take him out to the valley and stone him to death."*** They stoned Achan and his wife and his children. They named that place the valley of Achor (the valley of chastening).

You know, one of the sweetest things about being a Christian is getting spanked.

When I was a child my mother spanked me. She and I lived alone. Earlyne, eight years older than I, was married, so she moved away. My dad had left home. Mother and I were left together. If Mother had turned her back on me, there wasn't anybody else! We were very poor. I can recall when Mother would spank me. The spanking hurt, but it did not hurt the most. The thing that hurt the most was the broken fellowship. She would spank me and put me in the back bedroom on my bed, and I would cry. Then she would pull the door shut like she was gone. I thought mother was gone! I began to tip-toe (She told me not to get up, but since I thought she was gone, she wouldn't know that I was up) to look for Mother. When I could see her, I would say to myself, "She's still here!"

Even in the valley of chastening, the Lord is still there. He has to spank us, doesn't He? He has to take the rod of chastening and put it across our backs, but even when God has had to put us in the valley of chastening, spank us, put us in the hospital, cause us to lose a job, put us in the middle of a road in an automobile accident, or knock us down and spank us, it is always blessed because even in the valley of chastening, God is there!

In the valley of Siddim or sin, He is there. In the valley of Eschol or decision, He is there. In the valley of Kidron or suffering, He is there. In the valley of Elah or battle, He is there. In the valley of Achor or chastening, He is there.

VI. The Valley of Gehenna

Gehenna was the garbage dump of Jerusalem. There was a fire going on there all the time. When our Lord spoke about hell, He said there shall be "eternal Gehenna." In other words, there is going to be eternal fire there. That is the way it will be forever. For those of you who will die without God, I am calling this the valley of death. You have to die someday. *"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art there."*

One night I was called from my study in Garland, Texas, to a home in the Lakewood section of Dallas. One of our dear men was dying. I walked into the back room. He had heart trouble for many years, and he was near death.

I walked in and said, "How are you feeling?"

He whispered, "I thought I died last night."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"The prettiest nurse came by my room. I looked up and said, 'Ooooo, I must be in Heaven, 'cause there is an angel.'" He and I laughed and laughed. Soon he died, and in dying he said, *"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."*

You know, death is highly exaggerated. It is highly overrated. Death is overrated as an enemy. It is no enemy at all! Do you know why? He is there. Look, it matters not where you go if He is there. If you suffer, He is there. If you are tempted, He is there. If you are in battle, He is there. If you are facing decision, He is there. If you are facing death, He is there if you are saved!

VII. The Valley of Jezreel

The valley of Jezreel is important in the Bible because in that valley the great end-time battle shall be fought. Russia will come on the valley of Jezreel and fight against Palestine. Egypt will come from the south to the valley of Jezreel and fight against Palestine. China will come from the east to the valley of Jezreel and fight against Palestine. There the armies of the world will be gathered together in the great end-time battle. Russia and her horses, a great cavalry, and the nations of the East and the North shall be gathered together in the valley of Jezreel against Palestine. All of a sudden, the Western powers, the United States, England and the revived Roman Empire will come and fight against Russia in the valley of Jezreel.

It is in the valley of Jezreel where there is found Mount Megiddo, from which comes the word "Armageddon." It is in the valley of Jezreel where the battle shall be fought. It is in the valley of Jezreel where the Antichrist shall rise up as the victor and conqueror of the entire world. The man of sin shall be king of all the world. The valley of Jezreel is where our Lord shall descend from Heaven and shall come back with His own people, coming back riding on white horses. He shall come back as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and forever we shall be with Him. Even in the valley of Jezreel He is there.

Thirty-five years ago last fall, as a little poor boy (if I had be in the First Baptist Church of Hammond, I would have been a "bus kid") I walked down the aisle of the Fernwood Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, and said, "Dear God, if You will have a poor little boy like me, I'll take You." I trusted Christ. From that day as long as I live, He will be there!

He said, *"I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."* There are five negatives there. "No, I will not never, never, no never, leave thee nor never forsake thee." It is bad English but it is good Greek. In Greek excessive negatives underline importance. He will never leave.

When I was an eleven-year-old boy, my drunkard dad came home at five o'clock one morning. I heard dad as he drove in and as he turned, he missed the driveway. He hit a tree and all the neighbors came out. I said "Dear Lord, why can't I have a daddy like everybody else?" Even then, Jesus was there.

When I was in World War II, I left home to go into the army. He was there! When I have faced the darkest hours of my life, He was there.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me." Isn't that wonderful!

Someone this morning who is in the valley of sin, come to Christ; trust Him as your Saviour. Somebody who is in the valley of decision, obey Him; do His will. Somebody who is in the valley of suffering, depend on Him. Somebody who is in the valley of chastening, just say, "Thank God. If He is spanking me, He must be there." Somebody who is facing death, realize that He is there. Realize, too, that He is coming!

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
O may I then in Him be found,
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne!

As long as there be a Heaven, as long as God lives, as long as the eternal God Who was and is and shall be forever, as long as God lives, He'll be with thee. In the valley or on the mountain top, He is there.

6. When Absalom Burned Joab's Farm

"Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come. Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire. Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire? And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? it had been good for me to have been there still: now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me. So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom." 2 Samuel 14:29-33.

David was the king of Israel. He had a handsome son whose name was Absalom. Absalom had his sights set on the kingdom. He wanted to take it prematurely. So Absalom decided he would rebel against his father.

In one of these times of strife between David and Absalom, David became angry with Absalom and expelled him from the land. Absalom fled. Later, he was allowed to return, but he could not return to the king's palace or the presence of David.

Absalom came upon an idea. He said, *"If I can get to Joab (David's top assistant) and talk to him, he will arrange a meeting between us."*

Absalom and Joab had adjoining land, so Absalom sent his servant over to Joab. The servant said to Joab, "The king's son wants to see you."

Joab refused to come. Absalom sent his servant again, who said, *"Joab, Absalom wants to see you."* Again, he wouldn't come.

Get the picture. The first time Absalom sent, Joab wouldn't come; the second time, Joab wouldn't come. Absalom devised a wicked plan. He called his servants together and said, *"Now fellows, Joab's fields and my fields are right next to each other. If you will set Joab's barley field on fire, he will see me."*

Absalom's servants went out and actually set Joab's barley field on fire. Joab came running to Absalom and said, "What in the world is going on? Why are they setting my fields on fire?"

Absalom said, "That was the only way I could get you to come. I sent my servants to you saying, 'Come, the king's son wants to talk to you,' but you didn't come. I sent my servant the second time to say, 'Come Joab, the king's son wants you to come to see him,' but you wouldn't come. Now I didn't want to set your barley fields on fire, but I felt I had to get your attention."

That is exactly what God does. There are many people who are sick in hospitals tonight who would not be there if they had come when God first said, *"Come."* There are many babies buried tonight

in babyland who would still be in Mother's crib and in her arms if Mom and Dad had come when the King's Son had invited them with the first or second invitation.

God had to burn the barley field. Of course, the baby is in Heaven, but God had to burn the barley fields. Why? He called once, and there was no answer. He called again; still there was no answer. Men have been laid to rest before their time because their wives wouldn't come to Christ. The Holy Spirit said, "Come to the King's Son. Come to the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved."

The answer was, "No, not now."

The Holy Spirit came again and said, "Trust the Saviour and be saved.

You do not know what is going to happen. Come now."

The answer came, "No."

So the Lord came and said, "Okay, I'm going to take your husband." He burned the barley fields.

Many a wreck on the highway would not have taken place if the person who was injured or killed had come on the first invitation to the dear Lord Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is speaking to someone here tonight, someone who is here for the first time. You are sitting in this service tonight. You have never felt the call of God before; yet right now the Holy Spirit says, "You ought to be saved. You have to die. You have to face God. You will go to Heaven or go to hell." He knocks on your door and says, "Come to the King's Son."

You say, "No."

He comes once again and says, "Won't you come to the King's Son?"

You say, "No."

Then God will look down and say, "Okay, angels, go down and set his house on fire. Put him in a car wreck. Put him in the hospital. Take his baby on to Heaven. He has said 'No' to Me long enough. Burn the barley fields!"

Now you listen to me. If God has ever called you one time to be saved, you better answer His call before He burns your barley fields.

Now there are three things for which the Lord burns barley fields, and I want to talk to you about them.

I. In the Matter of Salvation

God calls. He calls again. Then He burns the barley fields. There is the screeching of brakes on the highway, the shedding of blood across the pavement, the roaring of the police car and ambulance, the screaming of loved ones, the gathering of a crowd, the stopping of cars, the clanging of steel, the rushing to the hospital, and the doctor being called. There is danger. It is a life-and-death proposition. It all happened because a person would not come when God called the first time.

Listen to me, dear friends, if you are not saved, God is not going to put up with your neglecting His salvation.

You say, "Well, it's just not the time."

Listen to me. Just as sure as I am standing behind this pulpit, God is going to come into somebody's home who hears the Gospel tonight and He will take out a precious little baby. There will be the bronze shoes on the mantle and a picture upon the hearth. You will have memories, sweet memories. It did not have to happen. If you had come to God when the Holy Spirit called, it could have been avoided.

God called, "Come to My Son."

You said, "No!"

God called again and said, "Come to My Son."

Again you said, "No!"

The Lord said, "Okay, I must burn your barley fields."

When I was pastoring in east Texas, one day I knocked on a door. A fellow opened the door and I said, "My name is Jack Hyles. I am the Pastor of the Grange Hall Baptist Church out on highway 43."

He said, "You leave me alone! I don't have any use for you! Get out of my house!"

I went back the second time and again he said, "No." It wasn't long until his son, fifteen years of age, was out hunting. As he was crawling through a barbed-wire fence, his shirt got hung on the fence. He tried to pull himself loose by jerking, and in so doing, pulled the trigger and shot himself. He died instantly! Guess who came to church the next Sunday morning. You guessed it. His dad did. The dad got saved. Why? God burned the barley fields. Guess who else got saved. His other got saved. Why? God burned the barley fields.

Are you saved tonight?

You say, "No, I'm not saved. No, I'm not ready yet."

There is more to it than that, sir! Get ready! God is not going to let you hear the Gospel over and over and over again, trample under your feet His precious blood, say "No" to His Son and do insult to His Spirit and the Gospel of truth. God won't allow it. Don't be surprised. God will call. God will call again. God will call again, but the day is going to come when God will set the barley fields on fire. Then you will say, "Hey, why is the fire here?"

The Lord will say, "Well, I finally got you here, didn't I? I wanted to get you without setting your field on fire, but I couldn't. I had to set your fields on fire. I had to put you in the hospital with a heart attack. I had to put your baby in the grave. I had to allow you to have a car wreck and have your wife killed. I had to cause you to lose your job. I had to give you cancer."

I knew a man whom we tried to get saved, but we could not. He was rough. What happened? He got cancer. God burned the barley fields. I went by one night. I went back to the room. Nobody

thought he would get saved, but he was saved that night before he died. God called one time, and the man said, "No." God called the second time, and the man said, "No." After awhile God burned his barley fields.

Don't let your baby be buried in babyland before you come to God. Don't wait till your boy shoots himself before you come to God. Don't wait till you have cancer and are flat on your back before you come to God. Don't wait until you have a serious car wreck. Don't wait until your health is gone. Come to God and serve Him before He burns the barley fields.

By the way, there is something else that God does too. First, God calls and we say, "No." God calls again, and we say, "No." God burns the barley fields. The sad thing is that a lot of folks will not come even when the barley fields are burned. What does God do then? He draws a deadline. He says, "Okay, I called you and you said, 'No.' I called you again and you said, 'No.' I called you again, and I burned the barley fields; you still said, 'No.' Okay, you have crossed the line."

God says of you, "Okay, let him go unto his idols. Let him alone. My Spirit will not always strive with men. Forget it! You have put it off too long. You have crossed the line."

"Oh, now wait a minute, dear Lord, save me." Then it is too late. Why? You said "No" long enough. The very idea of your thinking you can always say "NO" to God, turn your back on soul winners, refuse the Gospel and turn your back on sermons; then when you have about two hours left you say, "Okay, God, I'll come to You."

He will say, "Why, years ago you crossed the deadline."

A lady walked into the service one night when I was preaching in Garland, Texas. I preached that night on "The Unpardonable Sin." I had announced it on the radio. This lady came and sat on the left. After the service was over, she came down the aisle. I did not know her. She said, "You are my favorite preacher."

"Are you saved?" I asked her.

"No, I can't be, but you are my favorite preacher."

"Are you saved?"

"No, I can't be saved."

"Why?"

She said, "Brother Hyles, there was the day when I felt the call of God. There was the day when I went to church and I felt conviction. I knew I ought to be saved. The Spirit of God kept pounding in me and pounding in me and pounding in me. I said, 'No.' Then there was one day when I never felt the call again. Now," she said, "Brother Hyles, I have my radio set on KSKY, 6.60 on the dial. Every morning the first voice I hear is yours. My clock is set at 6:05, and every morning I wake up and hear your voice. I love to hear you preach, but for years I have not felt the call of God. I waited too late! I waited too late! I WAITED TOO LATE! Tell people to answer God's call in a hurry!"

God will call once and you'll say, "No." God will call again and you will say "No." God will finally say, "Okay, I'll burn the barley fields." If you continue to say "No," the Spirit like a dove will take Its flight. That tender sweet call of salvation shall suddenly be gone.

I have seen folks come to this church who during the invitation would reach out and take a hold of a pew and shake while rejecting Christ. I have seen people come to an invitation time and tremble like they had the palsy. I have watched them while the invitation was being given and they said, "No!" Now I have seen those same folks come year after year after year. Now they sit while dozens are being saved, but they feel nothing. What is it? They have crossed the line!

You say, "Well, I don't believe it."

Then you do not believe the Bible. God says His Spirit will not always strive with man. If you are not converted, you are marching toward the line. God has put a line before you. If you do not get saved before you cross that line, you will die and go to hell. In God's name, wake up before you get to the line!

II. In the Matter of Service

You felt the call to preach one time, didn't you? You wouldn't preach, would you? God called again, didn't He? You wouldn't preach, would you? God had burned the barley fields. Why? He called you one time; He called the second time; then He burned the barley fields.

A fellow in Garland, Texas, came to me one day and said, "God called me to preach."

I said, "Okay, surrender."

"I can't. I have a baby to feed. I have a wife to feed."

"Surrender! God will take care of you and your family."

"I can't afford it! Who will feed the child?"

"God will feed the child."

"I can't do it."

One night he came home to find that the child had a high fever. The baby did not live through the night. We stood together beside that casket that held the lifeless form of that little child and the father said, "I don't have a child to feed now. I guess I can surrender to Him now."

What happened? God called once; God called twice; then he burned the barley field.

I was once in a revival campaign in Texas. I stayed in the pastor's home. I wanted to be alone to pray awhile. I asked the pastor if I could be alone for awhile. He said, "Sure. Go to my prayer closet." I walked into his prayer closet. As soon as I walked in, I saw a set of braces. They were right there in the prayer closet. I went back and I said, "Pastor, what are these?"

"That is my altar."

"Why?"

He said, "God wanted me to preach, and I would not do it. God called me again. I would not do it. God gave my little boy polio. Dr. Hyles, whenever my boy goes around the house, he hobbles. Every time he hobbles, he reminds me to stay in the Word of God. Those were his first little braces."

When those were taken off and new ones were put on, I put them in my prayer closet. Every time I kneel, they remind me of what I had to pay and what my boy had to pay because I wouldn't do the will of God."

Listen to me. Listen! Has God called you to preach? Preach! Has God called you to teach a class? Teach a class! Listen, there are people in this room whom God has called to be bus workers and you know it! You know God has called to be bus captain. God has called once; God has called twice; He will set the barley fields on fire one of these days. Yes, He will. You know you ought to be a soul winner. You feel conviction every time I say that you ought to win souls to Christ. It is everybody's job. It is up to everyone to win folks to Jesus. You have felt the call and said, "No, I'm too timid." You have felt the call and said, "No, I don't have the personality. No, I'm not outgoing enough. No, I don't have time yet." Look out! God is about to burn your barley fields.

God means business! There is a living God Who will not put up with your saying "No" to His will and "No" to His call. We have the idea that God is just an old grandfather who watches over everything and sprinkle holy dust on everybody. That is not true. God is a God of vengeance, indignation and revenge. God is a jealous God. You won't say "No" to God's will very long and get by with it. If you feel the call of God to preach the Gospel, do it before He burns the barley fields. If you feel the call of God to get saved, do it before He burns the barley fields. He calls once; He calls again; then He burns the fields.

III. In the Matter of Sin

We seem to have the idea that our barley fields will never burn. We have the idea that we are different. We have the idea that it could not happen to us! We have the idea that God will never do it to us. We say, "He will do it to others, but not to me." Yet, He is a holy and righteous God Who cannot wink at sin. When He hears the rejection of people who hear the call from sin and live lives unto themselves, He calls once and says, "Come out of sin!" Again He calls; then He will burn the barley fields.

You will be in some dark room of a hospital and look up to God and say, "Dear God, I do trust You now." It may be that a little child will be taken, or the person you love as much as you love your own life. You will never see the child or that loved one until you get to Heaven. The Lord didn't want to take that baby away. The Lord didn't want to take the loved one. He didn't want to take you child. God didn't want you to have to look at that brace all your life. Yet He had to do it!

You know, as a pastor I never like to see the barley fields burn, but I would rather have the barley fields burn than not have you come to the Son of the King. Jesus comes tonight. Are you lost? Come and be saved. Jesus says, *"Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* Have you had a soul winner come by your house? Have you had him by twice? Look out! The barley fields are about to be set on fire. I don't want the dear Lord to come and have to hurt you. He will reach down and take the most precious possession you have from this earth. I do not want the Lord to reach down in one of those little cribs. I do not want you to have to face that. I do not want God to reach down and put cancer inside your body. I want you, when you hear the sweet call of God, to come to Him before He burns the barley fields.

A young lady in Texas was called to be a missionary. She would not surrender. God called again. She said, "I'm having too much fun." One night as she was driving down the highway with a gang of kids, a drunk pulled out in front of her car and hit them head-on. She was killed immediately. God called once; God called twice; then He burned the barley field.

I know a young man in east Texas who wouldn't come to God. He was a talented fellow. God called him to be saved. God called him again. Suddenly one day, he was in a car wreck. His eyesight was taken. He has been blind ever since. He has served God ever since he got blind. God called once; God called twice; then He burned the barley fields.

Is God speaking to you about salvation? Are you called of God to teach a Sunday school class? Do you that God wants you to be a bus captain? Is God calling you into full-time service? Please heed the call while the call is tender and sweet.

"Hey, servants, go over and tell Joab to come over. Tell him that I, the king's son, want to see him."

"I'm one of the servants of Absalom, Joab, and Absalom wants to see you. Would you come over and see him?" There is no answer.

"Servant, did you go over and see Joab?"

"I did."

"Well, go again!"

"Hey, Mr. Joab! Absalom, the son of the king, wants to see you. He wants you to come and see him." Again there is no answer.

"What happened? Did he come?"

"I have not seen a sign of him at all."

"I want you to burn his barley fields."

Joab is sitting over there in his house, looks out and says, "Oh! My field is on fire. We worked hard to get that barley where it is now. We worked the field. We care for this crop. The barley is on fire. Absalom! Can I see you?"

Absalom says, "Yeah, that is what I had in mind. The only way I could see you was to burn your barley fields."

I have been preaching for a long time. I am only 45 years of age. I have seen a lot of people. I have preached to millions of people. I have preached a lot of sermons. I know what God does. I have seen it! I tremble whenever I see a person spurn the call of God. I tremble for what might happen. Whenever a person is called of God to preach or to serve Him in any capacity and says, "No, I won't do it," or whenever a person is in sin and says, "No, I won't come out," I tremble! In a quarter of a century of preaching I have learned that God calls once; God calls twice; then He burns the barley fields!

7. Why God Hides His Face From the Righteous

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer." Isaiah 54:7, 8.

Are you sitting here this morning as one who seems temporarily forsaken by God? Have you sought the will of God and found it evasive? Have you prayed and found your prayers bouncing back in your face? Have you ever come to the place in your life when you examined your heart and you honestly knew there was no gross sin in your life, you knew you were sincere and you knew you were willing to do God's will, yet when you came to God, it was as if He had turned His back on you and had hid His face from you?

It seems that God sometimes says to His people, "Don't inquire of Me. Just don't bother Me."

Often in the Bible God seems to hide His face. God hid His face from Cain. In Deuteronomy 31:17, 18 God said, *"I will hide My face from them."* In Deuteronomy 32:20 God said, *"I will hide My face from them."* In Job 13:24 Job said, *"Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face?"* In Psalm 13:1, David said, *"How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?"* In Psalm 44:24 David asked, *"Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face?"* In Psalm 88:14 David asked the Lord, *"Why hidest Thou Thy face from me?"* It seems that David lived in constant fear that God would once again turn His face from him.

The worst thing about hell is that God has turned His face from those who are there. God's presence is not there. I do believe that hell is fire. I have no patience with these people-be they preachers, evangelists or theologians-who say that hell may or may not be fire. Hell is fire because God says hell is fire! However, the worst thing about hell is that God is not there.

God has hidden His face. There is eternal separation from God.

Do you recall the awfulness about the Garden of Eden? When Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid themselves from God. Sin had separated them from God. I think that is the worst thing about the cross. Jesus prayed a prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, *"Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done."* Perhaps the cup that He hated to bear was the cup of the sins of all the world. The Father would notice that the Son was bearing our sins, and being a holy and righteous God and not willing to look upon sin, He would turn His back upon His Son. The Son of God, Jesus Christ Himself, between Heaven and Hell, was alone. The Father had hidden His face from Him.

It is easy to understand why God would hide His face from Cain. He had sinned against God and killed his brother. It is easy to understand why God would hide His face from David. David committed the sins with Bath-sheba and Uriah. Yet, why would God sometimes come to His people when they are not in sin and hid His face? Every person in this house this morning has come to this place. You pray every day. You read your Bible. You come to church. You love God. Yet for some unknown reason, you do not feel as you once felt. Some say, "I feel like God has turned His back on me." Sometimes, God does hide His face from us. Why? Why would God hide His face from a person who is trying to serve Him? I think I know why. There are three reasons to which I call your attention this morning.

I. He Wants to Keep Us Closer to Him.

Did you know that one can get so busy building a school that he is not as close to God as he should be? Brother Helton, you can get so busy as Registrar of the school that God will say, "I wish you would spend more time with Me. I wish you would get closer to Me. When you got saved, you didn't have all the things to do you have now. You used to spend more time with Me."

So God turns His face and Mr. Helton says, "Hey, Lord, where are you?"

The Lord says, "I'm not going to tell him where I am. I'm going to let him fret for awhile."

My mother used to go downtown a lot. The biggest day in the week was when we went downtown. We'd get on the streetcar and go downtown Dallas. We went to Grand and Silver's Five and Ten Cent Store. They had the best malted milks you have ever tasted. Mama would say, "Son, you stay close to me now." So I'd stay close. Oh, their popcorn always smelled so good. McCrory's was right next door and Kresge's was right down the street. I'd smell that popcorn, and I'd say, "Mama, could I have some popcorn?"

Mama would say, "Son, I don't have any money for popcorn."

So I'd sit around and every now and then somebody would drop some popcorn, and I'd catch it before it would hit the floor. Mama would say, "Son, you stay close to me."

I'd say, "Okay," and then I'd smell that candy. There's nothing like a candy counter at a five-and-dime! (I don't go around them to this day. I used to couldn't afford it money-wise; now I can't afford it stomach-wise!)

Mother would say, "Son, stay close to me."

I'd say, "Okay," but I would keep drifting away. Then all of a sudden, I'd say, "Mama? Mama!" Then I'd holler, "MAMA! MAMA!" There were a thousand mothers who would say, "Yes?" A lot of "Mamas" were there, you know.

I'd say, "Mama, Mama, I want my Mama!" I'd find out later what she'd done. Do you know what she had done? She had hidden herself. She hid behind a counter and let me cry awhile. Then all of a sudden she jumped out and said, "Now then, are you going to stay close to Mama?" I'll tell you one thing! My little hand hung on to her skirt the rest of the day. I never got away. I knew what it was to be away from Mama. I knew what it was not to be close to her. I knew what it was to be downtown Dallas, and all I could see were knees. I was just a little, short fellow. (Nowadays, you can see knees if you're a big tall fellow.) I'd say, "Mama! Mama! Mama!" I knew what it was to be away from Mother with no car fare to get back home. I would think, "Oh, what will I do? I guess I'll just die down here. I have no way to get home and nothing to eat and my mama's gone!" So, when she returned I would hold tightly on to her skirt. That's what the Lord does sometimes.

God says, "I want to stay close to Me." I don't mean that you have gone into deep sin. I don't mean that you have killed anybody lately. I don't mean that you have gotten drunk or been lustful. I don't mean that you have cursed and lied. I don't mean that you have cheated and stolen. You have been doing good. You are busy with the choir. You are busy with the school. You are busy with the bus. You are busy with the visitation. You are busy with the church work. You are busy with the work of God, with the Sunday school department. Yet, you have forgotten that the whole purpose of the

Christian life is that God might redeem to Himself a peculiar people who will fellowship with Himself. You are so busy.

The Lord says, "Okay, I'm going to turn My back."

We say, "Oh, God, where are You?" We go to the pastor and say, "I don't feel like I used to feel."

After awhile the Lord says, "Okay, I'm going to come back now and turn My face toward you."

Then you say, "Oh, Lord, it is so good to see Your face again! I thought you would never come back!"

That is what the Lord means when He says, "I turned my back on you for a little while that I might redeem you with everlasting mercy. I have hidden My face from you for a moment that I might have you all the time."

Let me ask you a question this morning, young people. Do you know you can get so busy even in a Christian school that you forget to be close to God?

Dr. Billings and faculty, it is easy for a Christian to have the right skirt length and the right hair length, to teach scholarship, to require the boys and girls to say, "Yes, sir," and "Yes, ma'am," and yet lose God's presence. That can happen even though there are no riots or revolution. It is easy for us fundamental people who walk straight and live right to get so busy in our right things that we forget to stay close to God. Sometimes the Lord comes to a school teacher behind the desk and says, "I am going to hide My face awhile. She is not talking to Me enough. She is not close enough to Me."

Let me say, dear friends, the thing that God wants more than He wants anything else in this world is for His children to walk with Him.

When Becky was a little girl about five, I said, "Becky, do you want to go to the grocery store?"

Becky said, "Oh, goody, goody, goody! I get to go to the grocery store with Daddy. Goody, goody, goody!"

When she got to be about seventeen, I said, "Do you want to go to London, Paris, Jerusalem, Nazareth, Jericho, Capernaum, Rome, Athens and Cairo with Daddy?"

She said, "No, I want to stay here with Tim." Who is Tim? He was her boyfriend.

Becky was home visiting not long ago and I was leaving the house. She said, "Where are you going, Dad?"

I said, "I'm going up to the store."

Becky said, "Can I go? Can I go?" What joy it gave to me!

The dear Lord says, "Dr. Billings, I can recall when you were a young Christian. You would go with Me to the store and we would talk and fellowship. You didn't have to take care of all the faculty in those days. You didn't have to take care of the schools, Baptist City, the carpets, the lockers, the

colors of the walls, the wallpaper, the foundation, the ordering of the furniture and the chairs and all of that." I think that the Lord sometimes says, "I wish old Bob Billings would get closer to Me."

He could say about me, "Hyles gets so busy traveling and trying to save the country, to stir the preachers, to get the people right, to get the job done and to get preachers on fire that I think I'll turn My back."

II. He Wants Us to Depend More on Him.

I have a sermon that I consider the best sermon I have. I preached it here and we had a great service. I preached it somewhere else and we had a great service. So one time I was in a hurry and I had about fifteen minutes to get from the airplane to the service. I ran to the pulpit and was huffing and puffing. (I needed a shave.) I said, "Lord help me. I'm going to preach the best one I've got because this one never has failed." I opened my Bible and said, "Now open your Bible to a certain-certain passage," and I started on the introduction. Do you know what? The Lord forsook me! I got in the middle of that sermon and I said, "Is this the same sermon?" I began to stutter and stammer. The people were wiping their eyes, not from tears, but from boredom. I thought, "Good night! I thought I was a pretty good preacher. I thought this was a pretty good sermon. This is the best one I've got. Boy, what if I had preached the worst one?" After I got through, I went to my room and I said, "Lord, what is wrong?"

The Lord seemed to say, "I had to turn My back on you a bit to let you know that it is not the sermon that gets the job done; it's walking with Me and depending on Me."

Oh, I wonder sometimes if we get to the place where we think "Well, we've got the machinery here at the First Baptist Church; we have the school; we have the church; we have the Sunday school," but we don't depend on God.

My dad was a big man. Oh, he must have weighed 235. He was a wrestler when he was young. The strongest man I ever met was my dad. Really!

We had an old clunk of a car. We would pay \$25 for a car. Sometimes it would run and sometimes it wouldn't. I used to say, "Daddy, can I 'dwive?" I'd get in my dad's lap. (I can still feel his hands around mine.) I'd put my hands on the steering wheel and drive and say, "Hey, Mama, I'm driving!" Daddy would hold his hands on mine.

Then I'd say, "I want to drive by myself."

"Now, son, let me help you. You're a good driver, but let me help you."

"I want to drive by myself."

"Now..."

"I can drive by myself, can't I, Mama?" She never answered for some strange reason.

Daddy would say, "Now you're a good driver, son, but you'd better let Daddy help you."

"I want to drive by myself!" We'd get out on some country road where the ditch wasn't too deep, and I'd say, "I want to drive by myself!"

Daddy would say, "Okay." So I'd drive by myself. All of a sudden, I'd see something that I wanted to see out at the side. When I'd look at that, we'd run off the road out in the field.

Then I said, "Daddy, help me drive! Help me drive!"

There are a lot of people this morning in this room who are the same way. Oh, there was a day when you said, "Oh, God, give me strength. Lord, help me to have the victory. I used to drink. I want victory over the bottle. I used to smoke. I want victory over the cigarette. I used to curse. Give me the victory." Every morning you got up and said, "Help me today, just today." The day came when you said, "I want to drive by myself."

The Lord said, "You had better let Me keep My hand on your hand."

"I want to drive by myself!"

I got a letter the other day from a fine man. He said, "I'm not much the kind to seek counsel."

He is a fool. Nobody ever gets to the place where he can drive by himself.

Solomon said, *"In the multitude of counsellors there is safety."* Proverbs 11:14; 24:6.

Young people, there is no wisdom in driving yourself. Somebody somewhere has gotten the idea that it is manly to say, "Nobody tells me what to do." It is not manly; it's idiotic!

One of our preacher boys said a few years ago, "I make my own decisions now."

Brother Jim Lyons asked him, "Why?"

"Well," he said, "I used to call Brother Hyles, but now I figure I'm big enough. I'm going to have to do it my own some of these days. I'm just going ahead and making my own decisions."

He did. He went in the ditch. His church died. He had to quit the church. It wasn't because he didn't call me; it was because he said, "I want to drive by myself." Nobody does that.

Oh, sometimes we drive and the Lord says, "Let Me hold your hand." The Lord holds our hands and everything is okay. Then we get a little cocky, don't we? Our only hope is that we let the hand of God be on our hand and let the hand of God direct and steer us.

Yes, sometimes the dear Lord turns His back. Recently I went to the pulpit with a burdened heart. My heart was broken, and I said, "God, I can't do it by myself. I can't make it by myself. I have to have Your help! You know, that is the time when we have our best services.

Other times someone has gotten up and said, "We are glad to have Dr. Hyles with us this morning. Dr. Hyles is pastoring the great First Baptist Church in Hammond."

I said to myself, "Yeah, that's me." "Dr. Hyles has written eighteen books." "Yeah, and nineteen coming up, too."

Then I got up to preach and stuttered and stammered. The Lord wants me to know that it is Dr. Jesus, not Dr. Hyles! The Lord wants me to know that it is His mighty arm, not my little weak arm. If only we could learn the lesson that our very sustenance depends on Him; our breath depends on

Him; our hope depends on Him; our strength depends on Him; our Sunday school depends on Him; our college depends on Him; our high school depends on Him. We have to say, "Oh, dear God, we are weak. We may be Dr. Hyles, Dr. Billings and Dr. Evans, but we are just a bunch of helpless, needy people that can do nothing without the hand of blessing of God!"

I used to play every kind of sport in the world. I am a "Jack-of-all-sports" and a master of none. I can play all sports fairly well. I am not an expert in any of them. I know all sports and follow them and can play most any sport. As a boy I would get up in the morning and play sports until it was so late in the evening that we couldn't see the ball. Then I would hear mother's voice, "Son, come in!"

"Just a minute, Mama!"

I said, 'Son, come in!'"

"Just a minute, Mama."

One night when I went in it was dark. "I'm home, Mama!" There was no mama. I was only about nine. "Mama, I'm home!" There was no mama. I said, "Mama. Mama? I want my mama!"

Mama had hidden in the closet. I cried and I cried. I was thinking that my mama was dead or that my mama had gone off or that my mama had been kidnapped. When she came out of that closet, she never looked so pretty. I said to myself, "I'm going to come home right away next time."

The Lord says, "Jack, I want you to depend on Me."

I say, "But Lord, I can make it by myself."

We are like the fellow sliding off the roof of a two-story house. He said, "Help me, Lord! Save me!" All of a sudden his britches caught on a nail on the roof. He said, "Never mind, Lord. I can make it by myself from now on." That's the way most of us are.

There were two fellows out in a life raft on the ocean. A storm was coming up and they were about to starve to death. One said to the other, "Do you ever talk to God?"

"I never have."

"One of us had better talk to God now! Dear Lord, I come to you now. I haven't prayed in fifteen years, and if You can get us out of this mess, I promise You that I won't bother You for another fifteen either!"

That is the way most of us are. God wants us to bother Him! God wants us to depend on Him! When you sing a solo, let His hand be on yours. When you preach a sermon, let His hand be on yours. When you face a trial, let His hand be on yours.

Sometimes the Lord turns His back, not because we have been in deep sin, but because we have just not been depending on Him like we should. It isn't because we've been out drinking and cursing and swearing; it's because we have not been depending on Him like we should.

III. He Wants to Make His Face Sweeter to Us.

Not only does God sometimes hide His face from the righteous because He wants us to walk a lot closer to Him and not only does He do it because He wants us to depend on Him, but God also does it to make His face sweeter to us. Never is His face sweeter than after the time when we haven't seen It for awhile. Have you ever come to pray and said, "Lord, why did You turn Your face from Me? Why did You hide Your face from me?"

Did you ever play hid and go seek? I can recall when Becky was a little girl we played hide and seek. I would say, "Okay, Becky, it's my time to go hide. You close your eyes." She put her little hands over her face and peeked through.

I'd say, "Hide your eyes." She squinted her eyes tightly behind her fingers pressed against her face. After awhile I said, "It's your time to hide."

Quickly she would cover her eyes with her hands and say, "Come find me!" She thought she had hidden from me because she covered her eyes.

The Lord sometimes turns His eyes from us. He hides His eyes and hides His face. Have you ever been to that place? I have. Oh, listen. I preached one time about six months ago when I was tired and weary and it seemed like there was so much to think about. I had dictated over a hundred letters that day. I had so many decisions to make, money to raise, bills to pay, property to buy and sell, things to approve, staff members to advise and help, and folks to counsel (I counseled about twenty people that day). I was so tired and weary. I went to preach, and oh, the freshness was gone. While I was preaching, I said, "Lord, where are the tears?" I tried to cry and couldn't. I went to my room and said, "Lord, I'm going to pray all night if I have to; I'm going to get the sweetness back! I must have the sweetness!"

The next morning I stood to speak. It came so easily. The tears came and the joy came. When I thought about Heaven, I wanted to shout. When I thought about hell, I wanted to weep. When I thought about the love of God, I wanted to clap my hands and praise the Lord. When I thought about sin, I wanted to fall on my face and confess. Oh, how sweet it is! How sweet is the face of Jesus!

A mother died leaving a father and a little boy. They had the days of waiting for the funeral. Finally the day came when the funeral was conducted. The father and the little boy sat at the front, as many have done so often in this auditorium. Their hearts were crushed, for in the casket lay the body of their wife and mother. They followed the hearse out to the cemetery and heard the thud of the dirt as it beat on the casket that held the body of Mama and wife. They soon got in the car and drove back home. There was an empty place at the table. The little boy was tucked in bed that night and the dad went to his room. Out of the darkness of the night the boy said, "Daddy, are you there?"

"Yes, son, I'm here."

The little boy missed his mother. He missed the kiss on his brow, the tuck of the cover, the pat on the cheek, and the "good night." Again he said, "Daddy, are you there?"

"Yes, son, I'm here."

Then out of the darkness came the voice of the little boy. "Daddy, could I come and sleep with you?"

"Why, of course, you may."

The little boy got out of bed, ran in, crawled in bed and turned his face toward his daddy. The daddy went off to sleep, but soon was awakened by his little boy's voice in the darkness, "Daddy! Daddy!"

"Yes, son?"

"Daddy, is your face turned toward me?"

"Yes, son."

"Would you hold my hand?" The daddy reached out and took the little boy's hand in his.

The little boy whimpered and said, "Daddy, it's so much easier when you hold my hand and your face is turned toward me."

I thought about that night when my dad left home, never to come again in our house. I recall when my mother said "good-bye" to my dad. Our home was broken. My dad went away, never to walk back over our threshold again. I slept back in the back room of our little three-room apartment. I can recall that night. A big clock was up on our wall. It was a big grandfather clock. Everytime it would strike the hour, I would be awake. When Dad was gone for the first night, I called my mama and said, "Mama, can I come and sleep with you?" I don't know why, it just made it easier.

Oh, ladies and gentlemen, that is why God sometimes in His mercy has to say, "I am going to turn My back on you for a few minutes. I don't want to, but I'm going to. I don't want to turn My back on you. I don't want to hide My face. You haven't been in deep sin. You just haven't been as close to Me as you ought to be. You don't depend on Me like you ought to depend on Me. Our fellowship isn't as sweet as it used to be." So the Father turns His back.

I look up and say, "Oh, God, why? Why? Are You ever going to turn back again?"

The Lord turns His face back again and His face is so sweet to me!

And He walks with me,
And He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own;
And the joys we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known.

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms!
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine
Leaning on the everlasting arms!

8. Saved, But Not Converted

"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou are converted, strengthen thy brethren." Luke 22:32.

I seek your sympathy this morning. Would you consider the problem that a preacher faces? A preacher has to try to sell three products to three different people at the same time: He tries to sell salvation to the unsaved, fellowship to the saved, and conversion to the follower. The Apostle Peter was saved in **John 1:40-42**, *"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jonah; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."* Andrew said, *"Peter, we've found the Messiah!"* He brought him to Jesus. That took care of the decision: Peter had to decide to be saved. He had to make the decision to be saved, but that was not the only decision he had to make. After he was saved, he still had to face another decision: What kind of Christian am I going to be? So he had to come to the place where he said, "I will leave everything and follow Jesus." People who have left everything and followed Jesus still have another decision that they must make: Will I be converted? You say, "Preacher, explain that," Okay, listen carefully and I'll explain.

I. Saved or Lost?

This world is divided into two groups: saved or lost; going to hell or going to Heaven; born again or without God. There were two thieves on the cross, one on either side of our Lord. One was saved; the other was lost. Two men went into the temple to pray. One was justified; the other was not. One was saved; the other was lost. **John 3:18**, *"He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already."* There are two classes of people as God sees them in this room this morning. Either you are saved, or you are lost. There is no "hope so." There is no "trying to be." There is no "maybe so." There is no "wishing so." Either you are saved and on your way to Heaven or you are lost and on your way to hell.

The Jews had what they called the "ten awesome days." These were the first ten days of the year. The Jews thought there were three books, and they thought the very, very good people had their names written in the very, very good book. These people were right with God. They were going to Heaven. The very, very bad people had their names written in the very, very bad book, so they thought, and they were going to hell. The Jews thought that since not very many folks were very, very good, and not many folks were very, very bad, most were in the center book, not good enough to be good and not bad enough to be bad. They had enough good to keep them from being bad and enough bad to keep them from being good. Most of their names were in the center book. During what they called the "ten awesome days" everybody could get right, confess all of his sins, and then get his name transferred from the middle book to the good book.

The person who owed debts would get all of his debts paid to get his name transferred from the center book to the very good book. He that had anything against his brother or anybody else would make it right to get his name transferred from the middle book to the very good book. If you were really in bad shape, and if you were listed in the very bad book, you could work mighty hard and get transferred from the bad book to the middle book. Then next year you could get from the middle book to the good book. However, the truth is, that is not so! There is no purgatory. There is a Heaven and there is a hell. You are going to Heaven or you are going to hell. The decision is yours. You have to decide. Nobody can do it for you. The priest cannot do it for you. The preacher cannot do it for you. You can join the church, but that will not do it.

You can get sprinkled, but that will not do it. You can get confirmed, but that will not do it. You can get dedicated, but that will not do it. You can turn over a new leaf, but that will not do it. You can live a good life, but that will not do it. You can tithe, but that will not do it. You can take communion, but that will not do it. You can take the Eucharist, but that will not do it. You must decide one question and one question only: Where would you go if you died this morning? Jesus died for you on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins. If you in faith will receive Him as your Saviour, God will impart to you His righteousness and will impart to Jesus your sins. Jesus will bear your sins, give you His righteousness and though you will still be a sinner, in the sight of God Almighty your record will be clear, clean, perfect, because the sins that you committed were imputed, imparted to Jesus and His righteousness covers you sins. Now I ask the question again: Where would you go if you died this morning?

You say, "I don't plan to die." That sixteen-year-old boy who went fishing over here in Tinley Park didn't either. He did not plan to die. You say, "Well, I don't intend on facing a tragedy." Neither did Governor Wallace plan to face a tragedy last week. He did not plan that he would be at the point of death before this Sunday. Tens of thousands of people will die tomorrow who are not planning today to die soon. You are going to hell or you are going to Heaven!

"I don't believe it!" you say. That does not change it a bit. You are going to hell or you are going to Heaven. Either you are saved or you are lost.

You belong to God or you belong to Satan. You are on your way to Heaven or you are on your way to hell. The difference is not to what church you belong, not what baptism you have experienced, not the good deeds you have done, but the question is this: What have you done with Jesus Christ Who paid the penalty for your sin?

You are saved or lost. Let us suppose this morning that you do face the issue. You say, "I am not saved. I know that I am a sinner. I am lost and I know that I am going to hell. This morning, I put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ. I receive Him now as my Saviour. Jesus, I trust You."

If you are not saved, in God's name, do it today! Do not take a chance on walking out those doors not prepared to meet God.

II. Spiritual or Carnal?

You face still another decision. A person's first decision is to be saved or lost. When a person is saved, he faces another decision: Will I be spiritual or carnal? After you come to Christ, the next decision you face is what kind of Christian you are going to be. Are you going to live after the flesh or after the Spirit? Are you going to live a carnal life or a spiritual life? Paul writes to the church at Corinth and says, *"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."* 1 Corinthians 3:1.

"Oh," you say, "I have decided to be saved. I am going to go to Heaven."

I know, but as soon as you are saved, you face another decision. You face being either a spiritual Christian or a carnal Christian. Are you going to come to Prayer Meeting on Wednesday night? Are you going to give God tithes and offerings, or are you going to rob God and be selfish and steal God's money? Are you going to read your Bible and become acquainted with God in His Word, or are you going to read it just every once in awhile and never learn much about the Bible? Are you going to bow your head and pray before you eat or are you going to dig in without praying just like any ungrateful pig? One fellow prayed, "Lord God of the Holy Ghost, the one who eats the fastest gets

the most." Many don't even do that. Are you going to eat without thanking God, or are you going to say, "God, thank You for the food You have provided, Amen"? Are you going to live as if there were no God?

Now I am not talking to unsaved people. I am talking to saved people. America is going to hell. America is headed for destruction this morning, not because of the Hollywood crowd, not because of the President, not because of the Supreme Court, and not because of the homosexuals, but because we have a generation of people whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life but they live lives as carnally as the unsaved. They are carnal Christians. Oh yes, they are saved. I am simply saying that our country is perishing because we have a generation of Christians who don't love God as much as the revolutionary loves Communism. We are perishing because we have Sunday morning Christians, half in and half out, half on and half off, half hot and half cold, lukewarm Christians who won't give God the tithe, who don't know what the church looks like on the inside on Sunday night, who don't come back on Wednesday night, who won't read one chapter a day out of God's blessed Book, who won't spend ten minutes a day in prayer with God, who won't bow their heads to thank God for the food. They are living carnal lives. Oh, you are going to Heaven, but you are carnal on your way to Heaven. God help you to come this morning, face to face, to the decision that every Christian needs to face: Am I spiritual or am I carnal?

Peter had to face that. Peter was already saved. That did not stop the decision that Peter had to face. After he got saved he had to make another decision: Will I stay in the fishing business or will I leave all and follow Jesus? Will I be a carnal kind of Christian, living like I used to live, or will I leave all?

This morning I was walking down the alley behind our church buildings. I met four or five young ladies (Pardon me, they were females) who had skirts on that made them look like harlots. You say, "Preacher, you are trying to preach somebody off." I never try to preach anybody on or off. I try to preach that which is true. All through these years I have done that, and I am not about to change at age 45. They looked like harlots. When they sit down, you can see things that are unlawful to see. When they stand up, you see things that nobody ought to see. I said to myself, "They are probably not Wednesday night people. I know they are probably visitors." Listen, I want you visitors to know how you ought to dress. Somebody somewhere ought to tell you to wear some clothes.

God help this sensual generation of ours! I said to myself as I walked down the alley, "How hard does a fellow have to preach? Nobody has preached any harder than I have on the fact that ladies should wear decent, modest clothing!"

In spite of that fact, listen, you can see as much walking down the alley as you used to see in burlesque shows! It's time God's people decide to be spiritual instead of carnal! It is no wonder that Communism is taking over! No wonder topless bathing suits are becoming the fad. No wonder homosexuality is running wild. People who are saved just live like the world, dress like the world, talk like the world, act like the world, wear their hair like the world, tell jokes like the world, read what the world reads, watch what the world watches, sing what the world sings, and say what the world says. Oh, people of God, give all to Christ! Live the spiritual life!

So Peter faced the question, "Shall I be carnal or shall I be spiritual?" He left all and followed Jesus.

III. Converted or Unconverted?

Peter has made two decisions. He has come down the road and found a fork in the road. "Shall I go this way and be saved or shall I go this way and not be saved?" He decided to be saved. Then all of a sudden, he finds another fork in the road. "Shall I be carnal and go this way or should I be spiritual and go this way?" He chose to be spiritual, but now he comes to yet another fork in the road-the choice of conversion or unconversion.

You say, "Pastor, what are you talking about? Isn't a person converted when he is saved?"

No, he is not converted when he is saved. Conversion should be a result of salvation, but it is not salvation. Let me illustrate it.

Back in World War II, I was a paratrooper. I used to jump out of airplanes. We jumped out of airplanes called C-46's and C-47's. Eighteen of us would jump. They had two engines; they were prop planes, of course. Back in those days, we had no jets.

After the war was over, I was out at Love Field, an airport in Dallas. I got on a plane, and they said, "Welcome aboard Delta Airlines DC-3 plane." I felt at home on that plane. We got up in the air, and I asked the stewardess, "Can I ask you a question? What kind of plane is this?"

She said, "DC-3. The pilot just announced it."

"Has this plane always been a passenger plane?"

"No, they used to be called C-47's."

I said, "Go open the door."

She said, "Why?"

"I might jump!"

"What do you mean?"

"I used to jump out of C-47's."

"Mister, after the war was over they converted all of those planes!"

What did she mean? She meant that that plane was once used for something else, but it has been reconditioned; its purpose has been changed. Now there is a new purpose. That which was used for war is now used for peace. It has been converted.

Listen to me. Here is an unsaved person. He smokes. He drinks. He lies. He never reads his Bible, never bows his head to pray, never says grace. Now he comes down the aisle and gets saved. He receives Christ. When he goes back home, he still does not read his Bible, he still does not pray. He still does not come to church on Sunday nights. He still does not come to church on Wednesday night. Is he saved? Yes, but he is not converted. His body is being used to do exactly as it did before he got saved.

Listen, Delta airlines went to the United States Army and said, "We would like to purchase all your C-47's." Now then, listen to me. Does the United States Army own the C-47? No, Delta owns it. It has a new owner. Suppose that paratroopers still jump out of it even though it is owned by a new owner. Is it converted? No, it is not. The ownership has nothing to do with its conversion. The conversion comes about when the use is changed. Let me ask you a question: Are you converted?

"Oh," you say, "I am saved."

Are you converted? Are your habits like those of the unsaved? Then you are not converted. Is your language like that of the unsaved? Then you are not converted.

When a lady comes to Christ and does not lengthen her skirts, she is not converted. When a young man comes to Christ and does not cut his hair and wear decent-length hair, then he is not converted. He is saved, but not converted. When a man comes to Christ and does not quit his smoking, he is saved but not converted. Conversion means using the body for something else other than the original use.

Peter came to the place where he had to choose to be lost or saved. He chose to be saved. He came to a place where he had to face another decision: To be carnal or spiritual. He chose the spiritual. He then had to face another decision: to be converted or unconverted.

I know a lot of folks who pray but never win a soul. A lot of folks never start a bus route or bring the unsaved to church. Their lives have never changed.

I was out at Munster's shopping center not long ago. A big family walked by and one young lady said, "Mama, who is he?"

She said, "That's Reverend Hyles from down on Sibley Street."

Then the girl whispered something to her mother and came over and spit on me. Then the boy did the same thing. Do you know why they spit on me? They did it because I believe in decency. I am against the liquor traffic. I am against the narcotics traffic. I am against Communism. I am for America! I am for the Bible! I am for clean living! I believe that Christian people ought to be different from the people of the world! Christians ought to be "converted," if you please.

Let the people of Hammond criticize First Baptist Church if they will, but let them see there is something in our people that differs from the world. We have not only been saved but we have also been converted.

Listen carefully, and I'll illustrate exactly what I am saying. Across the street there used to be several apartment buildings. Our church bought all but one. For a season we kept renting out one of the apartment buildings. The same people lived in there for awhile that lived there before we bought it. We owned it, right? It was still occupied by the same people. The same things went on in that apartment that went on before we bought it. There was no change at all. There was only a change of ownership. I am talking to a lot of people in this room this morning who have had only a change of ownership. That is all. Aren't you ashamed to call yourself a Christian and that the only change in your life is that you have received Christ as your Saviour? Don't you think God deserves more than that? Okay, you have been saved. Many of you are just like that building. You are owned by God, but you are no use to Him at all.

Now let me give you a second illustration. There was a diner, a "greasy spoon" kind of a place that once operated next door to our church. For many years the same owner had it. He paid us rent. We owned it. It was ours, but there was no change in what went on there. The saved man who is carnal is just like that.

Here is another illustration. Across the alley this morning there is an empty building. It used to be the Werth Furniture Store. We bought it. No longer is there a furniture store. Now it is empty. Now, bear in mind, nobody curses over there. Nobody gambles over there. Nobody drinks over there. Nobody smokes over there. Nobody tells lies over there. Nobody lives in wicked sin over there, but it is empty! Do you follow me? We bought the diner and there was no change. The building we bought, and it is no longer carnal, but it is empty.

There is a building down in the next block. We bought it from a liberal church. They didn't stay in it, but we didn't leave it empty either. Now it is being used for the glory of God as the Hammond Baptist Grade School.

Now listen to me. Every Christian in this house is either like the Temple Diner, the Werth Furniture building, or the Hammond Baptist Grade School. Think for a minute: Where are you? Think! Are you living any differently from the time before Jesus bought you? Are you any different from what you were back yonder before you got redeemed? You say, "Thank God, I'm saved!" Okay, but is it like the Temple Diner where the same things are going on now as they were before you got saved? You are saved, but you are not spiritual; you are carnal. Perhaps you say, "Of course, Preacher, I don't drink, I don't use dope, I don't curse; I'm clean!" Okay, then maybe you are like the Werth Furniture Building. You never win a soul, never teach a Sunday school class, never run a bus route, but you are clean. You are spiritual; you are not carnal. Perhaps you are like the Hammond Baptist Grade School building. Are you bought, spiritual and converted?

Most of you are Werth Furniture Companies. You are "worthless." You do not do what is wrong. Listen. You can sweep out that building and you can paint the walls, but it is not converted until its use is changed to do something constructive for God. Now, where are you? There are folks right here this morning that are Temple Diners. You are saved and on your way to Heaven, but that is all. You use the same language the world uses, the same literature the world uses, the same television programs the world watches, same magazines, same books, same radio programs. You are redeemed, you are bought, you belong to Christ, but the same things is going on in that building now as before.

Then there are those who are like the Werth Furniture building. You are spiritual; you are not carnal, but you are just not doing anything for God! You have not been converted.

May I say this morning, if you are saved and not spiritual, I beseech you to ask God to forgive the sins of your life. I beseech you to give everything you have to God. This morning, if you are spiritual, but you are not converted, may I say to you, let good come from your life. Get a bus route. Go out and win souls. Get a Sunday school class. Work for God. Become converted!

I look at our teenagers and say, "Oh God, use them." Oh, so many prayers have gone into these kids. I have sat in my office with them. I have wept with them. I have pleaded with them to give all they had to God. Yesterday morning I sat in my study with numbers of kids and said, "Don't stop short! Don't stop short! Turn from sin! Don't let your body be a vessel of dishonor! God wants more than that. Let God use you! Be converted! Be converted! Be converted!"

Let me ask you a question. Are you going to Heaven? How many can say this morning, "Brother Hyles, I know that if I died today, I would go to Heaven; I am on the right side; I am saved, and I know it?" Raise your hand. All right, you can drop your hands. If you could not lift your hand, may I beseech you this morning to say "yes" to God.

Everyone whose hand was raised still faces another fork in the road. Are you spiritual or are you carnal?

You say, "I'm spiritual!" Then I ask, are you converted or are you unconverted?

9. After His Kind

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good." Genesis 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25.

Several months ago a preacher came to me while I was speaking in a distant state. He said, "Brother Hyles, I visited your church and was there for the Pastors' School. The outstanding thing about your church is love. I pastor a church. We are always fussing and wrangling; we cannot get along with each other. What can I do? Could you tell me what I can do to make my people do?"

I turned to Genesis 1:11, *"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind..."* I read it and repeated, *"...after his kind."* Then I took him to verse 12 where we find those words twice, *"...after his kind."* Then in verse 21 the words, *"...after his kind,"* are used two times. Then in verse 24 we find the words used twice again, *"...after his kind."* In verse 25 we find the words three times, *"...after his kind"* or *"...after his kind."*

He said, "Brother Hyles, what in the world does that have to do with my people loving me? Why did you use this passage?"

I will tell you folks what I told that preacher.

In this statement, *"...after his kind"* we find the secret of getting church folks to love each other. You see, everything has in itself reproductive powers. A flower has seed in itself to make another flower *"...after his kind."* The Bible says in Genesis 1:11 that grass has seed within itself. It is able to reproduce *"...after his kind."* Each animal has power within itself to reproduce *"...after his kind."* Even man can reproduce *"...after his kind."* It is the law of God. Not only is this a law of God for animal life, plant life and human life, but it is also the law of God for virtues. Every virtue and every trait has in itself the power to reproduce itself.

I. Gloom

That is why when you get around someone who is always full of life you feel more full of life. That is why some people tranquilize us. I went into the Fellowship Hall the other night, and I never felt better in my life. I was bouncing; I just felt like I was full of life. To be honest with you, I thought I looked better than usual. Then the strangest thing happened. A lady looked at me and said, "Your eyes are bloodshot."

"Oh?"

"Yes. You haven't been getting as much sleep, have you?"

"Why," I said, "I..."

"You don't feel good."

"Well, I feel fine." I sat down and somebody walked past and said, "Pastor, you've been working too hard."

Then I said, "Well, I have not been feeling real well."

Listen, I was ready to go and get a check up before the Teachers' Meeting was over. I limped into the auditorium for Prayer Meeting. Why? Every creature can reproduce "*...after his kind.*"

Every virtue reproduces itself. The way to get love into your church is to get love in your heart. When love is overflowing in your heart, that love will reproduce itself after its kind in the hearts of other people.

II. Joy

Joy reproduces itself. Happiness reproduces itself.

I had an evangelist in my church in Texas who came to Hammond, Indiana, about twelve years ago, to a revival meeting at the First Southern Baptist Church. He came back and said, "Pastor, I want you to go to Hammond, Indiana, to preach. The folks in Hammond need you."

I asked, "Why?"

He said, "Most of the folks in the area work in the steel mills. They go to work in the steel mills before daylight in the morning, and they work hard all day. When they come out, it is already dark, often it is snowing, and many times it's below zero. You seem to enjoy life. I think if you would go to Hammond for a few days, you would be a tonic to that area."

Yes, our services seem to have more joy than they used to. We are not as afraid as we used to be to laugh in church. It is because I have always been this way. It is incurable! I will always be this way. What am I saying? Joy always reproduces itself. By the way, so does gloom. A virtue has within itself the powers of reproduction. Just as a seed is in a flower and it reproduces after its kind, just as an animal reproduces after its kind and humanity reproduces after its kind, even so joy reproduces after its kind.

III. Soul Winning

When we first came to Hammond, I said to Brother Jim Lyons, "Now, Jim, we want to build a soul-winning church-not just an evangelistic church where the Gospel is preached and souls are saved in the services, but a church where people go house to house knocking on doors, covering the neighborhood."

He said, "What can we do?"

I said, "Let's just start ourselves."

Back in those days, he and I would each make a hundred visits per week. If we had fifteen or twenty conversions on Sunday, eight or ten would be mine and eight or ten would be his. What were we doing? We were trying to start soul winning. Then somebody else got the idea. It reproduced itself.

IV. Enthusiasm

Are there some people you've been around who enthuse you? Dr. Lee Roberson is like that to me. Nobody makes me want to do something like Dr. Roberson. I do not cry when he preaches; I just want to go and build a building or burn one down or build another one. I just want to move and do something. Some people affect others like that.

V. Pessimism

I am thinking of a lady right now who is a member of this church. There was one time, about ten years ago, that I asked her how she felt. She has never gotten finished yet. Don't ever ask that lady how she feels! Don't do it! I have never visited her when she was sick yet that I didn't have the same symptoms when I let. I never have. Why? Pessimism reproduces itself. I want to be the kind of person that has joy after his kind, kindness after his kind and love after his kind. Just go around your home, your church and your business scattering joy. It has in itself reproductive powers "after its kind."

Oh, my dear friends, Christian people ought to realize that they can influence others. Joy can have that kind of seed and reproduce after its kind, and the entire office can be changed by our joy. I am sure that there can be again and again and again a home changed by the love of one person. It can be so strong that it reproduces after its kind until the entire home is full of love. That is the way Christians ought to be. Kindness, enthusiasm, joy and love ought to overflow in our Christian lives.

I was driving down Sibley Street one day. I went about a half block past LaFayette School. There I saw a bunch of kids in a huddle. I thought there might be a fight, so I pulled over to the curb and watched. Would you believe what I say? I saw a little kid on top of a box. He had a bunch of kids around him, and he had a Bible open. He was waving his right hand in the air and he was crying at the top of his voice, "YOU KIDS HAD BETTER GET BORN AGAIN! YOU'RE GOING TO SPLIT HELL WIDE OPEN!" He gave an invitation. A dog walked the aisle and was baptized in a mud hole behind the box. (I wonder where that kid goes to church! Right here, of course.) That's one reason why I must be the right kind of pastor. Oh, as God's people, we ought to realize that we reproduce after our own kind. We need to become the people who reproduce joy and love so that people will have those attributes reproduced in them.

VI. Love

We should be so filled with love that our love will so overflow that our Sunday school classes will have love, our homes will have love, our schools will have love, our neighbors will have love and our churches will have love. You cannot generate love until you get the love of Christ in your heart. Then that love can reproduce after its kind.

I said to the preacher who asked me what he could do, "Fellow, you can go home and preach on love all you want to, but that will not give your folks love. You can go home and exhort your people to love, yet you must love if your people are to have love."

I was in a barber shop in Springfield, Missouri. I was preaching at the Baptist Bible College for a week, and I went to the barber shop. The barber said, "Your hair is thinning."

I said, "Just cut it."

He said, "Your hair is thinning. I have some stuff that will keep it from falling." He pulled out a bottle and said, "I'll sell you all of it." It was about three dollars. He then pulled out another little tube of stuff and said, "This goes with it."

I spent six or seven dollars before I left (plus the price of a haircut) on some stuff that will help my hair grow. I bought the stuff, walked out, and looked back through that window and discerned something: The barber didn't have a hair on his head! There I stood with junk for which I had paid seven dollars! That man may never get rich selling that stuff because not everyone is as dumb as I.

What am I saying? I'm saying that all of the preaching will never get the job done. It is the practicing that gets the job done. Diligence has its own seed after its own kind. Proper behavior has its own seed after its kind. Hard work has its own seed after its kind. Alertness has its own seed after its kind. Joy has its own seed after its kind.

Oh, my precious friends, let us be what we ought to be so that if the world reproduces not what we say but what we are, then the churches in America will be what they ought to be. I have always said this: I want my church to be what it ought to be 52 weeks a year so that guest coming in on any particular Sunday will see our church always at its best. It is not the big day that counts; it is what you are on the small days.

That, basically, ladies and gentlemen, is what salvation is. Salvation is God reproducing after His kind. When a person is born again, the seed that is in him was grown by God. The Word comes and reproduces God in that person. That is why we call it "being born again." That's why the Apostle said, "*Christ in me, the hope of glory.*" It is God bearing seed "*...after his kind.*" When one is born again, Christ comes into him to live. In fact, he then becomes a "little Jesus," after God's kind.

There are four basic different kinds of creation: plant life, animal life, human life and spiritual life. If you are not saved, by all means, hear what I am going to say! You can mix animal life, or you can mix plant life and improve each particular type of creation, but you cannot make it another type of creation. For example, you can cross two kinds of beans and get a better bean, but you cannot take a bean and make it into a puppy dog. You can cross a cocker spaniel and a Boston terrier, but you cannot make it into a girl or a boy. There is no way possible for mankind to cross the barrier between plant life and animal life, animal life and human life, or human life and spiritual life.

Listen! You can take a green bean and make it the best green bean possible! You can baptize that green bean; you can dedicate that green bean; you can give a degree to that green bean; you can do to it all that you want to do, but that green bean will never become a cocker spaniel. All of the improvement in one area of creation will not make it step up into the next area.

Take that cocker spaniel. You can take that cocker spaniel, improve him, set him in church, baptize him, make him into the best cocker spaniel in the world, let him be "Mr. Canine of the Year," teach him not to bark at people who are kind and teach him to bite nobody. Teach him love and how to sit up. Teach him to play dead. Teach him to roll over. Teach him to sing and bark when you play the piano. He might win the award in the county fair, but you cannot make that cocker spaniel into a human being. Why? It is impossible!

By the same token that you cannot cause a plant to become an animal or an animal to become a human, you cannot cause a human to become a new creature. Bring him to the church, give him the Lord's Supper, baptize him, make him the best person in the world, and make him the nicest, kindest, most loving person in the world, he is still not a Christian until he is born again!

A blade of grass cannot become a cockroach. A cockroach cannot become a boy. A boy cannot become a Christian unless there is a supernatural work of God Almighty. That is why you have to get born again to go to Heaven. Actually, being born again is God reproducing Himself *"...after his kind."*

Follow me. A plant is born a plant. An animal must be born an animal. A human being must be born a human being. A Christian must be born again! Don't you see? That is a law and all the logic of the world cannot refute that. It is just as easy to go out and pick a petunia and make it into an elephant as it would be to make a man a Christian, apart from the supernatural work of God. It is just as easy to make that elephant a human being as it is to make a human being become a Christian. No one can naturally cross the divisions between God's forms of creation: plant life, human life, animal life, spiritual life. That means that it is humanly impossible for a person to become a Christian. That is why baptism cannot save you. That is why the Lord's Supper cannot save you. Good works cannot save you. That is why improving yourself cannot save you. It is humanly impossible for one of God's forms of creation to cross into the other. That means all a person can do is to come to God in faith and say, "God, here I am. I trust You in faith." That faith is the thing that causes God to reproduce you *"...after his kind."* That explains why suddenly you want to come to church instead of going to the tavern. You are *"...after his kind."* Suddenly you exchange your PLAYBOY magazine for a copy of the Scriptures. You are reproduced *"...after his kind!"*

Every Christian here ought to say, "I am going to be joyful and reproduce joy. I am going to love and reproduce love. I am going to be optimistic and reproduce optimism." I heard a fellow say the other day, "The pessimist says we can't do it; the optimist say that we can do it; but what we need are some 'peptomist' who say that we're doing it!" I'm going to be that kind of person. At work, home, school, everywhere I go, I am going to represent my church and my God. I am going to reproduce after my kind love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, love goodness, meekness, temperance and faith.

Those of you who are not saved, you ought to say, "By the grace of God, there is nothing that I can do to save myself, to make me, a human, into a Christian, so I'll give myself to God, and God will perform regeneration." Then you will become born again. God will have reproduced in you *"...after his kind."* All you can do is to put your faith in Christ. He must do the work.

Say, "All right, I will. I will put my faith in Jesus Christ. I will trust Him to make me a new person, to begin in me a new work, to create in me a new heart." Then you will be born again.

10. A Brook in the Way

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Thy strength out of Zion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: Thou hast the dew of Thy youth. The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at Thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, He shall fill the places with the dead bodies; He shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall He lift up the head." Psalm 110

This Psalm looks forward to the coming of Christ in Bethlehem. The Psalmist is projecting his vision to the first coming of Jesus, not the second coming, although that is included, I think. The basic outlook is toward the coming of Christ for the first time. It pictures the week of suffering that is called sometimes the Passion Week. (This is found in Psalm 109 too.) It pictures the week of suffering from the time that He set His face toward Jerusalem to be crucified, buried and then to rise from the dead. It is pictured as a journey. He was going for the last time. Oh, how he must have suffered as He realized that His days were numbered! Then came the awful time of suffering in Gethsemane, when the perspiration fell like drops of blood from His brow. Then as He went on to Caiaphas' court where He was tried in a mock trial, and on to Pilate, from Pilate on to Herod, then back to Pilate. There was the scourging with the cat-o'-nine-tails, a long whip with nine different prongs on it. He was hit 39 times across the back. Isaiah 52:14 says that He was beaten so much that you could not tell that He was a human being. Following that, the cross was placed upon Him and He was led up to Calvary. There was the crucifixion, and there was the shame and suffering on the cross, the nakedness and the dogs licking His wounds, the back-handing and the plucking of His beard, the mocking, the making fun of Him as a king, the crown of thorns on His head, and the other events that tell of the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this awful time of suffering, we find an unusual statement, *"He shall drink of the brook in the way."* This brook symbolizes a refreshing drink of water. That brook is a stream that has fresh water from which one need not fear to take a drink.

This Psalm is likened to a king in battle. Here is a king leading his forces. The day is hot. The desert is arid and dry, and the king comes to a place where there is a refreshing brook. He says, *"There is a brook in the way."* The king stops on a hot day, and gets the refreshment of the brook.

Now what is the *"brook in the way"* of Christ? This brook is a little stream that runs across the week of suffering in the life of Jesus Christ. Get the picture, very carefully, and you will find a beautiful truth. Here is Jesus in His week of suffering. It is not a time to laugh. There is no enjoyment as far as we can see. Everything is dark and gloomy, the suffering of shame, the suffering of the crown of thorns, the suffering of the agonies of the cross. It is a week we call "a week of passion." Yet trickling across that week of passion, like a brook in the way, something refreshed Him. Something delighted Jesus in that week of suffering, and it is called, *"a brook in the way."* Like a fresh stream would bring refreshment to a weary traveler, there was something trickling across the path of Jesus, in the darkest week of His life, so that it was like a *"a brook in the way."*

What was this refreshing oasis over which Jesus crossed, that gave Him refreshment like *"a brook in the way?"* Was it the home of Mary and Martha, where He spent His last night before being tried? Was it the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus where they served Him, worshipped Him, cooked for Him, and loved Him? Was that the oasis? I do not know. Maybe it was. Maybe this *"brook in the Way,"* this little refreshing stream of water, this stream that trickled across the path of Jesus was the wonderful time spent with Mary and Martha and Lazarus in their home. I do not know.

What was this refreshing oasis? What was the refreshing *"brook in the way?"* Was it the love of Mary Magdalene, that woman whose body had been possessed of seven devils, out of which Jesus had cast them? She, no doubt, loved Him more than anybody on the face of the earth. She stood with Him when all others had forsaken Him. She stood beside the sepulchre when no one else did. She was there first in the morning when all others had fled. Was the love of Mary Magdalene the *"brook in the way?"*

What was this refreshing oasis that crossed the path of our Lord through the week of suffering? Was it the thief who cried for mercy by saying, *"Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom"?*

Jesus replied, *"Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."*

Was not Jesus dying that sinners might be saved? Was not this the purpose for which He came into the world? Even now, in His death, there cries a thief, "Lord, don't forget me. Remember me when Thou comes into Thy kingdom." Was this the *"brook in the way?"* Maybe it was.

Was it the women who stayed until the end? Peter was out cursing in the garden. Judas had betrayed Him with a kiss on His brow. The disciples had forsaken Him and fled. Thank God, a little handful of women stood beside the cross. They tried to give Him something to help His sufferings, and they did give their loyalty. Was this the *"brook in the way?"* I do not know.

The Bible does not tell us what it was. We do not know exactly what it was, but we do know there was something in the week of suffering of Jesus Christ that was as refreshing to Him as a spring would be to a weary traveler going across a desert. It was *"a brook in the way."* I do not know what it was, and I shall not advance to you what I think it was, but I would like to suggest two thoughts to you.

I. Every Christian Should Be a Brook in the Way.

So many times in my life I have met such brooks. Have you in your life been weighted down with your load of heartaches and problems? Have you thought life was not worth living? Have you wondered if you could make the day? Then suddenly in a wonderful way, God sent to you a person who was *"a brook in the way."* Maybe a smile when no one else was smiling, maybe a pat on the back when no one else would give it, maybe an encouraging word when no one else could quite give an encouraging word, was to you like *"a brook in the way."* Don't you think it would be a wonderful thing to help the weary traveler, help carry his load with a pat on the back, a smile, or an "I love you," or maybe a helping hand? You and I should be *"a brook in the way"* for others.

I was thinking last night of Tommy Ford. He was one of my deacons in a country church in east Texas. He was saved shortly after I became pastor of the little country church. I baptized Tommy shortly after I got there. What a wonderful man! What a sweet wife! What a fine family! What *"a brook in the way!"* We had some problems there in the church. Some of the people didn't think I

was old enough to pastor a church. Through many heartaches Tommy and his family were *"a brook in the way."*

When I was pastoring in Garland, one night after we had had a little problem which no one knew much about, Jack Barber (God bless him) came to me and said, "Preacher, come to our house and have refreshments after the service." We did. (He didn't know about the problem.) The next time we had a problem, again Jack didn't know about it, but God had a way of telling him to say, "Preacher, come to our house tonight for refreshment." We would. In the six years and eight months that I was Pastor there, we ate in the Barber home only a half dozen times, but every time it was a time we were discouraged and needed help the most. He was *"a brook in the way."*

Everybody is having a difficult time. There ought to be some brooks. There ought to be some people to cheer others on the way. There ought to be some folks who are *"brook in the way."* Everybody is having a tough time. Everybody is having problems. Nobody needs your insults. Nobody needs your crabby disposition. Nobody needs your criticism. Nobody needs your gossip. Nobody needs your slander. Everybody is having a tough time; everybody has fear of Communism; everybody is afraid of the atomic bomb; everybody is afraid about heart attacks; and everybody is afraid about cancer; everybody is concerned about Vietnam; everybody has a heart that is heavy and broken. Let's see to it that every one of us is *"a brook in the way,"* to encourage people in a time of suffering and sorrow.

II. Have a Brook in the Way.

What do you mean, Preacher? I mean this: You should have a *"a brook in the way."* I know you are having it rough. I know you have troubles and problems, difficulties and heartaches. I know that, but have *"a brook in the way."*

Now you say, "Preacher, what is the *'brook in the way'* for me?" One brook in the way is the church. Every church ought to be a brook in the way. What do I mean by that? I mean that I want the First Baptist Church in Hammond to be the kind of a church that can be *"a brook in the way"* to all who attend. When you walk in the doors of this church, I want you to feel refreshed. The church is *"a brook in the way."*

There are folks here this morning whose hearts are heavy and broken and who are discouraged and lonely. There ought to be *"a brook in the way"* as we stand to read the Scripture, hear announcements, preach, fellowship, and sing.

People sometimes come to our church and they say, "Pastor, you don't have a morning worship service."

I say, "Yes, we do. We just don't worship like you do. We have *"a brook in the way,"* not a stagnant stream. We don't have a cesspool. We want to have something you can drink and be refreshed. When you come to First Baptist Church of Hammond, we want you to have a place where you can lay your burdens down for awhile and rejoice that we serve a living Saviour! There are people here this morning that are sick, I mean, very sick. They don't know how long they will live. They wonder if this will be the last Christmas they will see. I say, "Oh, my God, let the First Baptist Church be a brook in their way. In their time of suffering, may there appear a refreshing stream across their path like trickled across the path of our Lord Jesus Christ." May the church service this morning be a refreshing brook in your path like a refreshment in a dreary world or an oasis for a traveler on a desert. May this be *"a brook in the way."*

There is a family this morning in this service whose boy perhaps yesterday landed in Vietnam. He came by my office this last week to tell me good-bye. He is one of our own boys. We knelt and prayed in my office and asked God to watch over him. Last Sunday he sat in this service. His parents, I'm sure, are here. Their hearts are heavy. Oh, let us be *"a brook in the way"* to people like that. In a time of suffering, when your heart is the heaviest, may it always be that when you come to First Baptist Church, there will be that lilt, delight, joy and thrill that will make the service refreshing, not some kind of a funeral where you come feeling bad and you go away feeling worse.

There are people in this service this morning who will face a Christmas Day for the first time without a father. There are people in this service who will face Christmas without a husband for the first time in years. There are people this morning who will face Christmas Day without a delight or joy, but with a dread because someone is gone. They have burdens and heartaches. God has placed across the path a place like this where they can come and feel the refreshment of the *"brook in the way."*

There are people this morning in this service who will be beaten when they get home. As the choir sings, as we have the Lord's Supper, and as I try to preach, may this service be to you *"a brook in the way."*

That is one reason why I put a little humor in my sermons. I don't think there's anything wrong with it. I think God is pleased. I don't think it ought to be inappropriate or obnoxious, but I certainly think that a little laughter here and there causes God to be pleased when His people, with burdens, heartaches, sorrows and loads to carry, have a little trickling brook in the way over which to cross, every Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday night.

There are folks who have had loved ones die. They need *"a brook in the way."* I've walked in this pulpit time and time again when I was so discouraged I could hardly face the service or preach a sermon. As I stood to preach, the service was to me as *"a brook in the way."* Before I got through preaching, I was refreshed. I felt better. Why? There was *"a brook in the way."* How I thank God for this church! How I thank God for this place where we can come with our burdens and leave them! You can forget them for awhile, rejoice for awhile, "Hallelujah" for awhile and praise the Lord for awhile. *"A brook in the way."*

As you have your burdens, problems, heartaches, sorrows and bereavement, I hope that this can always be a place where you can come and feel like, "There's a drink of water here."

I trust that hungry hearts that come to First Baptist can find *"a brook in the way."* I trust that people who lay loved ones in the grave will look forward to Sunday where there is *"a brook in the way."* I hope that those of you whose boy is in Vietnam can come to church and find *"a brook in the way."* I hope you aged people who live alone find *"a brook in the way."* What this old world needs this morning is *"a brook in the way!"*

Now wait a minute. A brook is to carry water. Jesus said, *"I am the living water."* Are you thirsty this morning? Are you thirsty for something this morning that you have not found? You are thirsting for Christ and you don't know it. Have you sought peace in the world? You will not find it there. You are thirsting for Christ and do not know it, for He is the Living Water! He is that refreshing brook. No one has ever come to Christ and been disappointed because Christ has always quenched everybody's thirst. *"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,"* said God in Isaiah 55:1. In Revelation 22:17 we find, *"And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life"*

freely." If you are thirsting for something in life, come to Christ and find in Him *"a brook in the way."*

If you would take Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you would find that He is your brook in the way. He is that refreshment in the hour of trial. He is that load-carrier in time of a heavy load. He is that burden-bearer in times of burdens. He is that comforter in times of sorrow and bereavement. He is *"a brook in the way."*

May I say this morning, be a brook in the way.

Look all around you,
Find someone in need,
Help somebody today.

Though it be a little,
A neighborly deed,
Help somebody today.

Help somebody today,
Somebody along life's way.
Let sorrow be ended,
The friendless befriended,
Oh, help somebody today!

Be that little brook that crosses the path of sorrow.
Then find in your church a brook in the way.
Then if you are not saved, turn your eyes upon Jesus.
Put your faith in Jesus, and find in Him a brook in the way.

11. For His Mercy Endureth Forever

Twenty-six times in Psalm 136 we find these beautiful words, *"For His mercy endureth forever."* Eleven other times in the Bible we find the same words. One of the most comprehensive statements regarding the nature of God in all the Bible is this: *"For His mercy endureth forever."*

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6. The thought of the mercy of the Lord just overcame me this past week. The fact that the Lord's mercy endures forever, means that nothing can stop His mercy. I woke up Tuesday morning praising the Lord for His mercy. I took the concordance and began looking up the places where I could find the word "mercy."

Are you deep in sin? His mercy goes deeper than your sin. Are you away from God? Are you living a life that is not counting? His mercy goes beyond that. No matter how deep you have fallen, His mercy is sufficient. It does not matter how far you have strayed; His mercy goes just a little farther.

When a Jew met someone on the street, he would say, "Peace" or "Shalom." They still do it in Palestine. Paul wrote and said, *"Grace and peace."* Why? No one has peace until he has grace. 1 Corinthians begins with *"Grace and peace be unto you."* So does 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and both books to the Thessalonians. 1 Timothy says, *"Grace, mercy and peace be unto you."* I laughed and said, "Lord, I think I know why You said mercy.

Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians were written to churches, but Timothy was written to a preacher. A preacher needs more mercy than anybody else in the whole world!" In 2 Timothy again Paul said, *"Grace, mercy and peace be unto you."* In Titus he said, *"Grace, mercy and peace be unto you."* When God wrote to a preacher, He thought, "A preacher has more burdens and more heartaches than anybody else." The Lord said to the church at Galatia, *"Grace, mercy and peace,"* but when He got to Timothy, He said, *"Grace, mercy and peace be unto you."* When the Lord wrote the epistles to an individual, He included mercy. Why? Individuals need mercy. You need mercy this morning. There is not a one of us here that does not need the mercy of God. None of us deserves to go to Heaven. None of us deserves the blessing of God. So God gives us mercy.

"The Lord's mercies ... are new every morning." Lamentations 3:22, 23. Why does the Lord say He is merciful in the morning? It looks to me as though He would have said, "Thy mercies are new every evening." After all, during the day after our meanness has been done, we need mercy. We need mercy after we have grown impatient and lost our temper a few times. Most of us need mercy at the end of the day when it is time to go to bed and we look up to Him and say, "Lord, I did not mean to do what I did today. I meant to do better. Lord, forgive me." He would forgive us and then we could say, *"His mercies are new every evening."* Why did God say *"...every morning"*? We are mean while we are sleeping! That is why we need mercy each morning!

I preached in Texas the other day near a church I once pastored. In that church I had what Dr. John R. Rice calls a "long-horned deacon." I drove past this church where I had pastored. For 18 or 19 years I had not had one evil thought in my heart against that deacon. I drove down the street in front of the church and went past the deacon's place and thought, "That place belongs to that old long-horned deacon." I asked if he were still living. They said, "Yes, he's still alive." He is now in his eighties.

I thought, "I am glad my heart is clean about that fellow. I do not hold any bitterness." That night I dreamed I punched him in the nose! When I woke up, I was glad I did it. Even while we are asleep, we need God's mercy! We are sinners morning and evening; therefore, the Word says, *"Thy mercies are new every morning."*

The Psalmist said in Psalm 19, *"Cleanse thou me from secret faults."* *"...Secret faults"* are those the faults that other people do not know about? This verse is talking about my faults that I do not even know about. The Psalmist said, *"Lord, forgive my sins,"* but more than that, "Cleanse the sins of which I am not aware, those unholy motives I have, those tainted purposes, the things I should not do, and the things I leave undone that I should do." That is why I think Jeremiah, the writer of Lamentations, said, *"The Lord's mercies...are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness."*

I got to thinking about the events in the Bible where *"His mercy endureth forever."* In 2 Chronicles 5:13 Solomon has finished building the temple. It is time to dedicate the temple, the Ark of the Covenant is brought in, singers begin to sing, instruments begin to play, the king stands to pray the dedicatory prayer and he says, *"His mercy endureth forever."* God blessed them by giving the Shekinah glory in the Holy of Holies. It was so bright that the priests could not minister. They said, *"His mercy endureth forever."*

I began to recall the years here at this church. How good God has been to us! Try to think of a service here in the church when God did not suddenly speak to someone in the choir, or when He did not give us an extra special blessing or there was not some special conversion or some special blessing that God gave us. I do not know of any church in the world where God has faithfully

blessed any more than He has blessed us Sunday after Sunday, week after week, and blessing after blessing. Every one of us ought to stand up and say, "Blessed be God-His mercy endureth forever!"

Somebody came to our services recently saying, "When we want a blessing, we come to First Baptist Church, Hammond. We know we will always get it." That is what I am saying! Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!

In 1 Chronicles 16:41 we read, *"His mercy endureth forever."* The Ark of the Covenant had been removed from Israel; the Philistines had taken it to Gath and Ekron and Ashdod. For years the Ark of Covenant had been gone; and now the Ark returns to Jerusalem. Do you remember David's happiness when the Ark came back? David, King of Israel, danced around the Ark. When his wife, Michal, looked down and saw her husband, she said, *"It is a disgrace for a king to dance, making a fool of himself!"* David shouted, *"His mercy endureth forever."*

In Ezra 3:11 we find, *"His mercy endureth forever."* The temple was destroyed; the Israelites were led away in captivity to Babylon. The walls had been leveled, their homes had been destroyed and the temple had been desecrated. For 70 homesick, lonely years they lived away from their home. They sat down and wept by the river Chebar in Babylon. They would not play their harps and they would not sing the psalms of joy. One day God burdened Zerubbabel to return and rebuild the temple. God's people came from far and near and laid the foundation for the rebuilding of God's house. The people were happy. The Bible says the singers sang and they played the instruments. They shouted, *"His mercy endureth forever."*

Stop and think how sinful you were, and the mercy of the Lord forgave you. Stop and think of the attitudes we have had this week. Remember the things we have done that we should not have done. We cannot forget the harsh words we said when we should have been quiet. We are guilty of envy, covetousness, jealousy and impatience; yet the dear Lord looks down from Heaven and *"His mercy endureth forever."*

Psalms 106:1 tells us, *"His mercy endureth forever."* Psalm 107:1 tells us, *"His mercy endureth forever."* Psalms 118:1 tells us, *"His mercy endureth forever."* In these psalms David remembers as he does in Psalm 136, *"The seas were parted, for His mercy endureth forever. Pharaoh's armies were drowned, for His mercy endureth forever. He fed us with manna from Heaven, for His mercy endureth forever. He gave us water from the rock, for His mercy endureth forever..."* Over and over again, the Psalmist remembers the blessing of the past.

Fourteen years ago today I didn't want to come to Hammond, Indiana. Once when I visited Chicago I said, "This is the last place in the world I would ever want to live." God has put me here and now it looks as if this is going to be the last place in the world I will ever live. I did not want to come to Chicago. We had battles. For a year it was hell. Yet God gave victories! Oh, the goodness of God! Think of our preacher boys that stand in pulpits around this country and around the world this morning, proclaiming the same mercy that we proclaim from this pulpit. Think of the churches that have been changed, their ministries transformed and preachers set aflame with the Gospel of Christ. Think of these 14 blessed years. Oh, we have had some heartaches. We had a fire that destroyed two buildings. We had to put out nurseries in the hallways of the Educational Building. We had to buy a furniture store and remodel it in one week. We had to live in all kinds of inconvenience for a long time, but His mercy endureth forever. People have called us "nuts," and folks have hated us.

One man said, "I have to drive down Sibley Street to work, but I won't drive by your church."

I asked, "Why?"

He said, "Every time I see your church, I see my liquor and my dirty sins and the life I live. The very presence of that building is a sermon against me."

I said, "Thank God, even our buildings speak out against unrighteousness and for decency."

We have felt attacks and tried not to retaliate. That is one reason I think His mercy has been good. We have tried to love everybody. We have tried to be gracious and kind. No word has ever come from across the pulpit against any man of God, no matter what denomination. We have tried to stand for God's men and tried to call this country back to God. If any church in the whole world ought to say, "His mercy endureth forever," we ought to stand up and shout the blessed praises of God!

As I read Psalm 106:1; 107:1; and 118:1, I jumped up and down and said, "Praise the Lord, *His mercy endureth forever*. God puts up with people like us. God uses people like us. God forgives people like us. God loves people like us. *His mercy endureth forever!*"

Then again, you find in Jeremiah 33:11, "*His mercy endureth forever*." Jeremiah saw the coming kingdom. He saw the lion lying down with the lamb; he saw the little child leading a lion down the street. He saw the kingdom of righteousness and peace. Jeremiah said, "Praise the Lord! Look what He was in the future for me! *His mercy endureth forever*."

Did you know God will be merciful to you as long as you live? When you young people get old, the mercy of the Lord will still endure. When you middle-aged people get toward the senior years, the mercy of the Lord will still endure. You dear people in your 70's and 80's and 90's, when most of life is over and you wonder about death and what it is like, the mercy of the Lord will still endure. The mercy of the Lord will be there when you go through the valley of the shadow and when somebody sits at your bedside, waiting for you to go Home to be with the Lord.

The young lady sang this morning about how she wants to see her father. I thought of her father, Bill Gifford, who helped us up in the baptismal room, he was a great man of God. When he was dying, I went to his bedside. He looked up at me and said, "Pastor, *for me to live is Christ and to die is gain*." Oh, when you come to the valley of the shadow, *His mercy endureth forever*. When cancer eats up the body-as it is this morning for some people- *His mercy endureth forever*. When you cross the chilly Jordan and go into the presence of our Lord, *His mercy endureth forever*. When we see Him, *His mercy endureth forever*. When we rise to meet Him in the air, *His mercy endureth forever*. When we come back to earth with Him, *His mercy endureth forever*. When we walk the streets of gold and go through gates of pearl, *His mercy endureth forever*. That means, no matter what happens, God's mercy is there and will always be there.

In the future, God may allow squealing brakes, burning rubber on the pavement, crashing to steel, and bodies hurling into the culvert or on the shoulder of the road. It may be that God will allow you to lie there for awhile and you may wonder if you will die. It may be that God has a wheelchair for you. It may be that God is going to let you be deaf. It may be that you will never hear the voice of a whippoorwill again or the sweet music of the choir, but *His mercy endureth forever!* It may be that God will allow pressures to come in your life. You may fall to the bottom of society and one day stumble into a rescue mission like some of these men here, but *His mercy endureth forever!*

You cannot get outside His mercy. You may go to the depth of the sea, but His mercy is there. You may go higher than man has ever gone, but His mercy is there. You may fly in space with the

astronauts, but His mercy is there. You may stumble into a tavern and give up your life and your virtue, but His mercy is always there. Why? *His mercy endureth forever!* God's mercy goes beyond your deepest sin, and beyond your most lonely hour. *His mercy endureth forever!*

Two men came to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a publican. The Pharisee said, "I am thankful I'm not as he is; I am a good man! I do not commit all the dirty sins he commits, and I do good things he does not do." The publican could not so much as lift up his eyes to God. He smote his breast and said, "*God be merciful to me, a sinner.*" Listen to me. Are you here this morning in sin and don't know if you died, you would go to Heaven? *His mercy endureth forever!* This morning God would save any person in this room that would look up to God and say, "Oh God, I know I am a sinner, and I am sorry. Be merciful to me, a sinner." The mercy of God would cover every sin of your life. *His mercy endureth forever!*

You say, "Are you sure?" Yes! Look at Ephesians 2:4, "*God, Who is rich in mercy.*" His mercy reaches out to you this morning.

Forty-four people came to my office for conferences from 3:30 Friday afternoon until 11:00 last night. So many of our folks have needs. What about the many people who did not come, but they also have needs? For everyone who came to my office, God's *mercy endureth forever*. For everyone who did not come to my office, *His mercy endureth forever*.

There is a lady here this morning who wonders if life is worth living. Lady, *His mercy endureth forever*. There is a man here this morning with cancer eating up his body, and he wonders what the future holds. Sir, *His mercy endureth forever*. There is a young lady here this morning who deeply loves the man she married, but he has been unfaithful to her. Lady, *His mercy endureth forever!*

The word "*endures*" means "nothing can stop it." It comes from a Greek word which means "to conquer." It means His mercy conquereth forever. Do you have heartaches? His mercy conquereth heartaches. Do you have sickness? His mercy conquereth sickness. Have you gone into sin? His mercy conquereth sin. His mercy conquereth forever. You can say with the song writer, Dr. Weigle:

I would love to tell you what I think of Jesus,
Since I found in Him a friend so strong and true.
I would tell you how He changed my life completely;
He did something that no other friend could do.
No one ever cared for me like Jesus.

In the Weigle Music Center at Tennessee Temple College, they built a little apartment for Dr. Weigle. He was nearly 100 years of age when the building was built in his honor. At the dedication I preached the message. After everybody had gone, I decided to go see Dr. Weigle. I went to his room and started to knock on the door, but I heard some noises. I leaned my ear against the door and I heard a voice say, "Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!" I just listened to him shout for awhile. Finally, I knocked on the door. He came to the door with the look of Heaven on his face. I said, "Dr. Weigle, what are you doing?"

He clapped his hands and said, "Just practicing for Heaven!"

We ought to practice for Heaven this morning and praise the Lord a little bit. Blessed be God! *His mercy endureth forever!*

When you go home today and have a meal, shout the praise of God. Say, " *His mercy endureth forever* " Reach up and touch your eyes. If you can see, say, "Hallelujah! *His mercy endureth forever!*" If you can hear the sound of this beautiful music, say, "Praise the Lord! *His mercy endureth forever.*" Just jump up and down and say, "Hallelujah! *His mercy endureth forever.*" Say it with me: " *His mercy endureth forever.*" Yes, it endures forever and ever and ever!

When kingdoms have crumbles for the last time, *His mercy endureth forever*. When dictators have waged their wicked battles for the last time, *His mercy endureth forever*. When the stars have fallen like untimely figs from a tree shaken by the wind, *His mercy endureth forever*. When the sun refuses to shine and the moon has turned as black as sackcloth of hair, *His mercy endureth forever*. When people shall die no more and cemeteries shall not dot the horizon, His mercy endureth forever. When shoulders shall never stoop, nor brows wrinkle, nor faces become furrowed, *His mercy endureth forever*. When all of us awake in His likeness to live forever around His throne, *His mercy endureth forever*. Blessed be God! *His mercy endureth forever!*

12. God's Peculiar Treasure

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own sons that serveth him." Malachi 3:16, 17

Malachi means, "My messenger." I do think that there was a man by this name, but we know nothing about him. We know nothing about his birth, his ancestors, or his descendants; in fact, all we know about him is that his name is "My messenger" and that he wrote the last book of the Old Testament.

As far as the list of books is concerned, **Malachi** is the last book in the **Old Testament**. **Nehemiah** is the last book chronologically. **Nehemiah** and **Malachi** should be read together, known together, and studied together. **Nehemiah** admonishes the people of their need for political reform. **Malachi** reminds them of their need for religious reform. The book of **Nehemiah** is a book written about the need for political change, and the book of **Malachi** is written by a prophet, calling God's people to repentance and reminding them of God's punishment on sin. Perhaps the darkest hour religiously and politically in all of Bible history was at the time of the writing of this book. There was, however, a group of people who feared God and thought on God's name. They were called the *"faithful remnant."*

In this dark day there was a group of people who thought on God's name and feared God. What they saw in the world about them pulled them closer together. As they saw the darkness of the day, they pulled closer together. These were people who feared the Lord. There were not many, but they were dedicated. These people would meet in a secret place to encourage and cheer each other and find fellowship with God's people. They talked about the Lord. They spent some time thinking about the Lord. They took some time for spiritual matters. When these people of God get together, they did not talk about the latest scandal or the latest gossip going around the neighborhood. Rather, they talked about the Lord. Their conversation was about God. Their thoughts were about God. Their music was about the Lord. Everything they did was built around the person of God Himself. In **Malachi 3:16**, the word *"hearken"* means "to strain to hear." It means "listening very carefully." Have you ever eavesdropped on anybody, listening very carefully to hear what was being said? That is what the word means. In this darkened day, when political reform and religious reform were so needed, thanks be to God, a few people thought on His name, talked about Him, feared Him, loved Him, and met to discuss Him. As they did meet to discuss Him, the

Bible says God "*hearkened*"; He strained to hear them talk. The word is taken from a word that means "listening for the baby to cry at night." The Lord said, "I like to hear that. I want to hear their conversation. I am going to tune in on their station. I am going to get that frequency." He strained that He might hear. It was like music to His ears as He listened to what they had to say.

Now let us notice Malachi 3:15, "*Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.*" The people thought about the Lord, talked about the Lord and feared the Lord. This verse implies that there were intimate friendships developing among the people as they would get together and talk about spiritual matters. Actually, it says that "everyone talked to his good friend." Every man got with his good friend and talked about the Lord. As God saw one friend talking to another, He strained His ears to hear what they said. God said, "That is beautiful language. That is like music to Mine ear." God leaned over Heaven and strained His ear to hear what they had to say. These were a part of the faithful remnant of which we spoke awhile ago.

Then the Bible says that the Lord enjoyed hearing it so much that he wrote it down.

I made a visit to a local hospital. I left one room to make another call. As I came back by the first room on the way to the elevator, I overheard a voice saying, "Do you know Brother Hyles?"

The other voice said, "I've heard about him."

I stopped and eavesdropped. The fellow said, "That's the best man in this area!"

The other fellow said, "Well, I've heard about him. He is sort of controversial, isn't he?"

"Listen, if there is anyone in this area that I admire, it is that fellow."

"Well, I've heard pros and cons about him."

"Listen, you forget the con; it's all pro. That fellow is really somebody."

I got my pencil and wrote down what he said. It was so beautiful.

That is what the Lord does. The Lord was listening one day and suddenly said, "Hush, David, don't play your harp! Hush, angels, sit still! Don't move!" The Lord said, "Shhhhh."

Down on earth in a wicked and corrupt generation there was somebody saying, "Isn't the Lord wonderful!"

The Lord said, "Shh, I'm listening to something."

Somebody said, "I love the Lord."

The Lord said, "Let Me hear that a little better."

"I love the Lord."

Somebody else said, "Praise the Lord! It's good to be a Christian!"

The Lord said, "Oh, that's so sweet! Recording angel, take some notes for Me, please." So the Lord had what the people said written down, and He delighted Himself with it.

The ears of God strained to hear what the people were saying. Judges were speaking in court, but God listened to what a handful of faithful people were saying about Him. Kings were making edicts, but God was listening to a faithful remnant praising Him. Politicians were making startling speeches, but God was not listening to them; His ears were tuned to those Christian people.

There is a Name I love to hear;
I love to sing Its worth.
It sounds like music in mine ears;
The sweetest Name on earth.

The people of God got together and talked about the Lord. He turned His ear from those speaking in palaces and those addressing congresses. God listened to those who were talking about Himself.

God said, "That's beautiful!" and had it written down.

In Malachi 3:17 God is saying, *"In that day when I make up My jewels, I am going to remember that crowd, and spare them."*

The word *"jewel"* is the word "segula." The word "segula" means "God's peculiar treasure." He is saying, "Those peculiar people down there who think about Me will be My peculiar treasure." Don't misunderstand me. You can be a Christian and not be a part of God's peculiar treasure. God is not talking here just about Christians, but about the dearest ones. It is one thing to be a Christian. It is another thing to be a part of God's segula or peculiar treasure.

Most of us have a circle of people that we call our "friends." Yet many have a smaller circle of friends for whom they would die. They're what we call "real friends." God has that too.

It is said of Abraham, *"He was the friend of God."* God said of David, *"He is a man after My own heart."* He said of John the Baptist, *"Not a greater was born of woman."* About John the Beloved it is said, *"He was the disciple whom Jesus loved."* God has two groups of people: There are those who are saved and then there are God's peculiar treasure, His "segula."

The word "segula" is used in Exodus 19:5, *"When ye obey, ye shall be a peculiar treasure (segula) above all people. Now if you obey this, I'll put you up as My peculiar treasure."* You Christians are either just a saved person or you are a part of God's segula. You may be a part of that peculiar treasure of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why get saved and sit down just inside the door? God has a further step. God has a deeper form. God has a graduate course. You say you are saved; that is good. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if you could get into God's peculiar treasure?

I hope that I am one of God's peculiar treasure, His segula. Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if God could say about you, "He is My peculiar treasure"?

God has that peculiar treasure of people, those of the inner circle; those like Peter, James and John, the twelve, those who make God so delighted, so happy and so pleased. God says, "They're My segula, My peculiar treasure."

How do you become a part of His peculiar treasure? How do you get into His inner group, His special treasure? Let us look at these people.

I. They Stood in Dark Days.

The world had never known such dark days religiously and politically. These people did not find it easy to stand. On every side there was corruption. On every side there was filth and profanity. On every side there was atheism. On every side there was adultery. On every side there was sin. "Okay," they said, "let the world get dark, but we will stand!" Stand they did. Attend church they did. Stand in the face of opposition they did. Withstand persecution they did. Stand ridicule they did. God looked down on the black midnight of this world and saw those people as they talked about Him and thought about Him, and He said, "Those people are going to be a part of My peculiar treasure."

You can be a Christian and not stand at work, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. Oh, I guess you can be a Christian and not pray, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. Oh, I guess you can be a Christian and neglect your Bible, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. You can be a Christian and go the sinful company party at Christmastime, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. You can be a Christian and stay around the wrong crowd, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. Young people, you can fail to carry your Bible to school or neglect to say grace when you eat and still be a Christian, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. God's treasure, His segula, stands for Him.

II. They Thought on the Lord.

Oh, you can read bad literature, I guess, and slip into Heaven if you have been saved, but you can't be a part of God's peculiar treasure. You can be converted as if by fire, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. Perhaps you can listen to the "Beatles" and the "Buzzards" and the "Owls" and barely get to Heaven if you are saved, but you cannot be a part of His treasure.

The Psalmist said, *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law doth he meditate day and night."* When you get to the place where you meditate on the Lord and His Word day and night, then God says, "You qualify to be a part of My peculiar treasure." You can watch the wrong television programs and be saved, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. You can hear the wrong radio programs and be saved, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure and do that. Do you know what is wrong with this world? The world is waiting to see some Christians who are peculiar. This world is waiting to see some Christians who think as much of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the hippies do about revolution. The world waits to see if it is real. The world waits to see if it means anything to us. The average Christian is concerned only about getting to Heaven.

"Well," you say, "will I go to hell if I do those things?"

No, you will not go to hell, but you will not be a part of God's peculiar treasure.

Here is a fellow who gets married. He makes plans for a honeymoon. He buys just one ticket, gives it to the gal and says, "Take off!"

She says, "Aren't you going?"

He says, "Must I do that to be married?"

"Well, I don't guess so, but I'd sort of like for you to go along."

"But I just don't want to be a fanatic about this thing!"

"Well," she says, "I don't think it's fanatical for me to ask you to go with me on the honeymoon."

"Oh, I've already been there. I've seen Niagara Falls. I'll go to San Francisco, and you go to Niagara Falls."

"Well, I know, but look, we ought to go together!"

"Do you have to do that to get married?"

What is wrong with being a good Christian? What is wrong with being a part of God's peculiar treasure? Sell out to God so the Lord can say, "I'll make you a part of My peculiar treasure."

III. They Spoke About the Lord.

These people that belonged to God's segula, belonged to God's peculiar treasure, were in God's inner circle, and were the most valuable to God, spoke about Him.

When David built the temple, he had a small portion of treasures or jewels that he saved and called them his segula. He had many jewels, but his favorite ones were his segula. He was a wealthy man. He had at his disposal the wealth of the entire nation. David very carefully chose his favorite jewels, put them together, and called them his segula, a peculiar treasure. As King David had his peculiar treasure, so the Lord Jesus, the offspring of David, has His peculiar treasure.

I do not advocate pious put-on or exaggeration beyond the realm of reason, but I do believe that we ought to talk about the Lord anywhere, all the time.

What am I saying? If you want to be a part of God's peculiar treasure, you are going to have to talk about Him in a world that does not like to hear about Him. Talk about Him!

Have you ever noticed that anyone who is in love is always a bit unusual? What is wrong with Christians being rather excited about the Lord? What is wrong with Christians being as excited about the Lord as others are about football?

You can gossip and criticize and be a Christian, but you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. If you talk about other people and slander and criticize, you cannot be a part of God's peculiar treasure. You can tear down people and talk about the staff, the deacons and the folks at church and be saved, but you cannot do that and be a part of His peculiar treasure. People who belong to God's peculiar treasure talk about the Lord!

The Lord said, "Look there. They are standing for Me and it is not easy. They are thinking about Me and talking about Me when they get together with their friends." The Lord said, "They are My peculiar treasure. They are My jewels."

IV. They Made His Treasure Their Treasure.

What does that mean? These people were not only standing for the Lord, talking about the Lord and thinking about the Lord, but they found other people from His treasure and made them their best friends. His treasure was their treasure. They got together with God's people. They made their best friends from God's people.

I could belong to secular organizations and still be a Christian. I have had invitations to join most of the civic clubs in town, but I have not joined them. I could hobnob with just anybody, but I want to run with God's treasure. I want to be a part of His peculiar treasure. I could join a secret order, but I belong to a group of people that I think form God's peculiar treasure. Why do I need anything else?

A fellow said, "You need to join the Elks."

No, I don't. I belong to the First Baptist Church in Hammond, and that is all. I do not know of a need that I cannot get filled right here, so I do not have to join anything else. I am simply saying that you can run with a wicked world and be a Christian. You can marry an unsaved person and be a Christian. You can run with the wrong crowd and be a Christian, but if you're going to belong to God's peculiar treasure, you will have to run with God's treasure. You can join anything you want to join that God's treasure belongs to, if you want to be one of God's peculiar treasure. I am not joining the "Elks" or the "Lions" or the "Elephants." I want to be one of God's peculiar treasure. If I do, then I will make my best friends with His treasure.

The Lord looked down and He said, "What a dark world! The people have turned from Me. Oh, the idolatry, the heathenism, the secularism, the atheism! Look at the darkness of a world that hates Me. Listen! I hear some people singing, 'Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.' I hear, 'There is a Name I love to hear, I love to sing It's worth.' I hear some people talking. There are a couple of people standing at the door of the First Baptist Church of Hammond saying, 'Good morning! God bless you. We love the Lord.' I hear some people singing. I hear a choir singing. They are singing about Me. Shhhh. I hear a preacher preaching about Me." The Lord strains His ear. The Lord says, "Shhh, listen to that group. The world does not think much about them. The world thinks they are a bunch of fanatics. They get hated. To Me, they are My peculiar treasure!"

V. They Had Regular Fellowship One with the Other.

These folks met for fellowship. They met to encourage each other. They met to strengthen each other. They met to help each other. They met to give strength, courage and cheer to each other. They met Sunday morning, you might say, and Sunday night, you might say, and Wednesday night, you might say. Why? They are fanatics; these people who belong to God's peculiar treasure.

Oh, I suppose you could come to church just on Sunday morning and be a Christian, but you could not belong to God's peculiar treasure. I guess you could come to church on Sunday night and not come back on Wednesday night and still go to Heaven when you die, but you could not be a part of God's peculiar treasure. You could drop your dollar bill in the collection plate Sunday after Sunday and maybe be a Christian, but you cannot refuse to tithe and belong to God's peculiar treasure. If you want to belong to God's peculiar treasure, you are going to have to stand for Him in a darkened world, meditate about Him day and night, talk about Him with God's people, meet with His people, and make your treasure His treasure. To me, one of the sweetest phrases in the Bible would have to be this one, "When I make up My jewels."

God looked down and saw darkness. There was an idol on every corner. Heathenism covered the land. I think the Lord said, "I did not make them for that. I made them to love Me. I made them to fellowship with Me." Oh, He made the sun rise in the morning and He put it down in the evening. Oh yes, He pulled out the stars at night and put them in their right places. He set the moon in its socket. He kept the sun just far enough away so that it would not melt the earth but close enough to keep it from freezing. He kept all the birds of the air and all of the beasts of the field fed. Yet this was a sad day for God. It was so dark. There was nobody much to whom He could talk. In the darkness of the day, the Lord heard somebody say, "I love God." His ears turned that direction. He looked down and saw a little huddle of people. It is a strange crowd of people. It is the strangest crowd you ever saw. They go to church on Sunday morning and Sunday night. Did you know that some of those nuts go back on Wednesday? That is a strange crowd. They carry an old black Book that has not one single picture in it. They say that they love it. A strange group of people are those Christians!

Do you know what they do? They give their church ten percent of all that they make! Strange people! Do you know what they do? They go down there and hear that preacher stand up and holler about how crooked they are. They like it! They are the strangest crowd. You ought to hear the songs they sing. They get down on their knees and talk to Someone somewhere. They call it praying, and they say that they like it. They will not bet on a ball game. They will not go to the company Christmas party because of the liquor. They pass out tracts. The Lord listens and says, "That is sweet. How sweet! Those people are thinking about Me. They love Me. They talk about Me. I am going to put them as a part of My peculiar treasure!"

Now, dear friend, if you are a Christian, there is something more that God wants you to be. He wants you to be a part of His segula, His peculiar treasure. Fanatics? Yes. Misunderstood? Yes. Peculiar people? Yes. Nuts? Yes. Yet when Jesus comes with trumpet sound and the graves are overturned, the stones roll into the valleys, the bodies of those who are saved are caught up to meet the Lord in the air, we are transformed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, and we see Christ, you will be glad you belonged to His segula, His peculiar treasure!

May I ask you a question: Are you standing for God? Do you think about the Lord day and night? Do you speak about the Lord? Do you run with the Lord's treasure? Are you faithful to God's church? Do you fellowship with His people? Why not say, "I am going to be more than a Christian. I am going to be a part of God's peculiar treasure, His segula."

13. Dwell Deep

"Brother Hyles, my oldest daughter didn't get into First Baptist Church and under your ministry early enough. My younger children are fine but my oldest daughter was too old when we got here." These words were said to me in the past few days.

"Pastor, I have several children, but my oldest son was a teenager when we came to First Baptist Church. My oldest son is on dope. He didn't get here early enough." These are words that I hear over and over again. At least once a month somebody in this church says, "My oldest children or my oldest child got here too late."

I have been preaching now for over 25 years. I have preached long enough to see a generation of young people grow up. I have pastored five churches, and so I have seen a lot of young people grow up. Many of them have turned out right. God has given me preacher boys, dozens of them, all across the country. I am sorry to say, there are some who have not turned out so well. I was sitting

in my office one day and there came a knock at the door. When I answered the door, I saw a young man who said, "My name is..." and he called his name.

I said, "Where are you going?"

"Just around the country."

"Where have you been?"

"Just around the country."

"Where are you staying?"

"Well, in just one rescue mission after another."

"I know who you are," I said.

"Well, of course," he said, "I'm 21 years of age now. I used to be in the Primary Department of your church in east Texas."

What is he? He is a narcotic. What is he? He is a drunkard, stumbling into one rescue mission after another at the age of 21. His mother and dad were faithful to the church that I pastored in east Texas.

One of the boys that I pastored in Garland, Texas, sits behind bars in prison today.

One of our finest men came to me last week and said, "My son is gone! He is just ruined!"

What is the difference? The difference is wrapped up in our little statement: Dwell deep! Those that turn out the best dwell deep.

What does it mean to *"dwell deep"*? The Lord said to Dedan, *"Dwell deep."* Jeremiah 49:8. Dedan was a tribe of Arabs dwelling with Edomites, the descendants of Esau. When the Dedanites were attacked by a powerful foe, they would pack up everything they had, take their children, leave the Edomites, and go to the rose-red city of Petra. There they would hide in the rocks. The messenger would say, "Dedan, dwell deep. Dedan, dwell deep." They would know a powerful foe was attacking, pack up their stuff, leave the Edomites, go to the rose-red city, and *"dwell deep"*. They would hide back in the caves of the rose-red city of Petra.

Anyone can see the powerful foes that are attacking our children today. It is no problem whatsoever to see the powerful foes: humanism, communism, rationalism, new morality, narcotics, our educational system, lewdness, dirty books and plays, etc. All these are our enemies. Satan is after your child!

Check sometime and see how many times the word *"abide"* is used in the Bible. Jesus said, *"Abide in Me,"* not "visit Me." The word *"abide"* means "to dwell." He said, *"Let My Word abide in you."* He wants not only daily Bible reading, but the Word is to dwell in us all the time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Give yourself to God! Let God live in you. Live in Christ. Make Christ your habitat. Make Him your dwelling place. Do not just come to church Sunday morning, pay your respects to God and drop your collection in the offering plate, but live for Christ and live in the Bible every day of the year, every hour of the day, every minute of the hour, every little second!

Check in the Bible how many times the word *"delight"* is mentioned. Psalm 37:4, *"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart."* Psalm 1:1, 2, *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth He meditate day and night."* Don't come to church like you pay your taxes on April 15. Don't come like you go to a dentist.

Don't come to church like you take a dose of castor oil. Delight yourself in the church of God. Delight yourself in the work of God. Don't make it just a part of your life; make it your life. Dwell deep.

Check the Scriptures and see how many times you find the word *"wholly"* in the Bible. God wants all of you, every bit of you. Why does God want us to be what the world calls "fanatical"? Why does God want us to be religious fanatics, if you please? Why does God want us to dwell in Christ, in the Word of God and serve Him all the time? Listen! This old world says, "Everybody needs religion. Everybody needs a little taste. It sort of holds you together. Everybody ought to have a little bit. Everybody ought to go on Sunday morning."

Oh, my brother and sister, God doesn't want just Sunday morning. He wants Sunday afternoon and Sunday night. God wants Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Why do you think God wants so much? I'll tell you. God knows what is best for you!

If we are going to rear our children right, we must learn to dwell deep! We have to say to our kids, "Sit up and listen to the preacher!" We have to say to our kids, "We are going to build our lives around the church. We are not going to have church and God on one side of our lives and friends and pleasure on the other side." We must say to our families, "The world is getting so rotten that we must dwell deep in the Word of God, in the work of God and the church of God."

I am thinking right now about a fellow who is on dope. He is one of our finest boys (so we thought). He grew up in our church. He has sung behind this pulpit. He is from one of our finest families. We have no better people than these people. I can recall in the last few months seeing him move toward the back of the auditorium. I remember seeing him slide down in his seat and whisper during a sermon. Let me tell you, my precious friend, if we want our boys and girls to be decent, we will have to say to them, "Dwell deep in the things of God."

God wants your children to turn out right, and if they do turn out right, we must, as families and as individuals, dwell deep!

I. We Ought to Dwell Deep in Salvation.

What do I mean? I mean we ought to accept nothing but a know-so, positive, assured, born again salvation experience. Dwell deep in salvation. Satan wants us to join the church, take communion, get baptized, take the Eucharist, get confirmed, get sprinkled, be religious and believe in God, but he does not want us to be born again. Be sure in your heart that you have real, genuine salvation. Dwell deep in salvation.

A fool in this house today is that person who sits here and belongs to some religion or belongs to some church, but does not know that he is born again.

Dr. Walter Wilson once said to me, "Dr. Hyles, I want to tell you something. I know that I'm near death, but I know I am saved. That may sound trite to you, for I am a preacher, but did you know

that there are a lot of preachers who are not saved? Dr. Hyles, I know I'm near death." (By the way, he lived many months after that.) "There is one thing I know, more than that I live. There is one thing I know! I've been born again! I know that I am saved!"

Then Dr. Wilson told me a very sad story: "A famous preacher was dying." (If I called his name, many would know of him.) "He served in Indiana for some years. He wrote books. He came to his deathbed. I went beside his bed and watched him die. Dr. Hyles, that preacher looked up at me and said, 'Walter, I've got something to confess to you.'

I asked him, 'What?'

He looked at me and said, 'Walter, I haven't been saved. I'm not saved!'

I said, 'Make it right!'

The fellow looked up with glassy eyes and said, 'I'm not saved! "I'm going to hell. I can feel the fire now!'

I said, 'Okay, you know how to be saved. You've preached the Gospel. You know how to lead folks to Christ. You know the Bible. Then trust the Saviour.'

He looked up and said again with glassy eyes, 'Walter, I'm not saved! I'm going to hell! I can feel the fire now!'"

Oh, my beloved friends, don't think that just because you believe in God you will go to Heaven! Dwell deep! Don't settle for church membership only. Don't settle for confirmation. Don't settle for baby baptism. Don't settle for living a good life or joining a good church! Know that you are saved! Dwell deep! Heed the admonition of the Apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:10, *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if we do these things, ye shall never fall."* Are you born again? Dwell deep!

II. We Ought to Dwell Deep in Service for God.

This year every born again Christian ought to dwell deep in a fundamental church. I am talking to some folks who are born again but whose membership is in a church that is liberal. You have affiliated yourself with a denomination that belongs to the National Council, or other liberal organizations. Get out of those liberal, modernistic churches. I say to you this morning that the time has come when the foes are so rampant that we need to be dwelling deep. Get in a fundamental church! Get your family in a church that teaches the Bible, decency, morality and integrity. Get your family in a Gospel-preaching church.

You say, "I'm going to pray about it."

Get in it and then pray about it. You don't have to pray about with which crowd you ought to run. You don't have to pray about what kind of a church you join. The very idea of people lining up with the enemy! How terrible! The very idea of your lining up with enemies of the Gospel that deny the Bible, the virgin birth, the blood atonement and the new birth! Dwell deep in an old-fashioned, Bible-preaching church. These are serious days. These are days when every weapon of hell's armory has been pointed at your family.

If you are going to rear your children in the nurture and admonition of God, you will have to dwell deep in a Bible-preaching, fundamental church. Dwell deep! First Baptist Church people, dwell deep! Fellowship with this church. Come on Sunday morning, yes, but come back on Sunday night. Dwell deep! Come back on Wednesday night. Dwell deep! Be sure your boys and girls center their lives around the church. Dwell deep! Put your children in the children's choirs. Dwell deep! Put your children in Sunday school. Dwell deep! Get your teenagers in the youth activities. Dwell deep! Get your boys and girls in the soul-winning groups. Dwell deep! Get your kids coming to junior activities. Dwell deep! Make sure your children's lives are not built around public schools that are getting more godless by the day, but around the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dwell deep! Families, if you want to turn out like God wants you to, dwell deep in giving. Dwell deep in the Word of God. Don't read just two or three verses a day; dwell deep in the Bible. Don't say just a prayer before you go to bed at night; dwell deep in prayer. Don't pray just when it is convenient; dwell deep. Don't just teach a Sunday school class or witness occasionally if it is convenient; dwell deep. Don't live for Him just when it's convenient; dwell deep. DWELL DEEP!

Young parents, dwell deep as you put that baby in the nursery. Dwell deep and see that that baby centers its life around the work of God. Dwell deep, teenager. Dwell deep. There's not a one of you that will turn out right unless you dwell deep in the Word of God. You can't go out and flirt and hobnob with the world that is an enemy of the Word of God and turn out right. You must dwell deep. You cannot play around with the wrong crowd, play around with the wrong girls and date the wrong fellows and turn out right; you must dwell deep. You cannot read your Bible just occasionally, remembering a verse here and there; you must dwell deep in this Book to turn out right for God. You cannot say just a few prayers about a minute a day and expect to turn out right; you must dwell deep.

When the powerful foe came, the Dedanites left the Edomites and hid in the rose-red city of Petra. They went alone. They would dwell deep. Why? The enemy was coming. The danger was at its peak. They must dwell deep.

Somebody asked me one time about David, my son, when he was a little tyke. I said, "David is going to turn out right."

The fellow said, "You're cocky! How do you know he is going to turn out right?"

I said, "Because I'm going turn him out."

When Becky was born, I got her home from the hospital and put her on the floor. I got on my knees over her and I looked down beside her and said to Satan, "Devil, I do not know where you are, but this is one you are not going to get!"

You say, "Well, you just can't ever know how they are going to turn out."

That is not true! THAT IS NOT TRUE! There is a way you can know. You take the child when he is born and put him in the nursery.

You say, "He may get a germ!"

I've been to your house, and that nursery is ten times as clean! By the way, I would rather that he get a germ at the church than for him to be in a sterilized place at home. Put him in the nursery. Rear him there. Bring him to Sunday school. Don't let him miss. When company comes, bring company along to Sunday school, or let them stay at home by themselves. Teach your child the

Bible. Teach him honor. Teach him decency. Teach him character. When he gets to be four years old, put him in the Beginner Choir.

You say, "But he can't sing."

Let him croak! Every time the Sunday school class has a social, be sure he is there. Every time the Sunday school doors are opened, be sure he is there. For every service, be sure he is present. On Sunday night, be sure he is there. On Wednesday night, be sure he is there. When he is four years old, enroll him in the Hammond Baptist junior kindergarten, and let him grow up through the kindergartens, the elementary school, the junior high school, the high school and the college.

Dwell deep, oh Dedan! Dwell deep, moms and dads! Dwell deep, teenagers! Build your life around God. Have your social life at church. Have your dating at church. Go with girls at church. Marry somebody who is born again! Dwell deep in the Word. Dwell deep in prayer. Dwell deep in separation. Dwell deep in your life for God. Dwell deep in church. Dwell deep in fellowship. Dwell deep. DWELL DEEP!

I know I am going to lose some people. I am sure I already have. I don't want to lose anybody; I love everybody in this church. God knows that I do. That is one reason why I do the best I can to preach like I am preaching this morning.

Somebody is going to get mad and say, "I just cannot stand it any longer!"

I would rather help you than keep you. I do not want to lose you, but I would rather help you than have those numbers on that attendance board. I am not trying to have just the largest Sunday school in the world; I want the First Baptist Church of Hammond to be composed of a great crowd of people who love God, love the Bible, love the people, dwell deep in the life for God, hide in Christ, and give themselves wholly to God.

Dwell deep! DWELL DEEP! The enemy is approaching. Narcotics are tempting all of our kids. Dwell deep! The best of our kids are tempted with liquor. Dwell deep!

The Dedanites leave the Edomites and dwell deep in the rocks of the rose-red city.

If you are saved and if you are a parent, I beg you to lead your family to dwell deep. Young people, teenagers, children, dwell deep!

You say, "Brother Hyles, there is one youth activity that I just don't like. I just don't enjoy that one."

Then just go and have a bad time. Dwell deep!

"I just don't like the director of my choir."

Go anyhow. Dwell deep!

"But Brother Hyles, I don't like it."

Well now, that's too bad. We would not want you to have anything that you would not like. It just so happens that I didn't like the medicine I had to take. I can recall my mother getting castor oil and giving it to me. She also gave me black draught. My mother would say, "Open your mouth, son."

Did you ever give medicine to a dog? You stick that spoon in, you pry his mouth open, you pour it down and you shut his mouth quickly.

I would like to be able to open your mouth and say, "If you don't like it, take it anyway; it's good for you."

The doctor says, "Take three spoonfuls of this a day."

"Well, I don't like it."

"Take it anyhow; you need it!"

"I don't like the youth prayer band."

"Take it anyhow; you need it!"

"I just don't like all the things we do on the youth activities."

"Do it anyway!"

"I don't like the Bill Rice Ranch."

"Go anyway!"

"I don't like to go with all these kids that go on the activities."

"Go anyhow! You need it!"

Don't you realize that we don't try to give you stuff that always tastes good; but that we try to give you what you need? You need it! Dwell deep! I decided a couple of years ago that we may lose our kids, but we are going to die trying!

I wish you could stand in the pulpit just one time and know what it is to know what they need. You have the medicine they need. You know it. Stand up here like I do, and watch some turn out bad. Watch some mother come to the office; wonder if she is going to live. You get your handkerchief and wipe her tears off her cheeks, close the door, and then remember how you had begged, tried, preached, hoped and dreamed. You wonder, was it worth it?

Thank God, there are still some who are obedient. Kids, dwell deep. Moms and dads, dwell deep. Dwell deep. Trust me like you would trust a doctor, like you would trust a lawyer; trust your preacher! I see things you do not see. By the way, when it comes to a thing like this, I know things you do not know. Dwell deep!