

**1. The Necessity and Nature of Covenant** (Monday 21 June 1976, morning)

I've been carrying in these days a rather heavy concern in my spirit for what is going on across the world in God, and it almost seems to me like the charismatic honeymoon is over, and that we are settling into the very serious business of laying the foundations for God's great last demonstration of his redemptive power and glory in the earth, which brings us to the perpetual paradox, between joy and suffering, which is a part of the kingdom process, that it's not all one or the other, as Kirkegard says, 'It's not "either-or."' It's not quite that simple. Karl Barth said, 'He who walks the pathway through treads the razor edge of heresy.' You're walking a tightrope constantly. You can be taken up with the ecstatic aspects of the Spirit-filled life, and miss completely the character building aspects, or, you can be so taken up with the character building aspects that you completely lose the joy of the Spirit, and become morbid. And, I feel that there are some very necessary things to be said in this hour, that have to be said to God's people and I, I don't see just you here this morning, I see across the earth multiplied thousands of men and women, many of whom I'm privileged to minister to, who are a part of what God is doing in this hour. It is for all of them that I carry such concern as God has permitted, nay, has imposed on me. For instance, I remember in those happy, ecstatic, euphoric early days, when we received the baptism of the Spirit and all of life was a kind of just a perpetual picnic, and one of my favourite passages with which to incite audiences to paroxysms of joy, was the passage in Second Corinthians where we are being changed from glory to glory. That was always good for about twenty minutes of ecstasy, until one day I decided I'd do a little in-depth research on the word 'glory', and that really fixed my text. It said that we're being changed. Now if I find anything in me, that is inclined to be stubborn, it's the challenge to change. Touch me superficially and I'm not bad, but don't reach down to my motivations, or you're in trouble. I don't want to be changed. And yet it is the very nature of the kingdom that if you and I are not being changed constantly, that the kingdom process has been arrested in us. There must be a constant change.

Coming out of my traditional theology, I might say that it was a joy to find out I could be changed, because my traditional theology told me that I couldn't be changed. For instance, my traditional theology was expressed by a Scottish Presbyterian who, coming to his charge, said, 'I want all of you people to know that as long as I'm your minister you'll never get out of Roman 7.' And, this was pretty much where many of us were. We were taught that God had saved us and we'd go to heaven someday, but in the meantime we had to put up with ourselves. When I discovered that I didn't have to put up with myself as I was, but that God could and would, and intended and desired to change me, that was really good news, because I had settled down to a kind of a morbid endurance contest, hoping the Lord would come quickly, or maybe I'd die prematurely. \*laughter\* Now we laugh at that, but this is where thousands of people are. They are told that they got born again, and they have an old man and they have a new man and they're perpetually in contest, while you, whoever you are, a kind of third disinterested party, \*laughter\* you sit by and watch this equal tug of war that is never settled. This was my position. And I was doing some work on Romans 6 one day and I decided to consult a commentator for whom I had little or no use. I won't tell you who it is, because I'd offend some of you, but I decided on this occasion I'd consult him on Roman 6, which I did. And he said, 'Some of my brethren do not believe that they can arrive in victory over sin until they die', which was my position of course. He said, 'This then makes the act of physical death more powerful, more efficacious and dynamic than the death of Christ.' At that point I slammed the commentary shut, and I said, 'That justifies my dislike for this fellow!' \*laughter.\* But the hook was in my jaw, and my Irish mother started to come through, and I began to chuckle as I saw exactly what he says, that if I believe that, then I'd say, 'Oh hasten blessed heart attack and bring me into victory.' 'Come quickly oh terminal cancer, that I may enter into the joy of sanctification.' And the humour of it caught me, and I realised that I was indeed not

giving the power and the dynamic and the authority to the redemptive work of Christ, which belonged to it, and that was the beginning of the chain.

When it comes to this, 'being changed from glory to glory', I was still getting a lot of joy out of this until I researched 'glory', and I found that probably an over simplified definition of 'glory' is 'the visible manifestation of the invisible attributes of God', and what God was doing with me, was that he was working on me by the Holy Spirit, as I lived in the Word, and by that combination he was changing my nature, that my nature might evermore express the invisible attributes of God. It was said of our Lord Jesus that, 'we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father', and as our Lord's humanity was perfected and brought into maturity, and he became God's model man, he learned obedience by the things he suffered. And I saw that glory carried in it suffering, that it meant that God was going to reach down into the core of my character, and he was going to lay hold on some of the precious behaviour patterns and thought patterns that I'd cherished for years, and he was going to change them. He was going to tear them out by the roots and replace them. He was going to take pictures off the art gallery of my soul and replace them with more worthy pictures, that he was going to renovate my vocabulary, that he was going to completely alter my philosophy, that he had started a programme that he wasn't going to finish until I was conformed to the image of his Son. And about that point, I remembered how my little grandson - I used to lead the services from a piano - my little grandson when he was about two years old, he had his own little tambourine, and he was very sensitive to the presence of God, and when there'd be a moving of the Spirit of God, he'd slip out of his seat, wherever he was, and he'd come up, and he'd just stand beside me and play his tambourine, and every few seconds he'd say, 'Gory!' \*laughter\*

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. Then I saw that there was another way of pronouncing that text. We are being changed from gory to gory. There is a gory side to glory, and that's the side that is changing. Well, I've said all of that to introduce my subject because it is going to demand from us change, unless you have already arrived at ultimate maturity, then I'm wasting my time. Paul said that in preaching to others, he said to Timothy, 'you'll save yourself, as well as those that hear you.' So I'll probably go through some changes this week too. I want to talk to you this week on the matter of Covenant. Covenant. And if you'll be patient with me this Monday morning, we're going to probably labour a bit technically this morning to establish accurate foundations upon which to build our theme. I became interested in Covenant in this dimension about six, seven years' ago, I'd always been interested in it, having studied covenant theology, I thought I understood Covenant, but when I began to study Covenant, just as the Bible taught it, this is one of the tensions between theological training, and biblical instruction. Theological training starts out on some basic assumptions, and then sort of makes the scriptures fit the assumptions, so that the system of theology worked out, and I had a system of theology and I had enough scriptures to make it work out. But I find invariably that when you do that, you violate a basic rule of interpretation, and that is that you have to leave some scriptures out to support all of your positions, and this is some of the inconsistency in theological training. They talk about, 'a sound biblical hermeneutic.' That means a sound principle of interpretation, then they turn right around and, with whatever it is they impose their system of theology on you, which at some point violates this hermeneutic, or this system of interpretation, and I knew that the basic rule of interpretation was this, and if you don't know it, you should learn it, it'll save you from lots of trouble, that you take all that the scripture has to say on any given subject, and that is the doctrine of the subject. Now that's a simple rule. If you leave out any scripture in the Bible on the theme that you are discussing, then you are running the risk of having a distorted concept of that subject. So many people build a pyramid on a peg. They take a text out of context, turn it into a pretext, and as a result they have a distorted concept. Now when you've taken all that scripture has to say on any given subject, even then you only have the material with which to

build your house. Now you have to sort it out, and in sorting it out, you take all of the positive affirmative statements and they receive first consideration. Then you take all of the supportive supplemental statements and you fit them into the mosaic. So that when I came to covenant, and I decided that I was going to just turn aside from all theological concepts, and just attack it biblically, following what I believed was a sound principle of interpretation, I started to find some very exciting things, and this was in Chicago when I was doing some pastoral work there, and one day driving home after I'd given about seven sessions on Covenant, Ruth said to me, she said, 'You know, it appears to me that the whole Bible is Covenant.' I said, 'Yes, it is. It's the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.' It's all covenant, because the word testament is interchangeable with the word covenant. And when you understand that, then you begin to see that probably the most important word, and the most important concept for you and me is Covenant, to understand what that word means, and what it implies, and what it entails for us, and how it involves us.

And so as we go into this now, just for a moment, looking at the word, and the words, both the Hebrew and the Greek, and then starting to build our house, this morning we'll probably just lay a foundation and then in subsequent meetings we'll start to make the various applications that are necessary. One more thing. Our Lord said that it was characteristic of the end of any age – I'm keeping myself free there - that it was characteristic that toward the end of any age, betrayal would be one of the things that would become prominent among the people. They would become Covenant breakers, that when the tensions are on and the pressures are on, I will forfeit my relationship to you for self-preservation. But when things are going well, my relationship to you is not threatened, because I'm not threatened, but if at anytime I am threatened, then my relationship to you is dispensable to preserve me. Now I believe we're in one of those periods, and I believe that one of the major words that we must lay hold upon is loyalty, and what it means to enter into a covenantal relationship. When I'm finished this week, I'm going to hope that I have talked into your heart the absolute necessity of integrity and loyalty, not only in your relationships with and to God, but in your relationships with and to those with whom you are in fellowship in covenant community.

Now God has a problem in reaching us with what he wants to say to us. The problem is, he's God, as Bryn so eloquently spoke of him last night in so many aspects. God, being God, has that problem, that he holds all truth simultaneously, he never remembers anything because there is nothing he's forgotten, he never has to learn anything, because there is nothing he does not know. There's nothing in him that should be out of him, there's nothing out of him that should be in him. He's the eternal 'now' who created the time-space world of history. He's apart from time, but he has entered time. He can stand at the end of history and review it before it has ever happened. Now he who holds all truth simultaneously, wants to transmit his mind to us, which is basic to the meaning of covenant, that God wants to speak to us. What is his problem? His problem is language. 'He who made the mouth, shall he not speak, and he who made the ear, shall he not hear?' And so in the Bible we find that God is anthropomorphised, that is, he appears as a man. The Bible says he's not a man, but to make himself understandable to us, he allows you and me to think of him as a man. He has eyes, he has a nose, he has hair, he has a mouth, he has ears, he has hinder parts, he has feet, he has arms, he has hands, he has a finger, and so on. Now God is not a man, but so you and I can understand him, he has chosen to speak to us as a man. In communicating with us then, he has to use language that is common to men, and so he has reached down into the human customs and the human vocabularies, and he's picked up what is necessary for his purpose and he has brushed it off and cleansed it, and then he's refilled it with divine meaning, which is not totally detached from its human meaning, never totally detached, that's the reason he chose it. He takes a word that we all know, and he takes that word, and he knows that it's been in bad company, but he cleans it off, and then he fills it with his own meaning, so that you can understand what he's trying to say to you.

For instance, take the word 'love', when he wanted a word for love, the Greek language is the universal language, and he took a look at the words that the Greeks were using for 'love'. He looked at the word *eros* and he decided not to use that. Now *eros* in itself is not a bad word, it's what it becomes because of sin. *Eros* is really the love between a man and a woman. It has deteriorated into 'erotic', which has a very bad connotation. Then he took a look at the word *phileo*, and he said that will serve some purposes, so he incorporated that into the divine text. He looked at another word, the word *storge*, which means family love, and he said, well, I think I can use that. But none of these are really suitable to describe my love. And then he picked the word that the Greeks hadn't used very much, so it hadn't got too muddled up, and he reached down, and he took the Greek word *agape*, and he made that his word, and then he poured into it all of the meaning of his outgoing to us, and *agape* becomes the word of God's love to man.

Now when he wanted to talk about his basic task of reaching us, he used a Hebrew word *berith*, which is translated in the Old Testament, 'covenant'. Now when you look at the word *berith*, because you've got to look at words, you see words are symbols. If you had not ever seen a glass, if you not ever seen a – I'm going to call that a glass, it's not really, it's plastic, but I'm going to call it a glass, now if you'd not ever seen a glass, and I said to you 'a glass', that word would mean nothing to you, but, I just take a moment and I say, 'Folks, that's a glass.' Now you don't have to see it the next time the word is mentioned. Somebody said, 'glass', immediately you have a picture of that which the word 'glass' symbolises. Do you understand what I'm saying? All words are symbols. The word in itself is not the thing, it's the symbol of the thing. So when you look at a word, you say, 'What does it mean?' And you've got to know what words mean.

For instance I knew an old illiterate preacher in Canada, and he took the little phrase, 'and it came to pass'. He said, 'Thank God it didn't come to stay.' \*laughter.\* Now he was quite sincere. On another occasion he was reading in Job, and he said about something being 'as swift as a post'. Well in Job's day it meant being as swift as the one who carries messages from one to another, but his understanding was, he said, 'You know, when you're sitting in a train and the train is speeding along, and it's going by the telephone poles,' he said, 'that means, swift as a post.' If you can imagine Job riding on a train by the telephone posts. \*laughter.\* Now, if you don't understand the word that you're using, then you don't know what it means. You've got to understand what it means. So the study of words has become very important, and when you look at the word *berith* and you go to study it, with a technical help, you find that it's shrouded in a mist of mystery, and you come out with about three meanings, all of which are very significant. Probably the major first meaning of *berith* is to bind, to pass a sentence legally, a binding sentence that determines the fate of someone in punishment or incarceration, or it could mean a decree, but it's something that is binding, it's something that has authority attached to it. Now let me say this very simply to you, when we're talking about covenant, the basic fact of covenant is the word of God. You and I are here, believe what we believe, are doing what we are doing, entirely on the basis of the measure of our understanding of what God has said. God has spoken. There are not any more three more thrilling words in all language than those, 'God has spoken'.

Now if God has spoken, what has he said? There can't be anything more important than what God has said, but here's where we get into a lot of trouble. We take the words that God has spoken, we fail to define them carefully, we use them loosely, and many times where God has spoken isn't how we interpret it, it's something altogether different. So we have to take great care that we know what God has said. Now in the word *berith* he is saying, first of all, 'My word is binding. My word is a decree. My word is not subject to change. My word has in it no admixture of fallibility. My word does not allow of mitigation or dilution. I, God, who am first, before me there is none other, and beside me, there is none other, and I am the ultimate, because after me there will be none other. I am the God supreme, superlative, there

is none like unto me. I am the self-existent one, I derive my life from no one. I have lived endlessly.' Now we're into the realm of incomprehensibility. We don't understand time. The Hebrews had no word for the endlessness of time, nor did the Greeks. Who can understand the endlessness of time? Anyway, God doesn't live in time. He made time. He lives in a dimension that we can't comprehend. I can comprehend days and weeks and years, but God made those. What does God live in? The closest we can come to it is that he lives in now, but for us now is now, and then was then, and tomorrow is tomorrow. But with God it's all now.

Now if that confuses you, it confuses me. \*laughter\* And I was so pleased last night that Bryn laid a foundation of the nature of God as he did, because it serves as a real foundation for the things that I want to say to you. If you and I do not this morning affirm, as a first fact of our faith as Christians, that God's word is ultimate, final, unchangeable, and non-negotiable. That's the basic meaning of *berith*, covenant. Now the secondary meaning for *berith* is a sacrifice. It's involved in blood. It has to do with life exchange, and we'll come to that as we move along. The third meaning that is inherent in the word *berith* is eating together, fellowship, and so already, just defining the word, we start to see something of the unfolding of God's purposes, both before sin and after sin, that God's word, whether it is to unfallen Adam, or whether it is to Adam after the fall, that that word is final, ultimate, cannot be abrogated, is non-negotiable, cannot be changed. It has to be received for what it is, the word of God. Now do we have that clear? I'm sure we have.

We have it clear up here, but we have a hard time handling some of it in our thought and behaviour situation. We say, 'I know God said, but...' and then follows our own little interpretive commentary, which is usually designed to accommodate us in our lesser response to his work.

Now when we come into the New Testament, we find the Lord again looking around in the Greek vocabulary to find a word to accommodate covenant. Now there are two words, and I don't have a chalkboard, so I want you to listen carefully. There are two words that are translated covenant in the Greek language. One is *diatheke* and the other one is *syntheke*. Now you will notice there's something alike in both of them, and something different, the difference is the prefix. The first one is *dia-theke*, *syn-theke*. Now, *syntheke* means an agreement made between two people, and is never used in the New Testament, never used. *Diatheke* is translated both covenant and testament, and so it kind of sneaks up on it through the back door. We'll look at it in terms of testament. For instance, Gerald has a lot of money. This is purely theoretical, of course, \*laughter\* but he has a lot of money, and he's getting old and decrepit, and soon to leave this scene of time, and so he arranges a meeting with his solicitor, and he said, 'I want to draw up my will, my testament.' And he determines in that will the disposal of his estate. Now that's his perfect right to do that. He can do that. And that's why the one time the word *diatheke* is used as a testament in the book of Hebrews, it has that meaning. The rest of the time it means covenant, and is always used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint, it is always used to translate *berith*. Please hang with me, I'm not trying to be pedantic, but we've got to understand this basically, before we can move into the shouting and the tambourines. Okay.

Now let's take a look at this word that God chose to speak of covenant in the New Testament, and which is used for the translation of the Hebrew word *berith*. *Diatheke* is the imposition of the will of a superior on an inferior. There is never any question in the word of God that God came down and held a council with all the wise and prudent among men, as to what he should do about the human race. God, out of his own sovereign good pleasure, hath made decrees as to what he proposes to do. Now, you're going to hear me repeat this several times, so I want you to get it now. He gives us his authoritative word, here it is, now listen carefully. 'You can accept it, you can reject it, but you cannot alter it.' You can accept it, you can reject it, but you cannot alter it. Now, I'm not saying that you won't alter it, but having altered it, it ceases to be that word and it becomes a bastard product, a synthetic, it no longer

is the real thing, and so having changed it, and saying, 'Now this is the word of the Lord', that is not the word of the Lord, you tampered with it. The word of the Lord cannot be changed. You can accept it, you can reject it, but you cannot alter it. Okay?

I'm going to give you just a few definitions, maybe two or three here, so that you'll know I'm not just talking out of my own head. Moulton and Milligan are probably two of the outstanding authorities on the Bible, and they say very simply, that in all of the ancient inscriptions the word means testament, will, with absolute unanimity, and such frequency, that illustration is superfluous. *Diatheke* is an arrangement made by one party with plenary powers, which the other party may, now you see where I get the phrase, may accept, or reject, but cannot alter. Now it's necessary for you to understand the meaning of that word. Because when that word comes up, you know what we're talking about. It's not a whimsy of a kindly old man sitting on a throne who looks like Saint Nicholas. It is the word of an absolute authoritarian God who functions out of a righteous, benign concern for a universe for which he's responsible. He's not arrogant, he's not arbitrary, there is no trace of darkness in him. He is light and in him is no darkness at all. Therefore his word is a pure word, it's a word of infinite integrity, it has no taint or tinge of fallacy in it. It is a final word, it's a comprehensive word, it's a word applicable to time, and all time, and all history and its implications reach outside of time into the very atmosphere of God himself. All I'm trying to press in upon you this morning is that all of our Christian ills have derived from our tampering with the ultimate authority of God's covenantal word.

Let me give you another one. Bishop Westcott, who I believe to be a consummate scholar in these areas, says that *syntheke*, which is the horizontal thing, is very rare in the Septuagint. The choice of *diatheke* to express the notion of a divine covenant is easily intelligible. In a divine covenant the parties do not stand in the remotest degree as equal contractors. God in his good pleasure makes the arrangement, which man receives, though he is not passive, that's true, once God has given a word, it requires a human response. Such a covenant is a disposition, an ordainment, an expression of the divine will which they to whom it is made, reverently welcome.

I don't think I need to read the third one because it's so much like the others. Now, having laboured, and I ask your indulgence for labouring that, how many understand the nature of covenant as a word? May I have some expression, you understand the nature of covenant? It's extremely important, and you'll see as we go along, that if you do not understand the fact that at the bottom of the whole Christian thing, indeed at the bottom of the whole revelation of God into the human race, I'm sorry I said 'Christian', because this is one place where people, especially with an evangelical background, are completely hung up. Their whole concept of God is, 'Jesus saves'. And God is much bigger than, 'Jesus saves'. God upholds all things by the word of his power, God supports the universe, God runs the nations, God lifts up kings and puts down kings, establishes the boundaries, he's the God of the whole earth. Psalm 24:1 should be recited every morning by everyone of us. 'The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein.'

Now we're going to ask the question, 'Why is a covenant necessary?' 'Why a covenant?' Well, if the definition of the word is accurate, and I've every reason to believe it is, then the God who made man and made man in his own image, made him with ears and a mouth, made him to communicate with his fellow human beings, the God who made a mouth and ears and eyes then himself made them for a purpose, that they might be receptive to a word. And God, in one aspect of his being, is a word. 'In the beginning was the word.' The Son is the *logos*, the word, the communication of God to man, and so God communicates. Now, why is it necessary? Very simply, number one, it is necessary because of a creator-creature relationship. God, because he is the creator, and the greater, must speak to man the creature, who is the lesser. That's the very nature of covenant, the greater speaks to the lesser. Implicit if not explicit in the word 'covenant' is if God has spoken to you, he expects the courtesy of a

reply. When God the greater speaks to the lesser he expects the lesser to respond to the greater. Therefore, when God spoke to Adam, he said certain things to Adam that required a response from Adam. God just doesn't talk into thin air, God communicates with rational, responsible persons, made in his own image. That's the nature of creation. When God made man, he made him in his own image, and he made him in such a way that it was necessary to communicate with him. So when he made that magnificent man, with all of his systems go, there he lay stretched out on the ground, God, with infinite accuracy and craftsmanship, had moulded every part of his frame, all of his systems, circulatory, respiratory, the perfect being, but lay inert, and then God stooped down and kissed him, giving the breath of life, and he became a living soul, and then God spoke to him, which is the first meaning of covenant, 'God has spoken', and God said to him, 'Adam, I want you to rule the world, I want you to replenish the earth, I want you to have dominion over the fowl, and the fish', and so on. He said, 'I want you to become my delegated reigning representative in the earth. You are my king over the earth. I delegate my divine ultimate authority to you, but because you're a creature, I delegate my authority to you, and because you're a creature, I protect that authority, by putting around it a covenantal word.'

Now, he made a magnificent earth. When God made the world, he looked at it with infinite self-congratulation, with which there is nothing wrong. In fact, if you can handle it, there is nothing wrong with congratulating yourself. You ought to, the very meaning of praise, and aspects of praise, is to congratulate yourself on the goodness of God in your life. 'If any man would boast, let him boast in the Lord.' You should all say, 'I congratulate myself this morning that I'm a Christian, I congratulate myself.' In a very real sense, if the extreme Calvinist will pardon me, congratulate yourself for having the good sense to recognise a good thing, and get in on it. \*laughter\* But God, without any of the kind of pride that human beings have, he congratulated himself, and when he made something, he said, 'Ah, that's good.' Made something else, he said 'That's good.' He liked it. Made a man, and watched him for a while, and he said, 'That's not good.' \*laughter\* First time he ever said something wasn't good, was when he made a man, and the man was all alone, and he said, 'It's not good for that man to be alone.' And then we really got into trouble. \*laughter\* Maybe he should have stayed with his original....anyway, alright.

Having made the world he did something that almost implies that it was even more exquisite than the things that he had made in their naked nativeness. He made a garden right in the centre of the earth, probably somewhere in the area of Mesopotamia, but he made a garden. Now if you can imagine, you English people are, you know, consummate gardeners, and can you imagine what kind of a garden God would make? That ought to make every gardener here say, 'Hallelujah', at the very thought of it. Can you imagine the symmetry and the order and how he planted it, and every part of it? And then he made man, and he placed him in the garden, he put him in the garden, and that's where he put the man, was in the garden, and if man had stay put we wouldn't have had problems, but he didn't stay put, he got out of there. He put him in the garden, now he said to him, 'Adam, I want you to do two things. I want you to look after the garden and I want you to protect it.' From what? From the beasts of the field, who might come in and tear up what God was doing, because they were beasts, after all, beasts do that sort of thing, and because they were perfect beasts didn't mean that they wouldn't come in and trample the roses. \*laughter\* Um, I'm not dealing with Genesis 1 and 2, but it's very interesting that if Adam had guarded the garden that beast of the field wouldn't have got in to have that little conversation with his lady. But gee, he was probably off trying some new kind of cross breeding roses or something. \*laughter.\*

Now God laid a covenantal word on him. He said, 'Adam, of the fruit of every tree of the garden you may freely eat but of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.'

Now that's a covenantal word. Adam could accept it, he could reject it, but he couldn't change it. There was no way that Adam by any kind of rationalisation could make the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil permissible to himself. God had spoken, God had given a *berith* word, a covenantal word, God had said, 'Adam, I've given you the world, it's yours. I've given you a central headquarters, I've planted this garden myself, I've given you the knowledge whereby you can look after it.' You can imagine this man, this is no ambling ape, this is no evolutionary creature coming from an errant piece of protoplasm floating on the primaeval waters. This is a man. This is something fresh from the creative genius of God. God crafted this creature. Magnificent, just think that there hasn't been a day of sin to sully the clarity of his thinking, there isn't a disease germ that has run its way through his blood stream, there hasn't been anything to surprise and upset his nervous system. He moves in conscious tranquillity and authority as God's delegated king, he walks through the garden, he speaks to the animals, he looks after the flowers and the hedges, he's master. This is a magnificent creature, you and I are, are .... \*laughter\* tragic caricatures of the original, with our bare faces hanging out. See, the problem with the evolutionary theory, it never has been able to come up with that missing link, and that's the whole problem, because there just ain't one. Paul said that there is a flesh of fish, a flesh of fowl, a flesh of human beings. There just is no missing link, because God did not evolve man, God created man. But this magnificent man, and then eventually that exquisitely beautiful creature – ooh!- he takes a side out of Adam's living tissue and he builds her, that's the Hebrew word, he built her. Brother, she wasn't just made out of dust, she was living tissue taken out of Adam, and God built that beautiful creature, and she was magnificent, she was the sum total of the winners of all beauty contests of all time. \*laughter\* And he brought her to Adam and there it was, the perfect two, and the perfect two were to reproduce their own beautiful kind, and they were to export the life of the garden of Eden across the earth. Now if you're hearing me, as I hope you are, you'll know what I mean when I say nothing has changed. It is still God's intention to cover the earth with beautiful people. God's people are beautiful people. Actually, the dictionary definition of the word 'beautiful' is closer to order, than it is to that which is aesthetic. This is why I'm so excited at what is going on across the earth. You know why we Christians have never made any impact on the world? We're a disorderly ragtag mob. Fractured, ruptured, competitive, all in our own little bailiwick, doing own little thing, pot-shotting at one another over the top of a fence, and the world looks on, and says, 'What an ugly bunch!'

But God is bringing together a people in this hour, they're going to start to walk in such beautiful order, with homes and relationships and interpersonal concerns and communities of redeemed love functioning, until the world is going to behold what God intended from the beginning, and that was a humanity that gets it together under the authority of God, and demonstrates to the world that God destined for man that he shouldn't be in the mess that he's in. But he's going to do that by mediating that message, first through the Christ, and then through the body of Christ. Now, he said, 'Adam, there's just one thing. In the day you eat of that fruit you shall surely die.' Now that's a covenantal word. I imagine that shortly after Eve had come on the scene and Adam had got over the first shock of this delightful thing, that he took her on a tour of the garden, and he showed her all the variety of plants and trees and flowers, and then they came to this one.

'Now you should listen to me, Eve, are you listening?' \*laughter\*

'We don't eat that one.'

She probably looked up at this magnificent hunk of a man and said, 'Yes, dear.' \*laughter\*

And then they went on. You see God commanded the man not to eat of the tree, then the man commanded the woman. That's why even though Eve was responsible for the first opening of the door, Adam was ultimately responsible for the act. The woman was deceived.



Adam walked into it with his eyes open, which shows the power of the woman to persuade. Well, we'll leave that. \*laughter\*

The point I want to make is that God gave a covenantal word which Adam could, repeat it, could what? \*Accept, or reject, but could not alter.\* Say it again. \*Accept, or reject, but could not alter.\* You see it almost seems unfair in some ways that for the little inconsequential negligible misdemeanour of eating whatever it was, that such tremendous consequences should accrue. But you see the eating of the fruit in itself was not the important thing. That tree stood as a sacramental covenantal sanction. That tree stood to test the integrity and the loyalty of Adam to his God. I don't suppose that the fruit of that tree had any gastronomical effect, but it stood as the one thing God said you shall not do. 'This is my covenantal word. You may do this, you may do this, you must not do that, in the day you do that this will happen. You may accept this, Adam, you may reject it, but you can't change it.'

Now I know that in all of the approaches to this matter of covenant, many people have said, many authorities have said, that there was no covenant between God and Adam. But all of the concomitants, all of the components of a covenant were there. And the New American Standard Bible says in chapter 6 of Hosea, and I'd like you to turn to it, and with this we'll probably close. Hosea 6:4. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Hosea. \*laughter\* That's just to help you out. Aren't those prophets a bother? Some of you are still looking. It's in the Old Testament. \*laughter\* I don't blame you. I memorised them when I was a child, but I really got lazy, and I went and put tabs on mine, so I could get them in a hurry. If my old Bible teacher knew I had tabs, he'd come back from the dead and lacerate me. He said, 'If I catch anybody coming in here with a tabulated Bible...' \*laughter\* But he's dead. \*laughter\*

Verse 4 of chapter 6. It is a very important passage, because remember what I'm going to be getting at this week, I'm going to be getting at the heart of all of us, in terms of integrity, honesty, loyalty, the ability to endure, and be the people God wants in this hour. It was God's problem, has been all along. People would not obediently respond to the covenantal word. Alright? 'What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For you are loyal to me like a morning cloud, and like the dew which goes away early'. I didn't even know that. But I got up this morning at six o'clock and I wandered around through this maze of paths and this place was just literally enveloped in a mist. The mist has gone. What happened? The sun came along and the mist disappeared. This is what he is saying, he says, 'Your loyalty is about as dependable as a mist before the morning sun, and as the dew on the grass, which when the sun rises, it just goes – it's gone.'

What a tremendous analogy of a superficial loyalty. See precious, people, I know you're not rolling in the grass and talking in tongues and prophesying, but for forty years I've watched Christian ecstasy without integrity. And I know in this hour when the nations can't be honest with one another, when society is filled with situational ethics and permissiveness, when it is the popular thing to violate your marriage vows, when no longer there are any mores that are absolute, everything is relativistic, this is the hour when God's people are either going to stand up and be men and women of integrity and loyalty, or the whole thing is going down the drain, but I don't accept that second proposition, because I believe God will make us stand, and I believe we're in an hour of destiny when God is bringing a people into relationship with himself, and with one another, where we're going to find a dimension of integrity and loyalty which will serve to bring the world back to its senses and recognise that God can change men, and make them the kind of people they should be.

Christianity is not merely cerebral, Christianity is behavioural. Alright. Verse 5 'Therefore, I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and with judgements on you, I, like the light that goes forth, for I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice.'

'Oh hallelujah, praise the Lord, wonderful Lord, hallelujah, glory to God', you go right out and pull a mean one on somebody.

God says, 'Don't bring me all that stuff. You can dance and beat your tambourines, and sing your head off, but if you can't be loyal to your neighbour, if you can't be faithful to your wife, if you can't keep a trust... Don't bang that tambourine, it stinks. I don't want to hear it, it's a dissonance in my ear.' He says, 'Israel, don't come up to your feasts, and go through all that religious rigmarole, as if you're fooling me, and your hearts are far from me.' He says, 'I inaugurated sacrifice to give you a chance to get back to integrity, not to use it as a buffer between you and me to hide your sin. Sacrifice is not to hide sin, it's to take it away, and give you a chance to become the people I intended you to be. Don't give me that stuff. I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice.'

You say, 'Don't you believe in all those other things?'

Oh yes, of course I do, if they are a true expression. Paul says, 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and I have not I agape', which is integrity and loyalty, 'I am as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.' I'm saying all this you ought to have done and not neglected the other. Man, I get this happy, I shout myself hoarse and all the rest of it, but that is no proof I'm a man of integrity. You see the Corinthians got drunk at the Lord's table, fornication was commonly reported among them, took one another to law, were divided up over preachers. They were a mess. They were a mess, and God laid it right on them, he said, 'Look, you can talk in tongues and work miracles, and prophesy, and interpret and all, understand all mysteries and be profound theologians and all the rest of it, but if you don't have the character of God functioning in your personal and interpersonal life, you haven't got anything that really counts. Now, I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings, but like Adam they have transgressed the covenant. They have dealt treacherously against me.' What did Adam do? Transgressed the covenant. How did he transgress the covenant? He transgressed the covenant by violating the word. He didn't obey the word of God, and for that, God put him out of the garden.

Now as we develop this covenantal theme, we're going to come in to some rather nitty-gritty areas, and I think you're going to see the difference between professional religion, and the Christianity of integrity that the word requires, and you're going to see how many times we've rationalised, and adopted and adapted substitutes and wondered why we couldn't find God. God and his word are indissoluble. If you're walking in his word, you're walking in his presence. If you walk out of his word, you leave him, because he stays with his word.

*Curb our hearts, gracious Father, as we break up now and go to lunch, we don't want to go in heaviness of heart or be discouraged, but Lord we don't want to be totally dedicated to the subjective side of things, we want to know that we are a people with a mission, that we are men and women that you are resting the weight of your purpose on, and that we have to be men and women of integrity and loyalty, and that you're speaking to us about covenant in these days. Help your servant to speak clearly and reach into the heart of us. We glorify thee our Father for the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ, by whose blood the new covenant has been ratified, and for the gracious Spirit of covenant that is come to produce the fruits of that covenant in our lives. Bless your people now our Father and give them great joy as they go together to break bread, in Jesus' name. Amen*

## 2. Covenant Developments (Monday 21 June 1976, evening)

It is the conviction of many thoughtful Christian men and women across the earth that there is something happening in the earth of a distinctive and unique dimension in the hour in which we're living. What is happening in every part of the earth now spiritually is something that probably wasn't even in the fondest imagination of God lovers and Christians and Bible believers ten to fifteen years' ago. As I said last evening<sup>1</sup> it is obvious God is up to something. If it were happening in one culture you might consider this some kind of a cultural phenomenon, but it is happening in all cultures and we're finding out in very deed that Jesus Christ was, and is, the Son of mankind. His own favourite name for himself was that, not that he shunned the term Son of God, but it almost appears that he felt that if he was refer to himself constantly as the Son of God it would turn him off from mankind, and so he constantly referred to himself as the Son of Man, as the Son of Mankind, which means that he is the black Jesus and he is a white Jesus, and he is a yellow Jesus, and he is a red Jesus. He is Anglo-Saxon and he is African, and he is East Indian, and American Indian, and whatever any man is, Jesus is, and as he is the Son of Mankind, his word, his incomparable word, that is applicable to all men, in all cultures, at all times of history, and so the word of God, and the God of the words, applies to men universally, and what is happening in the earth tonight is so extremely important that there are some of us, without having any messianic complex, or feeling that we're God's final prophet, who have a deep anxiety and concern that what is happening shall not be dissipated, in some form of superficial or shallow revivalism, that make its temporary contribution, and then is just a sort of an emotional memory. I believe that there is a depth of revelation and insight coming to the people of God that marks this as, if not that generation which shall be graced by God's ultimate manifestation, at least a generation that is well on the way toward it. The very fact that in the last ten or twelve years we've been able to see the deeply entrenched doctrinal and denominational viewpoints of multiplied thousands of people altered and changed, so that they can find it in their hearts to do what is being done here tonight, and that is enter into a corporate worship and praise of our one Lord Jesus Christ, without looking at each other suspiciously, as to where we stand theologically, this in itself is a miracle, and for this I praise God.

For in the fourth chapter of Ephesian the order of our ultimate unity is given. First we are to do everything in our power to keep the unity of the Spirit, Ephesians 4:4 says, and then it says that we, having got our hearts together and keeping the unity of the Spirit, we must move toward the unity of the faith. Now we've had everything backwards, which seems to be a kind of inherent tendency in humanity, and we have said, well we Christians will get together when we all believe the same thing, but that was never the divine intention. We get together first of all because of a common submission to the lordship of Christ, sealed by the Holy Spirit, by which we are brought into a common relationship with God and with one another, then we begin to find out what it's all about in our renewed minds, and God's ultimate in that is that we shall all speak the same thing, in fact Isaiah says, in Messiah's best day they shall see eye to eye in Zion.

Now, don't hinder that by saying, 'Impossible.'

If God has said it's possible, then it's going to happen, and I think that there are many things that will really blow our minds in the next few years as we see God doing things that we had considered impossible, for the simple reason we didn't believe God. Now we're beginning to see God doing things that we didn't think were possible, and this is getting us faith to believe he can do some more things that are impossible, for in his light we see light, and it's only as we walk in the light we have that more light is given. Now all of that is said simply to preface the message that I want to bring you this week. I have long since stopped preaching sermons. If you are a theologian here or a minister you have ample reason to question my

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<sup>1</sup> Was this a word spoken on the Sunday night, not in this series?

knowledge of homiletics and probably would like to give me a sound lesson in how to put together a sermon. I've stopped sermonising, my heart is concerned with a message. My heart is burdened with a desire to see the will of God done in earth as it is in heaven, and among many things that God has quickened to me since this desire has been born in my heart, is this matter of covenant which I introduced this morning, and we dealt somewhat technically with it, dealing with the words, and this is the message I want to bring you during the week.

Let me put it on a very human basis just for a moment, before we review this morning and get on into what we want to say tonight. I think that we are probably all concerned with our horizontal divisions, and our horizontal divisions and unchristian attitudes to one another even within the professing Christian community, really derive from the fact that we have not taken with profound sincerity and dedication, the fact that we will relate to each other as loyally and as faithfully, lovingly and meaningfully, as we relate to God, that all of our horizontal relationships are an expression of our vertical relationship. I don't wish to trust any man in a relationship with me any further than that man can be trusted in his relationship with God. If you will cheat on God you will cheat on me. If you play fast and loose with your relationship to Jesus Christ you won't hesitate to sell me down the river. And as we're seeing the relationship message taught, and we're realising that one of the very significant dimensions of what God is doing is that we're to be brought into a very vital meaningful relationship with one another, that God is forming community, that the body of Jesus Christ is coming into formation, that God must have a corporate Christ in the earth, that the magnificent individual Jesus who strode across the stage of history and left an indelible and an inerasable posture for all history, is being reproduced now in many, many lives, but only as those lives come into corporate community, and that as we come into corporate community we must first understand our relationship to God. I think we all see the need of unity, the rather pathetic poignant expressions of the world indicate that, the United Nations, that potpourri of fighting, scrapping, confronting, nations who gather at a place called the United Nations, with the hope that somehow they can get it together, and they just seem to be everlastingly getting further apart. And incidentally the fact that the world knows what you and I should be, isn't it interesting that the world somehow intuitively knows that Christians shouldn't be fighting? The world somehow knows that the nature of ultimate reality cannot be war. There are very few men in their sane moments who will attribute anything but insanity to war, and so there's this everlasting quest for peace, this desire for unity, after all science itself is committed to a uni-verse, and speaks about the relation and interrelation of laws that govern the universe that, whatever may be the motivating cause of our universe, that the universe springs from something that has a unitive concept and desire, and that the world is a universe, and that there is something in the universe that cries for the dissipation and the destruction and the ultimate disappearance of all of our divisions, and all of the distractions that keep us from one another.

Now we know that the world doesn't have the equipment to bring this about. It has in its very nature the seeds of destruction. Unregenerate men cannot find each other because there is war in their hearts, and while their heads tell them that it ought not to be, they don't have the moral power to quell the agitation in their own hearts, and so they come out roaring when they intend to talk about peace. But this is not so with us, for we are the children of peace, and we have been born into the family of the prince of peace, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and must be a people of peace, and we must become an example of peace, we must be a community of peace, we must offer the world an alternative and an option, for it has run out of options. The world has no way to turn, it has come to the climax of history, it has come to the ultimate cul-de-sac, and there are no side roads, there are no escape hatches. It is the end, economically, politically, sociologically, the world has run out of options, and the setting is ready for the display of God's grand community of committed men and women, but it involves our understanding of covenant. Covenant is basic to the

whole approach of God's demands. The Bible is divided into two parts, the old covenant and the new covenant, which in its simplest definition is telling us that the Bible is God's word to mankind, and this morning we quickly looked at the Hebrew word and the Greek word. The Hebrew word is *berith*. Its etymology as we said is shrouded in some mystery, but research yields these facts, that basically the word *berith*, which is the Hebrew word for covenant, speaks of a binding, a sentencing, the passing of an official decree. It involves a word of authority, the word of authority as it would come from a judge sentencing a criminal, the word of authority as it would come from an absolute monarch, declaring a word of authority to his subjects. When this word then is given to God, it stands first of all for the fact that God has broken into a time-space world and has communicated his mind and his will and his purpose with the rational creatures that he has created. It also has in it the meaning of sacrifice, which is a secondary meaning, both in the word and in the evolution of history that requires the second meaning. The third meaning that is inherent in the word *berith* is eating, and I think that you'll see how that these three meanings have a sort of an ongoing application as history breaks out of the garden of Eden into a long journey of sin, and needs the second application and the third as men through the blood of covenant are called back to the word of God, and then sit down to fellowship on the sacrificial meal, and declare their restoration and redemption, as they eat together in the community of the redeemed. When we come into the New Testament the word that has been chosen there is the Greek word *diatheke*, which stands in opposition to the word *syntheke*. The prefixes are different. *Syntheke* speaks of an arrangement or a pact between two equals and is never used of the covenant of God. It is interesting as you read the Bible that it constantly speaks of 'my covenant'. God never speaks of 'our covenant', it is not 'our covenant', it is 'my covenant.' He said, 'My covenant you have broken.'

God calls us into a covenant relationship with him, but he calls the tune, he sets the terms, he writes the clauses, he delivers the demands, and we found out from the Greek word *diatheke*, without labouring this recap overmuch, we found out from the word *diatheke* that it can be reduced to this, that what God has spoken in his covenantal word, you may accept it, you may reject it, but you can't alter it. I'd like us all to say that together, because it'll come up again time and again, \*You may accept it, you may reject it, but you can't alter it.\* It is God's covenant. It is never our covenant, even when I receive it, I receive it as God's covenant. 'This is my covenant, my new covenant, this is the blood of my new covenant.' So that the covenant is always God moving toward man, in love, in mercy in redemption, in compassion, in structure, in order, in discipline, requiring a response from man of obedience, just simply that, obedience.

I could wish that the word 'faith' would go on a temporary vacation. 'Faith' has become so many things that are not the real thing, and if for a little while we could set 'faith' aside and put 'obedience' in its place, I think we'd do all of ourselves a favour. In fact in the great epistle of Romans where the Apostle Paul is giving us the systematic revelation of how God saves the sinner, he says that we are justified by faith, but he never suggests for a moment that that faith is an intellectual acquiescence to a creed, or some kind of superstitious credulity, but he speaks of it three times in that epistle as 'the obedience of faith'. It is God's word to man that requires a response from man to acknowledge the right of God to govern men's lives. One more thing, for every time the Bible speaks of Christ as Saviour, it speaks of him twenty-nine times as Lord, and yet in my lifetime I have constantly heard people appealed to, to receive Christ as Saviour. I would be hard put to give you a text that says, 'Receive Christ as Saviour', but over and over and over again, we are told to confess Jesus Christ as Lord, that means that he not only comes to us with his precious blood to take away the guilt and penalty of our sin, but he comes to us as master, yes, and to take a Greek word *despotes*, and give it its English equivalent, as a benign despot, to say to you, 'I will take your mangled, distorted, misused life and I by my blood will legally forgive you your sin, and your violation of my law,

but I will from that moment on require from you your life to be put in my hands, that I should govern it entirely, and that from the moment you turn your life over to me as Lord, receiving my saving, forgiving grace, from that time on you shall never again make a unilateral determination, but you shall do that which I command you, for my ways for you are best. I not only save you from your sin, I save you from the thing that produced your sin, the twisted, warped, disoriented self. I will now come into that self, and I will not only reside but I will preside, I will not only be resident I will be president, and I will reign from the throne of your spirit, and I will renew your mind, and I will establish within you a whole new set of thought patterns from my Word, which will be expressed in a whole new set of behaviour patterns, which will make you my children in very deed. I have come to master you, I have come to be the King of all who are “kinging” and the Lord of all who are lording. If you’ve “kinged” your own life, I’ve come to displace you, if you’ve been Lord of your own destiny, I’ve come to replace you. I give myself to you as your Lord, to forevermore govern and guide and direct your life.’

Many people have come to Christ through the fire escape, they’ve come to Christ as an insurance policy. They carry the notice around in their wallet next to their heart and they can produce it at different times, and show that on a certain night they raised their hands, received Christ as Saviour, and automatically got a guarantee of going to heaven. I don’t wish to upset anybody unnecessarily, but if upset you have to be, then I’ll be the one to do it. \*laughter\* I think that we need to take a good hard look at what it means to be a Christian, and that being a Christian is not my doing God a big favour. I get positively, righteously irritated when I hear people appealed to as though Jesus were desperate to have you as his buddy. ‘Please do come forward, he won’t make it hard for you, really if you just come forward that’s about all there is to it, and we’ll give you a card, and just be sure you have the card when you die, that’s the main thing’, and it has reduced the whole thing to a caricature. What I am saying tonight is that God is God, and beside him there is none other, and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ has the government of the universe placed upon his shoulders, and the blessed Holy Spirit is the one who does the will of the Father and the Son in the earth, and is moving about among the sons of men to press the claims of God’s righteous government. I’m telling you that when we lost the gospel of the kingdom in the nonsense of a novel theology less than two hundred years old, we lost something very vital. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news that Jesus Christ has come to govern in the affairs of men.

In the twelfth chapter of Romans Paul says, ‘I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that ye yield your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that you may know by experience what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God.’ Now that’s an interesting passage, because when Paul said, ‘this is your reasonable service’, he uses a Greek word that is only used twice in the entire New Testament, the Greek word *logikos*, and it means that which is suitable for a sound mind, and what Paul is saying is this, ‘I beseech you brethren, be sensible, be rational, do the sanest thing that you’ve ever done.’ You can’t do a saner, sounder, more reasonable thing, than to give your life totally over to the God who made the heavens and the earth, to run that life for you. You can’t get a deal like that anywhere else, now don’t be stupid, take it up while it’s offered. \*laughter\* And I insist tonight that what God is saying in this hour, as he talks about discipline, and authority, and all of these words that are being so opposed by many, even Christians, what he is saying is, ‘For long enough you’ve run yourself into the ground, for long enough you’ve messed it up, for long enough you’ve made a total mess out of it, why don’t you let me take it over? Let me run it.’

This is the best deal you can get. Now we started out this morning to say why a covenant was necessary, and the first thing we said was because of the creature-creator, or the creator-creature relationship. The breath of every living creature is in his hand. If God

closed his great fist tonight, he could crush the entire body of humanity out of existence with just one pressure crush of his fist, the breath of every living creature. We are totally dependent upon God, therefore God as the creator has the absolute right to demand of us a response of obedience to his decrees, and so when he came to Adam in the garden, having placed man in the ideal situation of a beautiful garden in the midst of an unfallen world, putting at his side an exquisite creature to be his helpmate, he said to this man, 'I want you to multiply, replenish the earth, and fill the earth with beautiful creatures like yourself', whom he equipped in the garden of Eden to know how to subdue the earth, and how to bring it into God's order, and this was God's covenant word to Adam, and Adam broke that covenant word, and Adam was put out of the garden. Now as Adam was put out of the garden, God spoke again covenantally, coming down into the garden on the occasion of Adam's disobedience, you remember the conversation.

He said, 'Adam, where art thou?'

And Adam said, 'I was afraid, and I hid myself behind the trees.'

Sin makes us stupid, to hide from God behind a tree is ultimate stupidity. \*laughter\*

He said, 'I was afraid.'

Those are the first words of fallen man. Up until this time there was no fear. Man did not know what fear was, but suddenly, having eaten the forbidden fruit, having broken God's covenantal word, he found himself psychologically and emotionally as he'd not ever been before, and furthermore, he and Eve were ashamed as they saw each other's nakedness, which up until this time had occasioned no shame, because shame is associated with sin, and since they had no sin, they were covered by God's obedience, and had no need to cover their nakedness.

God said to Adam, 'Adam, you know where you are, you are at the fountainhead of the human race, and this one act of disobedience, this will throw all of your progeny into a state of unrighteousness.'

And for that one sin, God drove Adam out of the garden. Now as he drove Adam out of the garden, he wasn't finished, by any means, God didn't call it a day. God pronounced judgment on Eve, because when he spoke to Adam, Adam said, 'It wasn't me, it was the woman you gave me.'

Incidentally, he was plenty glad to get her when he got her, but sin not only makes us stupid and fearful, it makes us cowardly and deceptive, and none of us want to take responsibility for our own actions. There needs to be a restoration of God's moral law that makes us to know that every one of us when we stand ultimately before the throne of God, will give an account of what we have done as responsible moral creatures, and will not say, 'The devil made me do it!' 'My wife made me do it!' 'My husband made me do it!'

We will stand there totally responsible for our conduct, as rational moral human beings in a moral universe. This needs to be restored. The whole rotten sociological, Freudian concept, that has riddled society with its cop outs, needs to be exorcised in the name of Christ, and all men need to be brought back to the fact that wherever they stand, they stand in awful loneliness before a moral God, to give ultimate and totally alone account of what they have done with the life that God has vouchsafed them as a gift. The fact that your father abused you, that your mother forsook you, that you fell down a manhole or whatever, none of these things will avail in the day of judgement, and something else that you should know, that God did not stop to argue the case, he simply pronounced a judgement on Eve. But you say, 'Eve was deceived.'

Ah, here's something that we all need to learn. If you are deceived tonight, you are guilty for having been deceived. If you and I were to walk in the lordship of Christ we could not be deceived. The fact that we can be deceived indicates that there's an area in our life that is not submitted to the lordship of Christ, and we cannot blame the deceiver. Now the serpent was the deceiver, and while the serpent was judged for having deceived Eve, it didn't get Eve

off the hook, Eve was judged because she'd been deceived, she was responsible for the condition that allowed the deception, and so the serpent and Eve and the man were all judged, and the judgment was passed upon all three, and then God drove the man out, but before he drove him out, in his denunciation of the serpent, he told the serpent that the lines were drawn, and that the day would come when the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, and he said, 'I myself am going to put enmity between you and the seed of the woman.'

So God has spoken again, and God's covenantal word comes once more to man, now in his fallen condition, but there's a new dimension to it now. Before he said simply, 'Adam, I've given you the garden, I want you to look after it and I want you to guard it. Don't touch the fruit of that tree.'

That was the total covenantal law. Now man has violated that and is put out of the garden, and there's a new dimension. The first thing that Adam and Eve did when saw they were naked was to try to cover their guilt, and so they made for themselves aprons. Now they didn't make hats, \*laughter\* and they didn't make gloves, and they didn't make sweaters, they made aprons, and they covered their reproductive organs. Have you ever wondered why throughout the Bible God seems so sensitive on the matter of sex? And have you wondered why when a society goes permissive, that the area where it breaks through most flagrantly and rebelliously is in the area of sex? Because number one, the sex act of procreation brings man closest to his godliness or his God-likeness, as he reproduces his kind in the mystery of procreation. But symbolically the reproductive organs stand symbolically for the secret core of your being, the deepest, most intimate area of your inner commitment to yourself, to your God, and to those around you, and Adam and Eve had come out from under the covering of God's authority, and they were naked, and they knew they were naked, and they knew that something was wrong inside between them and their God, and they tried to hide from him. They knew that something had gone wrong between themselves and one another and they tried to cover themselves. They were uncovered. God ignored their fig leaf aprons, and after he'd pronounced judgment on them, they stood back with their eyes bulging, as they watched something they'd never seen before, a death. Up until this time there had been no curse, up until this time life had reigned. Everything was tranquil and beautiful, there were no gnarled knots on the trees, there were none of the aspects of the curse, and they had not seen death, and didn't know what death was. But now in this whole terrible dialogue, that has become necessary because of man's breaking of God's covenantal word, God reaches down and takes an animal, and with one deft movement cut the throat of the animal and lets the blood bleed out on the ground. Adam and Eve stand back in wonder and bewilderment. Then again with deft strokes, he skins the animal and with his hot breath he turns it, and then just as he had made man and woman, with skilful fingers he makes a garment, and God covers each of them with a garment that was theirs at the price of blood, and they learn their first lesson in redemptive covenantal relationship. As God drives them from the garden, the Hebrew word there is very interesting. Have you ever wondered how people said things in the Bible? That's always a constant, what shall I say, it piques my curiosity, how did God say this to them? What kind of inflexion? For instance, when Saul of Tarsus was thrown down on the road, how did the risen Lord Jesus speak to him? Did he say, 'Saul, Saul, what are you persecuting me for?' [In a perplexed voice.]

I don't think he said it that way. You say, 'Oh, you're quibbling now.'

No, there's a beautiful passage in the book of John, which says that Jesus at all times said only what the Father told him to say, and not only said only what the Father told him to say, but said it the way the Father told him to say it. You see you can say something that is true, and say it in the wrong way, and it becomes error, even though it's true in content, its delivery comes from a bad source, and it's spoiled in the process of delivery. And I believe that



when God drove man from the garden, the Hebrew indicates this, that he did it gently, and he did it with hot searing tears running down his cheeks, he said, 'You've got to go.'

And he gently prodded them, because they were protesting, 'For just one small thing, God, just eating, then I must leave...?'

God said, 'Yes you must. My covenantal word cannot be broken, because my word has in it teeth, sanctions. I warned you that in the day you ate thereof, dying you would die. It's a process of death and deterioration which starts from that moment, and now you must leave the tree of life.'

And he put them out. Now when he got them outside of the garden the Bible said, the King James Version said that he set cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the way back in to the tree of life. Jamieson, Faussett and Brown have provided a very beautiful and suggestive translation, they said that God at the garden set up an altar, and that the cherubim, as in the Tabernacle, were over that altar, for the cherubim are those mysterious creatures in the Bible that protect the holiness of God, and that within the centre of those cherubim there was a sword, a flame sword, or a flame tongue which stood for the presence of God, and right at the door of human failure, right at the eastern gate where they had been put out of the place of the pristine innocence, right at that place God speaks again covenantally, this time it's not, 'Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil', but now it is, 'Thou shalt avail thyself of my redemptive covenantal purpose. I have shown you the way back to me is by blood, it's by a covering of my provision, and that altar at the eastern gate became the first place of redemption. It was to that altar that Adam and Eve brought by the hand little Cain and Abel, and taught them the awe-fulness of God, the holiness of God. It was probably standing in the shadow and shelter of that altar that they recited the story of the beautiful pre-fall conditions in the garden, as the two lads listened to their parents recount the paradisaical days of their Edenic existence, and as they told their boys, 'It's different now sons, it's different now, to come to God no longer do you walk with him unhindered in the cool of the evening, you must come to him now with sacrifice.'

This is why Cain and Abel stand out as the first illustrations of those who obeyed and violated God's covenantal word in a new dimension. Cain was of the evil one, that means that Cain was seduced and deceived by Satan, as had been his mother. Abel was a believer, and Abel brought his lamb to the altar because he recognised that God's covenantal purpose now was a life for a life. But Cain brought the produce of his own hand, he brought the produce of his garden and he offered that to God, and God rejected Cain and his offering, and he rejected [accepted?] Abel and his offering. Now I want you to notice the order of the Bible, dear people. He didn't reject the offering and Cain, and he didn't accept the offering and Abel. We say, 'It doesn't matter what I am, as long as my offering is right.'

Oh, yes it does. Your offering is a manifestation of what you are. Cain brought the product of his own hand because his heart was in rebellion against God, and he refused to bring a bloody sacrifice. Abel's heart was right toward God, and he brought the product of his flock, and he shed its blood. Do you remember, I think we touched this morning on the passage, yes we did, in Hosea, where God said, 'I don't want your sacrifices, if with your sacrifices you bring your hypercritical double-dealing heart. Don't come to me with fornication in your heart and sacrificial blood in your hands. Don't come to me and try to con me into believing that you want to love me and do my will. Don't go through superfluous superficial meaningless religious acts, if your heart is not committed to me. Son, give me your heart.'

And so there was a new covenantal word. Now as you move along in the book of Genesis you come to chapter 9, and we're going to look for a moment at another covenant that God made with Noah and all flesh. As you know God had to destroy the earth with a flood, and out of the flood he brought Noah and his family, and he covenanted with Noah. Noah precedes Abraham. I know that's not very profound, but it's something I want you to observe. Noah precedes Abraham. For those of you that know what I mean, let me say this.

Providence precedes redemption. I don't quite know how to speak to you as an audience, because I was delightfully shocked to learn how many of you are new to Christian things, and I'm happy about that, because you're unspoiled by a whole lot of religious tradition that has done nothing but regiment men into channels of disobedience. But I'm going to take advantage of the freshness of your lives in God, to maybe sow something in your hearts tonight that many Christians, after years and years of traditional Christian indoctrination, do not know. Maybe that's why we're having this tremendous fresh inrush of new life into the kingdom of God, that they may hear some things that other Christians cannot hear. I want to say to you unequivocally tonight, that the earth and the world and its populace does not belong to the devil. Psalm 24:1 says, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein.'

You say, 'But just a minute, I've only been converted five years, but I do know some Bible verses, and the Bible says that Satan is the god of this world.'

Aha, good for you! But now we must define our terms of reference. Of what world is he the god? He's not the god of my world. Is Satan your god? Satan's not my god. So then he's not the god of the whole world, so then we're going to have to take a second look at it. Of what world is he the god? Do you know the simplest definition of the world as it stands in opposition to God is this: it is mankind organising itself apart from God. Mankind organising itself apart from God. I am not a part of that organisation, and I have news for you, that organisation is in bad trouble. \*laughter\* The organisation to which I belong is just getting ready to take over. Tomorrow is my birthday and the twelfth of this month was Ruth's birthday, and before we left our fellowship back in Florida they held a birthday party for us one night, and they did a skit, and a chap dressed up terribly like me, poor fellow, and he was a radio announcer, and he was the radio announcer for a radio station 'WJEB', which are my initials, and I have recently moved to Florida, and he did a very clever thing, he composed it himself, he is a writer of some ability, and as he talked I saw myself in a light that I had never really thought of. 'Would some power the giftie give us.'<sup>2</sup> He said, 'It is reported that a man has recently moved from Canada and has become associated with some other men who are presently under surveillance by the intelligence service of the United States. This man has recently come from Canada, it is alleged, is a revolutionary, who has on several occasions avowed that he is part of a coalition designed to take over the government of the earth.' \*laughter and applause\*

And suddenly I realised how really dangerous I was. \*laughter\* But really I then understood why Paul's enemies brought the charge against him that he declared another king besides Caesar, which gives me a clue to what Paul preached. The Bible says he preached the kingdom of God. What is the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God is the right of God to run his own world.

'O but,' you say, 'that's just the church, brother.'

Who said so? \*laughter\* This is our limited, confined ecclesiology, that comes out of a narrow-minded redemptive concept that, 'God bless me and my wife, John and his wife, us four, and no more. Amen.' \*laughter\*

God has grand designs. When God made the world he didn't make it to become the playground of Satan permanently, but against the black background of Satan's constant failures he blazes forth in prodigies of redemptive power, and he does it in such a manner, it's a totally embarrassed Satan who cannot stop a young man from a carpenter's bench, can't stop him with all the intellectual genius of the doctors of law, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes, the Herodians, the Zealots, the Essenes with all of their combined abilities and knowledge, can't stop this strange young prophet, with his homogeneous collection of country bumpkin disciples \*laughter and applause\* who move around the country, totally upsetting

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<sup>2</sup> Robert Burns

the populace. He just loves to do things like that. That's why I believe he's up to something. \*laughter\* 'He's going to do it again, he's going to do it again.' \*laughter\*

I want you to see tonight that God is a world person, and that this Bible is not addressed just to us Presbyterians. \*laughter\* This was a fondly held hope for years. Nor is it just addressed to the Pentecostals, which may come as something of a shock. \*laughter\* Nor the Baptists, which may be alarming, and probably most alarming of all, it is not the sole property of the Anglicans, or the Roman Catholics, or whoever. The word of God is spoken into the earth, for it's God's earth. Now for years I have to confess that I was cast in that evangelical mode which saw myself as the preferred class in the midst of a rather seamy bunch of people that I called the people of the world. \*laughter\* I was also comforted by a theology that I've had to since change, that I was sitting very self-righteously at the bus stop waiting to be whisked out any moment from this terribly unpleasant atmosphere that was contaminating my Christian faith. \*laughter and applause\*

One day I was sitting in my study when I had one of those, the ministers here will understand, one of those internal intuitive non-vocalised conversations with the Lord. That comes out kind of funny, but I think they know what I mean, they got their own lexicon, you know, they understand it. And the Lord said, 'You don't like everybody, do you?'

I said, 'Of course not.' \*laughter\*

I was sure God understood my attitude. \*laughter\* In fact, I thought what he really wanted me to do, he was really testing me out to see how well I could describe the unpleasant people with whom I've been called to dwell temporarily. So I began to tell him why I didn't like all kinds of people, and when I got through I waited for his word of approval, and it didn't come, and it didn't come, and it didn't come, and then I was afraid of what was going to come. \*laughter\* What eventually came were simple words spoken with a sob in them that broke my heart.

He said, 'Are you better than I?'

'O,' I said, 'my God, no.'

He said, 'I loved the world.'

I said, 'I'm sorry, Lord. I've been a small narrow bigoted self-righteous pharisaical whatever. I don't even know if I deserve to call myself a Christian. I have figured that because I embrace certain orthodox Christian positions that that gave me the right to sit in awful judgement upon all my fellow men, without reaching a hand to help them. God forgive me.'

And that was the genesis of a new concept of God that grows with every new day, that God is a God of the whole earth, that it is his ultimate purpose to make his name excellent in all the earth, that he will not be disheartened until he has set judgement in the earth, that he will see to it that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, that the earth is the Lord's, that he is interested in the nations, he's interested in government, he's interested in social law, he's interested in history, he's interested in geography, he's God over all, blessed forever, and I had better start to think in divine dimensions if I'm going to be useful in this mind blowing programme that he's launched. And then I discovered the Noahic covenant, and I discovered the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts, and I discovered that God made a covenant with Noah and all flesh before he ever made a covenant with Abraham and the seed. The covenant with Noah was unrestricted, the covenant with Abraham was restricted. The covenant with Noah was the covenant of providence, the covenant with Abraham a covenant of redemption.

The covenant with Noah was the covenant binding on all men. The cornerstone of that covenant was simply this, he who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he him. He said, 'I am God and I've made man in my image, and even though he is defaced and contaminated, and now formed by sin, you can yet discern my image in him. And I insist on his creatorial dignity, and I will not have my man in the earth thrown

into a state of uncontrollable anarchy, and I God establish the social laws of the universe, and the cornerstone of those laws is the dignity of human life.'

Now I'm not going to discuss with you capital punishment. I know there are many pros and cons. If I am opposed to it, the only way I'm opposed to it is in the way in which it is done. The fact that it should be done is not negotiable, and it's not optional. It is mandatory by the divine Noahic covenant. Now hear me people, and hear me good. As long as you and I live in the world we have got to be instruments of God's entire covenantal word, and men have got to know from our lips, no matter how feeble our speech, that we believe that the earth is the Lord's, that man is not self-conceived, nor does he have the capacity to govern himself, and that whenever man violates the Noahic covenant and the covenant of providence and social order, he pays the terrible price of total social disintegration and destruction, and as Arnold Toynbee said, something like seventeen civilisations have gone off into the obscurity of oblivion, barely leaving a trace of their having existed. What happened to them? They broke God's covenantal social law, they abrogated capital punishment, they broke over the boundaries of God's determination, they came at one another's throats until God had to destroy them, as he destroyed one civilisation in the flood, which was a typical act of God, which we were to recognise as something that God would do again and again when men violated his laws and ordinances, his creatorial ordinances, that man must recognise the dignity of his fellow man.

You say, 'What has that got to do with us?'

Well I can't tell you tonight, but it has a tremendous lot to do with you, as we go on in this covenantal series, because what it has to do with you is so important that if you don't understand it you may sit by in your ignorance and watch another civilisation go down the tube, while in your hand is the saving instrument to keep it from where it's going.

I don't know of a more humbling document than the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts. Don't turn to it, please, just let me talk to you about it, then read it quietly when you go home. Paul is in Athens. Athens is the headquarters of course of all of the discussion about this and that, it is the philosophical Mecca. He's taken up on Mars Hill and there he's asked to address the Areopagites, the Stoics and the Epicureans, the philosophers of the day who spend their whole time probing into the inexplicable mysteries, and coming out with stupid answers. \*laughter\* Now some say that Paul stooped from his high calling of preaching the gospel when he did what he did. I don't believe that. I believe that Paul stated the manner in which he moved about. He said, 'I'm all things to all men', and when he was talking to a group of philosophers, he spoke to them in a language by which he could communicate. Among other things he said, 'God hath made of one blood all nations for to dwell on the face of the earth.' And then he set in focus the divine philosophy of history, and this is very humbling, he said, 'God has established the boundaries of the nations and their time cycles.' In other words he says a nation thinks that it exists by the power of its armies, or a nation thinks that its boundaries are established by its protective outposts. He said, 'The fact is, that God establishes the boundaries of the nations, and he also establishes the length of time that they shall be permitted to exist, based on one thing.'

Now we have many answers to that, people would say, I'm sure that God preserves it because of its culture, because of its fine paintings, because of its cultural attainment, its works of sculpture and in literature, and on and on they go. No, this is the humbling part of it. We've seen entire civilisations disappear, archaeologists have probed down into the bowels of the earth to bring up artefacts that have shown the clever work of human genius in other civilisations, but the civilisations are gone. How could these clever people have died, if they could have produced these things? Their civilisations that have preceded us, ladies and gentlemen, that have taken to the grave of oblivion secrets in almost every area of human life, that we have not yet rediscovered. Why did they die? Here's the humbling part. Paul says,

'God establishes the boundaries of the nations and their time cycles if haply they may seek after God.'

God has one reason tonight, ladies and gentlemen, for keeping the social order in the earth, and that is to keep men within social boundaries, so that they will be kept in clumps and groups and social entities for one purpose, that they may be told the good news of God's redeeming grace. This is why it is so important that you and I, as we go on this week to understand covenant, understand that we are now God's delegated authorities in the earth, as was Adam, and that one of our great tasks is the one where we have most dismally failed. We have handed out tracts, we've preached sermons, we've written books, we've put on radio broadcasts, we've created anthems, we've built pulpits, we've put up steeples, we've done everything but what God wants us to do basically. In 1 Timothy 2 he tells us that the manner in which we govern the earth as Christ's delegated authorities is through the community of prayer. Paul said, 'I command you first of all that when you pray...' now, he's addressing the church, for remember this epistle to Timothy is an epistle that is written for the purpose of telling the Christians how they should behave in the house of God. Now, he said, 'First of all when you pray,' because you are my delegated authorities in the earth, I want you to pray in terms of my providential oversight of all things. Don't pray first of all for Grandma's carbuncle, and the baby's colic, and next month's rent payment, and the mortgage and all the rest. That's fine in its place, but remember who you are. You are my people in the earth. I don't pray for the world. I died for the world. I pray for you. Your job now is to be my delegated representative in the world of mankind, to take authority over the forces that are moulding men in wickedness, and when you take authority over those forces, and you pray for all men, for governors and rulers, and those in authority that we might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness, I give you this ability to paralyse the satanic powers that are constantly creating upheaval in the social and political bodies of mankind. You are my reigning delegated authorities. Ladies and gentlemen, we'll do anything, we'll sign a petition, we'll go on a pilgrimage, we'll preach a sermon, we'll hand out tracts, we'll walk on our hands and knees, we'll stand on our head in a corner and whistle, we'll do anything but what God wants us to do. Do you know there's enough concerted prayer power in this room tonight to paralyse the prince of Britain? Hovering over your nation is a great satanic prince who takes direct orders from his satanic majesty, and whose orders are to keep your nation in a state of social, political and economic turmoil. Your parliamentarians are at the end of their role in trying to work out solutions for your nation, as is so in America, in Canada, yes, and in the Iron Curtain countries. In the world men have run out of options. Where does the answer lie? Please don't anybody say, the Second Coming of the Lord. This has been our cop out for a hundred and fifty years. We've said, 'The world's in bad trouble but when Jesus comes...'

Go back and read that body of scripture that deals about when Jesus comes. When Jesus comes he brings no good news to the world, he comes in flaming fire with his mighty angels, to take vengeance on all those that know not God and obey not the gospel, in that same day when he comes to be glorified in his saints and admired in all those that believe. He's not coming back to set up a forced utopia on the hearts of wicked men, and he doesn't have another gospel, the gospel you and I preach is *the* power of God unto salvation, there is no 'the-er' power, there is no better gospel, God has no ace up his sleeve. He has nothing better to offer. For four thousand years he sent prophets to our fathers in times past when in various manners and parts he spoke to the fathers, but in this climax of history, in this ultimate age of the whole time-space historic world God has created, God brought from his bosom the darling of his heart, his own Son, impaled him on a cross and said to the world, 'You've got my best, my last, my ultimate word of love and redemption to you. I have nothing left.'

Some people will insult God's Son by saying that after the coming of the Lord, there will be a better message. Why am I saying this to you? Because I believe that what God is doing in this hour is stirring the Christians across the earth to rise once more and respond to

the ultimate and absolute authoritative power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to recognise that this is the ultimate age, this is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time, not some tomorrow age, but now, and that he's going to raise up the people of God in this hour to demonstrate the glory of God in the climax of history, that the church is not going out as some craven coward, or skulking dog, dragging on its belly in front of the command of its master, but the church is going to go out in a blaze of glory, a people that are mighty in God, an army equipped with all the authority of heaven. \*applause\* Well, until you and I understand the Noahic covenant we are going to play down our role, and we're going to say in mock humility, 'I'm really nobody, I'm just a sinner saved by grace.'

You are a king. Romans 5:17 says you are a king. The book of Revelation says God has made you kings and priests. Kings rule. We are going to turn governments upside down, not with atomic bombs and tanks and spears, but if God brings it together and gives us a vision of his covenantal purpose, we're going to know what it is to come together, and jointly take the kind of authority that will paralyse the powers of Satan that are keeping the world in disruption. I'm sure it would shock you to know that many of the wars that have been precipitated have been precipitated at the direct instruction of Satanic powers. It was my privilege to know Madam Karinska who was the Prima Donna darling of the Tsar's court, who at the time of the Revolution escaped from Russia with a bullet in her chest, a broken leg, and was smuggled out in a coffin. After she recovered she signed a contract to sing opera in America. On her way across to America she fell into the company of a godly doctor and Mrs Jonathan Goforth and was led to Jesus Christ. She tore up her contract, threw it overboard, landed in America, couldn't speak English, didn't know how to dress herself or prepare her own food, she'd had a maid from the time she was a little girl, and she came to our city when I was just a boy. My father and mother took me to hear her, and that magnificent voice rattled the rafters, and she took simple gospel hymns, I'll never forget her singing, 'I am a stranger here within a foreign land'. And the years went by, I lost track of her, God got hold of me, put me into the ministry, I had a church in the Pacific coast, and one day I read in the newspapers that some strange woman had stood in a bank trying to change some Australian money, and when they wouldn't change it, she stood and sang a song that just about shattered the chandeliers \*laughter\* and I said, 'That's got to be her.' Anyway I discovered her staying at the home of a retired Episcopal clergyman, identified myself and we, she was a much older lady then, I was just a young man, but from that time to the time she died God knit our hearts in a very beautiful relationship, and I arranged for her to minister her beautiful voice in many places until God called her home, but she told me many things, one of which was that she sat with the Tsar and the Tsarina, and the favourite spiritual medium of the Tsar, to decide the Russo-Japanese War, and the question was asked into the spirit world, 'Shall we go to war with Japan?' and the answer came back, 'Yes', and multiplied thousands of lives went into eternity at the directive of a satanic demon.

Now I'm going to close just in a moment, but I want to say something to you. I don't know to what extent you are personally involved in casting out demons, that's the ABC of your confrontation with Satan's power. Any qualified normal Christian here tonight has the ability to cast out an evil spirit – 'these signs shall follow them that believe, they shall cast out demons' - any Christian in this room tonight can cast out a demon. Satan is extremely clever, and in the last few years there's been a tremendous revival of exorcism, I'm sure you know that. Now in spite of what may be considered excesses in one area and another, the fact remains that I personally know of hundreds of people who have experienced miraculous deliverances from evil powers, because there has been a revival, a part of God's whole restoration process, there has been a revival of the understanding of our power over demons, and they've been exorcised. I've cast out more demons in the last five years than I ever did in the prior forty years of my ministry, because before it was a theory, but then when God started to restore, you see God is restoring many things. As young people here tonight, you

don't know how fortunate you are, you're getting in on the icing on the cake when some of us have been busy for forty years baking the thing. \*laughter\* But when you come to the last chapter of the book of Ephesians, where the Apostle Paul says, 'And finally brethren be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, put on the whole armour of God, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, the rulers of the dark places of the earth, and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places', every pronoun in that passage is plural. Now let me say this without having to go into it at any great length, and holding you too much longer. I can cast out a demon. I have done it, I will do it again, but I cannot come to grips with the prince of Great Britain, we must. And I believe that Satan's strategy in keeping us divided, among other things, his major strategy is that he knows that by the end of this week, and you mark my words, if I don't have to face him somewhere this week in some Titanic struggle, he's almost shaken me out of bed on more than one occasion, because he knows that I am letting his secret out. The reason that he has kept Christians divided is that he knows that if the time ever comes when you become cemented in a covenantal relational response to God's authoritative word, and you stand hand in hand, and heart in heart, and shoulder to shoulder, and lift your concerted voice in a symphony of authority, that will release God into the affairs of men, that there is power in this tent tonight to paralyse the satanic authority in this nation, to move up and down the halls of legislation, to take the hearts of wicked politicians and turn them toward righteousness, even though they're not personally inclined, there is a power resident in us but not in me, and not in you, but us, that if you and I can get it together, we can rock the world for God.\*applause\*

Now as long as you and I stay in our pretty little comfortable 'bless me' clubs \*laughter\*, and talk in tongues, and tinkle our tambourines, and jump up and down, and get goosebumps, Satan is going to be your greatest applauder. He's going to say, 'Good, oh that's great, stick with it.'

He doesn't like what I'm saying tonight. I'll be talking about your little 'bless me' clubs, they're very valid if they're functioning right, but I am saying that this kind of a thing here that we have tonight, this is the kind of a thing that he doesn't like, and what I am saying, I know, is quite unacceptable to him, because if you and I in this concourse tonight can find each other, without anything between each other, husbands and wives sitting here tonight, if you can breach the gaps, ministers, if you can reach through your denominational and theological fences and grip the warm hand of a brother on the other side, who may not be exactly what you are theologically, but whose heart beats with the same pulse of love for Christ as yours, I'm not now talking about theology, I've got theology, I've got my predispositions, I believe certain things, but I have learned that those things are secondary. I'm not asking who you are, I don't care who you are, I want to know one thing, do you acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord? Do you acknowledge me as a brother? Then let's get our hearts together, and start doing things together, and as we're doing them together, we'll get our heads together, but if we don't get our hearts together, we'll never get our heads together, but when we get our hearts together, we can raise a lot of problems for his satanic majesty, but we've got to get it together.

'I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' For years I've taught it with the traditional negativism that goes with that text. 'O thank God I'm in the church, and the devil can't get me.' \*laughter\* Have you ever been attacked by a gate? \*laughter\* Have you ever had a gate jump off its hinges and chase you down the road? \*laughter\* Your laughter gives me the answer. Have you ever had a problem opening a gate?

Now Jesus did not say, 'I will build my church and the gates of hell will not be able to attack it.' He said, 'I will build my church, and my church' - and the 'my' stands in contradistinction to somebody else - 'my church, in its greatest day, will kick the gates of hell in.' That means that God's going to have a people, before this age runs its course, that is going to vindicate God's Son, it's going to vindicate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the 'all

authority' that is his in heaven and earth. I believe what God is doing in the earth today is preparing that people that are going to do that thing, and I don't like to ingest this negative word, but if you don't want to go into the land, go back dear brother and wander, God will not leave you, he'll not take you back and drown you in the Nile, but you'll wander round and round, he'll provide you with a cloud and he'll provide you with manna, but you'll wet your pillow with tears night after night, as you I think that you missed the opportunity to go in. I'm looking at young people tonight, I know it's dangerous to exalt young people, I've heard that, I'm not to downgrade the old, well I don't wish to, because I'm involved, \*laughter\* but I do want to say something to this generation of young people. I believe that God is laying on you a commission like no generation of young people have ever had before, and God's leaving some of us old grey heads around to counsel you in the battle, but you're going to have to stand tall, and you're going to have to start to succeed where we failed, and you're going to have to start to fill in the breaches that we've created, and God's putting on your young shoulders a burden to stand up in this hour, erect and tall, and stand in the name of Jesus Christ in concerted, symphonic prayer, and attack on Satan's principalities and powers until the cry rings out across the earth again and again, 'Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus Christ is Lord!'

Well, we'll have some more of it next time I get a whack at you. \*laughter\* How many understand the seriousness of who you are, and what you are? May I see your hand, you understand that? Dear precious people, I haven't come to pontificate, many of my contemporaries are retired, but God's put a burning passion in my heart to see his people in this hour, instead of going down into dismal defeat, to rise up and lay hold on their covenantal rights, and put the Canaanite out, and plant the flag of the lordship of Christ on every Canaanite hill, until the Queen of Sheba will come from the uttermost parts of the earth, and take a look and say, 'The half was not told me.' The best is yet to come. He saved the best wine to the last. We're going to go on the biggest one we've ever been on. \*laughter\*

Shall we bow our hearts for a moment before Gerald takes over?

*Gracious Father, we did not say the things we planned to say tonight. Somehow we seemed to be pressed in a direction that we have not planned on. And Father, I receive it from you, and I pray that every man and woman, young man, young woman, yes, and boy and girl, that has understood your servant's speech, shall see the tremendous responsibility that the risen Christ has placed on his people, to rise up and find each other, in the community of love and concern and compassion and power, until the earth knows that the Father sent the Son, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen.*



### 3. God's Purpose for his Covenant People (Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1976, evening)

Let's turn to Genesis 12. How are we fixed for Bibles tonight? Got lots of Bibles, let me see the Bibles. Oh, isn't that a delightful sight? Alright, we're going to be turning to a number of scriptures tonight, we're going back and lay again another foundation for the whole concept of covenant. Tonight, we're going to be talking about covenant promise, the extent of God's covenant word, what God has declared is his purpose. I'm not interested in my purpose or your purpose, I want to know tonight what God's purpose is, because he's going to do according to his purpose, not according to my purpose, and not according necessarily to my interpretation of his purpose. That's why it's important that we study the word as closely as possible, so that we have as near an accurate understanding of what God's purpose is as possible. Now in chapter 12 of Genesis we have God approaching Abraham and giving him the covenant of redemption, the covenant of providence we dealt with, which was given to Noah, but God approached Abraham, and Abraham became the first name of the three great covenantal patriarchal names, and the Israelites learned to approach God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and so we read now, 'The Lord said to Abraham, "Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you, and I will make you a great nation and I will bless you and make your name great, and so you shall be a blessing, and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."'

Three very significant verses, that are packed full of the purpose of God, given to Abraham here in the embryonic form, all of which, were somewhere down the long road of history to be fulfilled, some of them yet to be fulfilled, and as we unfold the message tonight, you'll see why. Now the Lord spoke to Abraham of course first of all of as a person, and he said, 'Abraham, I want you to go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, and to a land that I will reveal to you, it will be revelation country, and it's not going to be a country that you're going to choose for yourself, it is going to be a country that I will show you.'

Now much of our problem as Christians historically has been that we believe God wants us to get out of sin, and get out of the world, but we're not sure where we're supposed to go. We haven't looked at the revelation of God concerning where we are going. If you ask thousands of Christians tonight, 'Where are you going?' they'll probably answer, 'Heaven.' Well, heaven is part of the package, but there's nothing in the New Testament that says, 'Let us go on unto heaven', and yet everywhere you hear a testimony meeting, somebody says, 'I thank the Lord I'm saved and sanctified, filled with the Holy Spirit, and going to heaven.'

Well, I hope to go to heaven someday, but that is not the purpose of God's people in the earth. The purpose of God's people is, 'Let us go on unto maturity, unto perfection.'

God wants a people in the earth that will manifest his glory before the world, and vindicate the gift of the Father in the Son before a world of men, and he wants to do it in our mortality, he wants to show that God can take more from men like you and me, filled with thought patterns and behaviour patterns that were alien to the will of God, and he can change us by his Spirit and his word, he can bring us into a community of relationship where we will function as the angels operate in heaven under divine order, and manifest the glory of God to mortal men who are lost and undone, we can manifest the glory of God in our mortality in the earth in maturity, and this is where we're going. Now, those who think that it's right from the mourners' bench to heaven, have at various times suggested that it would be a good idea if when someone became converted, that they could die as soon as possible, and I think that's logical, I really do. I think that's following sound logic, that if I figured that the next step after conversion is heaven, and if I had any question about the stickability of my conversion, then I would want, the minute I was converted, to make sure of heaven, and just go right on. But apparently God doesn't have that in mind, and we get converted and we stay here, many of us

don't know why, and we wander around for years, and eventually go to heaven, but God's got an order for us here. However, when one man who held this very extremely, because he felt that salvation was a very tenuous thing, he felt that you weren't very sure of it, and that if you got it, it would be a good thing, in fact he said to me, he said, 'I think it would be a good thing if somebody had the ministry of standing at the altar when people come forward, and he had the ministry of hitting them over the head with a big club, and sending them into heaven.' \*laughter\*

Well, I didn't share his theology, but I thought I'd help him out. And I said, 'Well, I personally think that's a bit gory,' and I said, 'I'd like to make a suggestion, that has a kind of a nice religious touch to it.' I said, 'If you want to do that, why don't you just drown them in the baptistry?' \*laughter\*

Now the only problem with that is that the fellow couldn't write a book on *From Baptistry to Glory*. Alright, now I want to point out the blessings that God promised Abraham in covenant. 'First of all', he said, 'I will show thee a land', in verse 1, this is a blessing, 'I will show you a land. You leave and I will show you a land.' Incidentally, Abraham left. The simple answer was, God said, 'Get out', Abraham got out. There is nothing complex about that. 'Repent, and be baptised, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. There's nothing complex, just do what you are told, and God will take care of it.' Alright, 'I said "Get out, and I will show you a land."' Now I'm going to leave that, because we're coming back to that, that's going to be our main emphasis tonight, and so we go on to the second one in verse 2, 'I will make thee a great nation, a great nation.' Now if you're thinking specifically of Israel as a nation, it was not quantitatively great, but it was qualitatively great, and the word 'great' can be interpreted both quantitatively and qualitatively. There can be a great nation full of very mediocre people, there can be a great nation which is small in number, but has qualitative people, and the nation of Israel as such was a qualitative nation, it was a nation like no other nation in its time, a nation that had the one true God as its God, a nation who had laws of a higher calibre than all the nations around them, a nation who had insights into hygiene and sociology and politics if you like, it had the ability to live together and so on, it was far in advance of any other nation. They were an outstanding people, and he did make of them a great nation, but before we're through tonight you will find that the fulfilment of the promise to make of them a great nation, and confine that strictly to ethnic Israel, is not adequate to the scope of the text, but we'll just leave that.

Now the third blessing was, the third promise of the covenant was, 'I will bless thee.' Now the blessing of Abraham is very distinctive, and is referred to in Galatians 3:14 as the blessing of Abraham, the blessing of Abraham being justification by faith. Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. The blessing of Abraham was that believing God, God then constituted him a righteous person. In the New Testament, if I may just make a quick aside, in the New Testament the apostolic references to Old Testament characters is extremely significant. In the book of Romans for instance, when the Apostle Paul wants to refer to individual salvation, he refers to Abraham. When the apostle Paul wants to refer to corporate salvation, he refers to the children of Israel, for instance 1 Corinthians 10. When the apostle wants to refer to the redeemed community in its authority in the earth, he speaks of David, not Abraham. Abraham speaks of personal redemption. Israel speaks of corporate redemption. David speaks of authoritative rule, and may I point out to you that on the day of Pentecost, Abraham is not mentioned, for Pentecost didn't have to do with Abraham, Pentecost had to do with David, and Peter said, 'Did not God promise David that from his own loins there would be one would rise up to sit upon his throne? This spake he of the resurrection of Jesus Christ', so that Jesus Christ raised from the dead, sitting at the Father's right hand, was the fulfilment of God's covenant with David, that from his loins would rise one to sit on his throne, and Peter interprets that under the authority of the Holy Spirit, he says, 'This spake he', not of the Second Coming of Christ, note you, but, 'of the resurrection of

Jesus Christ, so that when Christ ascended on high and shed forth this which you now see and hear', what he shed forth in the promise of the Father, in the gift of the Holy Ghost, was also the coronation oil with which he was crowned with glory and honour, given all authority in heaven and in earth, to become the King of kings, and the Lord of lords and what was shed forth on the day of Pentecost, was not salvation ability, but ruling ability, so that the Pentecostal baptism is the sceptre of God's authority, given to the redeemed community, to reign with Jesus Christ, in fulfilment of the Davidic covenant, so that Pentecost speaks of rulership. This move of the Holy Spirit tonight is not concerned primarily with you being saved, or even getting closer to God, it's God saying, 'My people hear me, I am giving you a renewal in the Holy Spirit, for the hour has come in history, when you must rise up in your Davidic authority, and take authority in the earth, and manifest my glory over the nations as the rod of my strength goes out of Zion.'

'I will bless thee.' Abraham's blessing was justification by faith. 'I will make thy name great.' Abraham's name is probably the most illustrious name in religion, outside of our Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham is great to the Jew, great to the Moslem, great for the Christians. They all own and claim Abraham, like the Catholics and the Protestants both claim Saint Augustine, the Moslems and the Christians and the Jews all claim Abraham. God made his name great. 'We have Abraham to our father', said the Jews.

'Yes,' said Jesus, 'that's true. You may be Abraham's literal ethnic seed, but,' he said, 'you are not the seed that I'm interested in, for if you were Abraham's seed, you would do Abraham's works, but you are of your father the devil, whose works ye do.'

At that point they began to get nasty, and wanted to discuss his genealogy. Alright, we too enter into the covenantal blessings of Abraham, for our name is great. That's why when we are baptised, Paul says, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Christ were baptised into his death', so that when one is baptised in water, it is at that point, and many scholars have proven I think beyond question, that many passages in the New Testament that have to do with water baptism, are catechetical in nature, and point out that water baptism was considered in the early church as that point where a person was married to Christ. Now when you're married to someone you forfeit your name and take on the name of your husband, so that Jesus Christ is our heavenly husband. In baptism we forfeit our old Adamic association, we move out of the Adamic society, we come into the Christ society, become a part of the bride of Christ, take on the name of Christ, and are known as Christians, and God has made our name great. Let me say something about that. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. A Christian is a disciple, I hope you're hearing it, because there is a little catchphrase that has been very popular in evangelicalism for years, and it runs like this, 'Every disciple is a Christian, but not every Christian is a disciple.' Now the least that that phrase does is indicate that a disciple is somebody different to the general run of the mill Christian, because a disciple is one who is subject to the disciplines of a master, and I think you'll agree with me that Christianity quite often shows very little discipline. But nothing has changed since the day that the disciples were first called Christians. A Christian is a disciple, and if a Christian is not a disciple, he's not a Christian. If a Christian is not one who has come under the disciplines of Jesus Christ as his Lord, he has no right to the name Christian, and I want to say something further, at the risk of losing my head. I was asked in the Pacific Northwest in America to convene a conference, because I was the senior minister in the area, and this was four or five years' ago, this was when the charismatic thing was flourishing, and everything was charismatic. And so, since we had a printing press in our complex and so on, we were asked if we would put out the brochures for the conference. We were going to call it the Pacific North West Charismatic Convention. When the printer brought the rough proof of the brochure into my office, and I was looking at it, I was looking at the title on the front page, and the Spirit of the Lord spoke to me, and I say that very carefully, but he did, and he said, 'What is that word?'

I said, 'That's "charismatic".'

He didn't wait, but came right back at me and said, 'That's divisive.'

I said, 'You're right...' \*laughter\*

Of course he was right. How many of us would give him an argument, but I reached for the intercom, I called the printer in, and I said, 'That name's got to go.' I said, 'The only name that we have a right to use is "Christian",' and so it was changed to the Pacific North West Christian Conference. Now it caught fire across the country, and many great conferences that had been advertising themselves as 'charismatic' took that out, and put in simply the word 'Christian'. Have you noticed how we make a virtue out of our vices? Have you noticed how we celebrate our divisions? God knows only 'Christian', but we say, 'I'm a good Episcopalian, I'm a good Baptist, I'm a good Presbyterian, I'm a good Pentecostal, I'm a good Charismatic.'

And the Lord says, 'I wonder if there any good Christians down there?'

Now you may not think this is a big item, but as long as we go on sentimentally and theologically and for a number of other, many unworthy, reasons, maintain divisive tags and delineations, we are doing a disservice to the heart of Christ, who prayed, 'Father, I pray that they may be one, as you and I are one, that they may be one in us, that the world may know that thou hast sent me.'

And I'd ask you to be very careful how you use the word 'charismatic'. Every child of God is basically charismatic. Every child of God has entered into a dimension of participation in the life of Christ and sometimes I think when we use the term 'charismatic', we tend to imply that other Christians are second class citizens, and I would much rather us charismatically enjoy the charismata, speak in tongues, prophesy, dance, clap my hands, and somebody says, 'What are you?'

And I say, 'I'm just a Christian.'

'Just a Christian? Oh, we didn't know Christians did that.'

'Well, that's the way they did it in the Bible.'

They say, 'Well, I've been a Christian for forty years I've never done that.'

'Well, perhaps you'd better go and look at your birth certificate.'

God has made the name 'Christian' so great, that Isaiah saw this day, he said, 'In that day seven women shall lay hold upon the skirt of a Jew and say, "Let us have your name, we'll provide our own clothing and our own bread, just give us your name."'

Have you noticed how men want the blessing of the name of Christian? Christian Science, even the communist, wants to claim that his position is Christian. Everybody wants to have the respect of the Christian name. There is something superlatively exceptional and distinctive about the name 'Christian'. People want it but they say, 'We'll provide own bread and our own clothing', but Jesus will not own such as his bride. For he's old fashioned, and he says, 'When you marry me, I'm going to feed you, and I'm going to clothe you, I don't believe in women's lib, I'm going to look after you.'

A friend of mine said that it was Adam's rib and Satan's fib that made woman's lib. \*laughter\* This point is a little difficult to put over in a day when men have stopped being men, and women have stopped being women, and we've got this cursed thing called 'unisex', and I simply want to utter into the atmosphere, for demons, men, and anyone else who cares to listen, that in the beginning God made them male and female made he them, and I think it's a marvellous arrangement, and I'm against any changes. \*laughter and applause\*

The next blessing of covenant was, 'Thou shalt be a blessing. Thou shalt be a blessing.' Anyone who had come into the blessing of the covenant with God cannot help but be a blessing. One of the proofs that you have entered into a vital relationship with God through Jesus Christ, is that you cannot help but spill over, you will be a blessing. Now remember this is inherent in the covenantal word. I'm not telling you tonight what the Salvation Army thinks, or the Pentecostal thinks, or anybody, I'm telling you that when God spoke from heaven to Abraham, who became the progenitor of the Messiah, who became the main, the

fountainhead, the source of the whole redemptive thrust of God, he said that for all time people who entered into the Abrahamic covenant would be blessing people, they'd be people who go around blessing other people. You can't travel into God, brother, and get all that electricity running through your system without shocking somebody with the glory of the Lord! \*applause\*

He said also, 'I will bless them that bless thee.' And I think many of you know that a man may be a completely unregenerate sinner, and yet if he blesses a Christian, God will bless him.

Some Christians say, 'I don't see that, I don't see God ever blessing a sinner at all, he only blesses Christians.'

You didn't hear the message the other night. God's the God of the whole earth. God has rules and regulations for sinners. You see even in the mystery of future punishment some will be punished with more stripes, some with fewer stripes, so that God makes a differentiation even among sinners, and sinners who bless God's people get blessed. I know all kinds of sinners who bless God's people and have been greatly blessed. And there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. You don't believe that? It's true. I'll tell you something else, if a man curses, which is the next thing, if a man curses God's people, God will curse him. 'Oh,' you say, 'that will be at the judgement.'

No, God will do it now, 'for the wrath of God is now being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.' You see, a lot of our evangelical thinking, every one's so nicely packaged, that there's no judgement until the future we've got it all fixed up, this is a moral universe and God is running it in terms of his own moral government, and when men violate his rules, he will deal with them now, and the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven now against all ungodliness. 'The ungodly perish', says the Psalmist, you look at them, and now they go, and now they're gone, because God is running a moral universe, and nation will pit its national strength against God, and God will smite it on the thigh, and smite it on the other thigh, and bring it down like a great oak tree crashing to the ground, if it tries to withstand the authority of his moral government, because no nation and no government has ultimate authority over men. The powers that be are ordained of God, and back of every authority, whether it be right wing, left wing, communist, or whatever, back of that authority stands the moral governor of the universe who has ultimate responsibility for the populace, and who deals with kings and rulers and governments, because he's God and beside him there is none other.

'In thee, Abraham, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' I haven't time to dramatise this or embellish it, or sophisticate it, other than to say that it must have been a very dramatic and impressive word that came to this lonely man, as he stood midst the idolatry of Ur of the Chaldees, and heard the voice of the one true God speaking into his spirit, in what manner I don't know, and saying to him, 'Abraham, you of all the sons of men have I chosen, and from your loins shall come the seed, which shall be the source of the ongoing seed of Meshioch, and one day there shall be born one of thy seed who shall be man of very man, and God of very God, who shall drag his bloody footsteps to a Roman gibbet, and bleed out his expiatory life for all men. Abraham, in you, right now lies the seed of the salvation of multiplied millions of men and women. In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.'

Alright, those are the eight blessings of covenant that were promised to Abraham. I want us to go back to the first one and zero in on it. The first and the last are related, but I want us quickly now to take the Word of God, and go to Genesis chapter 15 if you will please. Genesis chapter 15, and we're going to go down, oh let me see, where should we break in? It might be good to take a look at this matter of how he made a covenant with Abraham because we'll be talking about it later, when God made a covenant after sin came on the scene, when a covenant was made, and God made a covenant with Abraham, they had sacrificial animals cut in half. Ordinarily when a covenant was made, the two people making a covenant would walk

down the bloody path between the animals that had been severed in half, and as they walked down they were cutting a covenant, and when the Hebrew word *berith* occurs, it is always in the context of cutting a covenant, and as they walked down through the centre of the halved carcasses of these sacrificial animals, what they were saying was, the word that we have spoken to each other we seal in this fashion, and may it happen to either of us as has happened to these animals, if either of us breaks the covenant. When they had made that solemn pledge they then took of the carcasses of the animals and they cooked it and they sat down for a fellowship meal. Now all of this is implicit in *berith* as we've already discovered. First, it means a binding, a sentence where a word is bound, a declaration is made. Secondly it has to do with sacrifice. Thirdly, it has to do with fellowship. That phrase that we so often think, with a kind of a gentle, 'I do, the Lord watch between thee and me while we're absent one from the other', that doesn't have so much gentleness in it. What they were saying to one another was, 'God watch you and God watch me, so that we both are in awe of one another when we're apart from one another', like when I say goodbye to my wife, I say, 'The Lord watch between me and thee while we're absent one from another.' It sounds so lovely and romantic – 'Don't you cheat on me!' \*laughter\*

All through the scripture you find that the integrity in the veracity of a man's word is of the very nature of life. If all men turned out to be liars, life would crumble. If suddenly God told an untruth, the world would go whirling off into space, the stars would all become disoriented, the Sun would go whirling off in a thousand directions, the whole universe would go to pieces, because he upholds all things by the word of his integrity, his power, so that a man's word is important. God says he honours his word above his name. My name's only as good as my word. If I can't keep my word I have no character, if I have no character I've no right to exist. The apostle Paul makes a remarkable statement that I didn't understand for a number of years. He said, 'If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.' I think JB Phillips says, 'let him be damned.' That's a harsh thing to say, if a man doesn't love Jesus, let him be damned. But you know when you look at that closely, and a moral creature stands in the beautiful presence of Jesus Christ, if a man standing in the presence of Jesus Christ hasn't got the capacity and the desire to love him, that man has lost all reason for existence, and deserves to be damned, because a man who cannot love Jesus Christ has lost all the things, the ingredients that go to make up anything worthwhile in character. Now it's a severe test, but there it stands, 'if any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be damned'. On this occasion however, truth is not brought through between the animals, but even having cut the animals in half, stood back and suddenly the hand of God came on him at a certain time, for while he kept the birds from landing on the carcasses, and he fell into a deep sleep, and while he was in a deep sleep a symbolic manifestation of God walked through the animal carcasses alone, because God was making an unconditional promise to Abraham and his seed, and just hold that, don't be perplexed, it will work out. He was making an unconditional promise. Now first of all, he defined for him the piece of geography that he was going to give him. Listen to it, verse 18, 'on that day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river in Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim and the Amorite and the Cannanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.'" I always thought that would make a nice chorus, \*laughter\* but on second thoughts, it wouldn't be very edifying. What I want to point out was that God was very specific, now follow me please, please stick with me tonight, because I was going somewhere. God was very specific, now he said, 'Abraham, I covenant to give you this land. It will be bordered by the Euphrates, it will be bordered, and these nations will be in it, so there will be no mistaking. I promised you that if you'd leave Ur, I would reveal to you the land where you're going.'

Now stop right there and let me say something to you. You and I can only know what God's purpose is for us as a redeemed community by revelation. God has revealed to us where he's taking us, and some of us are so dedicated to theological and philosophical predispositions that we can't hear what God is saying, when he says this is where I want you to go.

'Oh,' you say, 'that can't be, that isn't the way they teach it at my church.'

I don't care how it's taught anywhere, the point is, what did God say? Has God told us where we're going? Has he said where he wants his people to go? He said, 'Abraham, I promised you if you left Ur of the Chaldees, I would show you the land. Here it is!' and he lays it out and geographically describes it. Alright, let's turn to Genesis 17:1 'Now when Abraham was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abraham and said to him, "I am God almighty, walk before me and be blameless. And I will establish..." what? Whose covenant? Talk to me. Everybody talk to me. \*My covenant.\* Thank you. "'And I will establish my covenant between me and you.'" Are you hearing? It's not our covenant, you see so many Christians have the idea that they did God an incomparable favour when they decided to become converted.

'I was going to be a great journalist and I gave it all up for Jesus.'

Oh, goody, goody for you. \*laughter\* I'll tell you something else you were besides a great journalist, you were a sinner on your road to hell, now think that over. God didn't get any big deal when he got you. Let's settle that. \*applause\* Now clap yourselves, that's right, come on. You came to him with your whole bag of garbage... the whole stinking mess, you spilled out at his feet, and then you have the gall to say that you did him a great favour, because you were on your road to becoming a great architect. Rubbish. "'I will establish my covenant between me and you and I will multiply you exceedingly"', and Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him' - that's a great place to hear from God, on your face. Verse 4 "'As for me"' - I'm really interested in what God thinks - "'As for me, behold my covenant is with you and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations, no longer shall your name be called Abram but your name shall be Abraham.'" When God changes a man's name he always puts a bit of Jehovah into it, Abraham, the breath of God comes in. Alright, 'for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations and I will make you exceedingly fruitful and I will make nations of you and kings shall come forth from you, and I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you, and I will give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.'

God said further to Abraham, 'Now as for you...' Now, back in verse 4 he said, 'As for me.' Now in verse 9 he says, 'As for you.' Hello? Are you there? I thought you'd all left. Almost stopped breathing. God said, 'Let's get this clear. As for me, Abraham, this is the way it is. Now as for you, you shall...' What? '...keep my covenant. As for me I will do this. As for you, you shall do this.'

'As for me, as for you'. That's very clear, isn't it? This is what I'll do, and this is what you'll do. As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you, throughout their generations. Alright, then Abraham was responsible to keep the covenant. Notice, God kept his part of the covenant. I want you to look quickly at one or two passages. Joshua chapter 23. Oh, let's go to Joshua chapter 21 first, just because you'll get there faster. Joshua 21:43-45. Please look at this. I don't want to be negative, I haven't time to turn aside to negate a lot of things that I believe are error and are keeping God's people from their inheritance, so I'm just going to deal with it positively. God had said he would give a specific piece of geography to Abraham and his seed, hadn't he? Alright, verse 43 'So the Lord gave Israel all the land which he had sworn to give to their fathers and they possessed it and lived in it and the Lord gave them rest on every side according to all that he had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them. The Lord gave all their enemies

into their hand. Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed, all came to pass'. Did they get the land? They got the land. Joshua 23:14, Joshua is going to die. 'Now behold the day I am going the way of all the earth and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one word of all the good words which the Lord your God spoke concerning you has failed. All have been fulfilled for you, not one of them has failed, and it shall come to pass that just as all the good words which the Lord your God spoke to you have come upon you, so the Lord will bring upon you all the threats until he has destroyed you from off his good land which the Lord your God has given you when you transgress the covenant.' Ah, so something new has come into the picture. 'As for me I will... As for you, you must...'

Alright, now let's turn to one more, well no, that's enough of that. Let's turn to Exodus 19. Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat twelve sons that became twelve tribes which became a nation. God covenanted with Abraham concerning individual salvation, he confirmed the covenant to Jacob, he confirmed the covenant to Isaac. The covenant to Abraham for individual salvation had within it the content of blessing for all nations. That could only come about if the individual was proliferated into a multitude, and so it's Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then Jacob has twelve sons, and we come to a new divine departure in history, what God was doing through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is now proliferated into the elect nation, and this is where we come in corporately tonight, and I want to talk about us from this point on, for remember when Paul wants to talk about you and me in our individual relationship to God, as in Romans 4, he talks about Abraham, but when he wants to talk about us in our corporate relationship to God and the world, he talks about Israel as in 1 Corinthians 10 where he says, 'I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren.' Every time Paul says, 'I would not have you to be ignorant', he is saying, 'Fasten your seat belts because I'm really going to let you have one', because when he says, 'I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren', that's a very general way of saying, 'You're being a bunch of Dum Dums. You're ignorant.' What were they ignorant of? They were ignorant of the fact that even though like the Israelites they had passed through the waters of the Red Sea, they had been baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, with the majority of them God was not well pleased, for they died in the wilderness. Please dear people, please hear me tonight. I'm not pleading now for individual loyalty. I'll talk about that before the week is through. I am talking to you tonight about the thing that I think is closest to God's heart. I know it's closest to mine. I'm obsessed with it. I was sitting in a conference in Atlanta, Georgia, and a Presbyterian brother got up to speak, and one of my brothers was sitting close by, and this Presbyterian brother said, 'I want to talk to you about the unity of the body of Christ. Would you all please turn to Ephesians 4.' My brother turned to me smilingly, and he said, 'That's the scripture that you've got tattooed on your chest, isn't it Ern?' What was he saying? He was saying, 'Baxter, some people say you've got a one tracked mind. Some people say that all you can talk about is unity. Some people say that you have forgotten there's any other parts of the Bible.' That's wrong, I haven't, but I'm going to make this assertion tonight. I believe that the bulk of the rest of the Bible is waiting on us getting together before it can be fulfilled. God is stymied, God is held up, God is obstructed by our disobedience in failing to find one another in the community of redemption, and pray with one another, and stand with one another, instead of that we're fractured, torn, lacerated, ruptured, separated, competitive. It's the scandal of the cosmos.

God is now covenanting with a plural people. He's covenanting with a plural people, he's covenanting with, look, I'm not saying to you brothers, you're not going to heaven, that's not what I'm saying. I'm not saying to you sisters, you're not going to heaven. I'm not talking about heaven, probably I'm not that spiritual. I'm talking about God's heart for down here among the nations that are wracked and torn with satanic influence and self and sin. I'm talking about God wants done now. Now look at this, verse 5 of Exodus 19. 'Now then if. Now then if. Now then if. Now then if.' Thank you, I'm starting to get your attention. 'Now then if.' How many got an 'if' in there? One of the most healthy exercises that you can have is to go



through your Bible and put a circle around the 'if's. A lot of people have the idea that everything is going to happen automatically. There is an 'if' in the covenant of God. Now then if you will indeed do your religion, put peas in your shoe, wear a horsehair shirt, go on a pilgrimage... No, we'll do anything but what God wants us to do. The old hymn has it so well. 'Oh what needless pain we bear, all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.'

What do we usually do first thing we're in trouble? Phone a friend, counsel with somebody, get in touch with anybody, everybody, and when we can't get any answers, we say, 'O, guess I'll pray about it.' Right? 'Now,' he says, 'if you will indeed obey my voice and...' Here it is, keep what? \*Keep my covenant.\* Let's say those three words together, 'keep my covenant'. Once more, \*Keep my covenant.\* What is the first ingredient of the divine covenant? The word. The word. 'If you will keep my covenant, then' – that's an adverb of time – 'then, having kept my covenant, this will qualify you to be my own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine.' Now what did he put that in there for? What did he stick that in there for, 'all the earth is mine'? Because he was trying to say to those people, thousands of years' ago, what he is trying to say in this tent here tonight in Capel in England, what he is trying to say in a hundred conferences across the earth tonight, what he's thundering into the community of Christ, he's saying, 'Please hear me, I've always had to pick somebody to do my work, I picked Abraham above all the souls in Ur of the Chaldees. I didn't pick you Israelites because you're some great nation. You are the least among the nations, I had to pick somebody. I didn't pick Peter because he was a PhD, or even a good fisherman, I don't pick men for human reasons, I pick men out of my own good pleasure and purpose, and I have chosen you Israel, I made covenant with your father Abraham, I confirmed it to Isaac and Jacob, and now I renew this covenant with you as a people, that if you will obey my voice then in the midst of the earth you will be my special possession. You will be my manifestation, you will be the declaration of my glory for all the earth to see, for all the earth is mine. Somebody says, 'God saved us and the church to take us to heaven.' Oh no, God saved us and put us together because all the earth is his, and he chose you to be the point where he could mediate his glory to the earth. How many are understanding what I'm saying? Whether you agree with it or not, do you understand? How many can see with me tonight the heartache of God over the division among us? Can you see that? Can you see what it's done to us? I hate to say this to you, but do you remember when they came to Jesus and they were so mad at him because he was doing what he was doing?

'Oh,' they said, 'he casts out demons in the name of the prince of demons, Beelzebul.'

And Jesus smiled very gently, and he said, 'Well, in whose name do your sons cast them out?'

Point number one, nobody ever cast out any demons. For years the Pharisees and Sadducees walked up and down the streets and the demons nudged one another, and said, 'Look at those old skinflints.' \*laughter\*

But one day there came a strange young man walking along, and out from him went powerful vibrations, and every demon for miles around became uneasy. \*laughter\* They said, 'This one's different.' \*laughter\*

Do we make anybody tremble? God's burden in this renewal, precious people, God's burden in this renewal is to provide the one ingredient that was from the beginning designed to bring us together, 'by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body and all made to drink into one Spirit.' You tell me you've got the Holy Spirit, and you won't talk to him, and you've got the Holy Spirit, and you won't talk to her, and you've got the Holy Spirit, and you won't fellowship with him, and you've got the Holy Spirit and you won't break bread with him. What kind of ungodly monkey business is this, when the world is going down the drain, when nations are toppling over the precipice into hell, and you and I are squabbling over a thousand piddling inconsequential little negligible nothings? Shame!

Now from here on for the next ten minutes it isn't pleasant reading. I want you to turn to Leviticus 26, talking now to the nation of Israel, and if you like, it might help you, he's talking to us, I didn't say you brother, with the sensitive conscience, you that love God and grieve over what I'm grieving, I'm not talking to you, but there may be some sitting here tonight and they say, 'Good, give it to them, they were a bad bunch.' It's you that I'm addressing.

I don't want to discourage any tentative soul in this audience, but I want to dynamite clean out of your seat any bigoted, hard-headed, dedicated devotee to separation and division, I want to blast you clean out of your chair! That's fair enough, isn't it? \*laughter\* Okay, let's go now, I told you this isn't pleasant reading. 'You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar nor shall you place a figure of stone on your land to bow down to it, for I am the Lord your God. You shall keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. I am the Lord. If you walk in my statutes and keep my commandments so as to carry them out, then I shall give you rains in their seasons, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit. Indeed your threshing will last for you until grape gathering and grape gathering will last until sowing time. You will thus eat your food to the full and live securely in your land. I shall also grant peace in the land so that you may lay down with no one making you tremble. I shall also eliminate harmful beasts from the land and no sword will pass through land, but you will chase your enemies and they will fall before you by the sword. Five of you will chase a hundred and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall before you by the sword, so I will turn towards you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will confirm my covenant with you, and you will eat the old supply and clear out the old because of the new, moreover I will make my dwelling among you and my soul will not reject you, I will also walk among you and be your God and you shall be my people. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you should not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and I made you walk erect.' I like it so far. Everybody like it so far?

Alright, keep on liking now. Verse 14 'But if you do not hearken - or in this translation says obey me - if you do not obey me and do not carry out all these commandments, if instead you reject my statutes and if your soul abhors my ordinances, so as not to carry out all my commandments, and so break my covenant...' break whose covenant? God's covenant... 'break my covenant, I in turn will do this to you'. Now this part we don't like, but brothers and sisters, you've got to hear the whole counsel of God, we've had our ears tickled with false messages of peace long enough. 'Now,' he says, 'I in turn will do this, I will pour over you a sudden terror, consumption and fever that shall waste away the eyes and cause the soul to pine away, also you shall sow your seed uselessly for your enemies shall eat it up, and I will set my face against you so that you shall be struck down before your enemies, and those who hate you shall rule over you, and you shall flee when no one is pursuing you, if also after these,' and on and on and on to the end of the chapter. He says, 'If you break my covenant I will do this to you.'

Somebody says, 'I've been going through a terrible time, and I've been rebuking the devil all week.'

Are you sure it's the devil? Are you sure it's the devil, that we're busy rebuking? Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. You say, 'I rebuke you, Satan.'

He says, 'I'm not Satan, I'm your Father.' Pow!

Alright, let's take a look at another one. Oh, Deuteronomy 28. \*laughter\* You laugh, I groan. I'm not going to read it all, because it goes through to 29. Look at verse 1 of 28, hurry up now, we've got to get moving. 'Now it shall be if... Now it shall be if... Now it shall be if... Now it shall be if you will diligently obey the Lord your God being careful to do all his commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.' Drop down to verse 10 and he'll tell you why. 'So all the peoples of the

earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord and they shall be afraid of you.’ What did God intend when he put Israel in the land? They were to become the Jehovistic evangelistic centre of the world. They were to have a sovereign theocracy. God was to reign over them as a nation, they weren’t going to have a multitude of idols, they were going to be the people of the one true God, he would make them his possession, they’d grow the biggest wheat crops, they’d have the largest grapes, they’d have more seed in their pomegranates than any pomegranates anywhere in the world. People would come from all over the world to study their agriculture and find out why they could grow those kind of crops, people would come to find out how they could keep the scourges of disease from the borders of their nation, people would come from all over the world, and when they came they would be told, ‘We are Jehovah’s people, we have Jehovah’s law, we have Jehovah’s blessing. He gives us rain in our seasons, he grows bumper crops, we barely get a grape harvest harvested before there’s another grape harvest to harvest.’ What would have happened, the fame of Jehovah would spread throughout the earth, and the nations would bow their knees.

What happened? They played footsie with the world, turned to the horses of Egypt, divided the kingdom, married strange wives, made political alliances for survival, violated their conscience, until God judged them, and it was Rehoboam then Jeroboam and then it was all downhill. Drop down now to verse 15: ‘For it shall come about if you will not obey the Lord your God to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the country, cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the offspring of your body, and the produce of your ground, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock, cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.’ We’re talking about God’s covenant being obeyed. It got so bad that the prophets started to rise up. When Israel started to decline the prophets began to rise up. Do you know what’s happening in the earth today? Prophets are rising up. Do you know what the people did to the prophets? They killed them. Why do you kill a prophet? A prophet says, ‘Christians, of this area, are you walking in the covenant of your God? Shepherds, woe unto you shepherds, for while the sheep are lost on the hills you are feeding on the fat of the flock. Woe unto you!’

Somebody says, ‘That’s not the gospel.’

Oh come off it. Some of you heard the gospel until you could recite it in your sleep. It’s not the gospel we need to hear, it’s obedience we need to hear. We know the gospel, my God, this country has been placarded with the gospel. Christ has been literally ripped across this country, and across America, and many other countries. We get up tight with the emerging nations of Africa, we get uptight with other nations because we don’t think they’re proper. Listen, we stand before God tonight, we of this western civilisation, who’ve had every opportunity to walk in God, and we stand, and the prophetic voice is thundering into the community of men and women who’ve had Christ placarded before their eyes, and the word of the Lord is, ‘Woe unto you shepherds, and woe unto you sheep that shoulder one another.’ Nobody likes a prophet. ‘Everywhere Baxter goes he makes trouble.’ What do they mean by that? I upset preachers. You’re right, I do.

‘You upset people.’

Right again. Upset them how? By saying, ‘Why is every man against his brother? And where are the shepherds that shepherd the flock? Are they found together in the work of feeding the flock, or are they feeding, taking off the fat ones for themselves?’

These are not my words, go into them in Jeremiah, read them echoed in Ezekiel, for years the people went downhill, broke God’s covenant. God raised up prophets, and the prophets didn’t inaugurate a new doctrine, the prophets never expounded a new doctrine. The prophets called Israel back to the Lord, back to the covenant, back to the ways of God.

‘Tear down the high places, burn your idols, turn unto your God, and he’ll turn you, if you’ll only make a move to him, he’ll turn you.’

At last the prophets were wilting under the impossible burden. God called Jeremiah, and Jeremiah thought, ‘Oh great, I’m getting a total ministry. This’ll be great. Sunday morning after service go home with the elders and have chicken.’ He was looking forward to a fine ministry in a parish. He got up and preached and they put him in jail. Every time he got out of jail and preached another sermon they put him in jail. One day he got with God, he said, ‘God, you deceived me,’ he said, ‘you didn’t tell me when you called me into the ministry I was going to spend most of my time in jail.’ He said, ‘I want you to know I’m quitting.’ He wasn’t the first preacher to pout. Do you know something? I’m going to tell you something. I’ve got a nice little home over in Florida, some palm trees, and banana palms, a little stream running behind it. I’ve been there about two weeks in the last year, and I won’t get there again until the end of next February, and it’s not altogether because I’m that terribly dedicated. It’s just there’s something God’s put in me that says, ‘Go boy, go, go! And tell my people that if they don’t find one another shortly, I’ll find them’, and so I go. I know what it is to be a discouraged preacher. Every man behind here has done what I’ve done, stood outside the Fuller Brush Company or whatever, ready to take a job as a salesman, or sell insurance, and don’t go putting the noble act on, any man of God who’s worth his salt has had those moments, when he said, ‘God, I can’t do this anymore.’ This is an hour for candour, not for a lot of cant and hypocrisy.

Jeremiah said, ‘I’m done’, but something was burning. ‘It’s alright, Lord, I’ll come back. I know it will be better this time.’

So he came back, preached a sermon, went to jail. \*laughter\* Now the prophets were starting to wilt, and the Spirit of the Lord began to drop a new message into their hearts. A remnant shall be saved, a remnant, a remnant. ‘Though thou Bethlehem Ephrata, be small among the cities of Judah, out of thee shall come one whose goings forth are from everlasting. Unto you a Son is born, a child is given, his name shall be called wonderful counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of peace.’ The prophets began to see something coming, and Jeremiah wrote about it, he got a word on it. Let’s read it quickly in Jeremiah 31. He saw a new day coming, he saw a new people coming, he saw a new hour coming. Jeremiah 31:31 “Behold days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant” – oh, hallelujah! “I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke although I was a husband to them”, declares the Lord, “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the Lord, “I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it. And I will be their God and they shall be my people, and they shall not teach again each man his neighbour and each man his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord’, for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them”, declares the Lord, “for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more. A new covenant, I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel.” Now what the house of Israel didn’t understand was that incorporated into that new covenant was hope for the gentiles, that when he made that new covenant with the house of Israel that they would then in very deed become the open door to the gentiles, and that’s exactly what happened.

But before it happened, I want you to turn to one of the saddest passages in the entire Bible, Matthew 21: 42-43. What is it going to take, ladies and gentlemen, for us to wake up? What is God going to have to do to make us realise that his judgments are in the earth, and his grace and mercy is knocking at our door? What’s it going to take? For years they slew the prophets, and after Malachi’s voice was stilled in death, for four hundred intertestamental years there was no voice from heaven, until one day as men were hurrying along to attend to their census taking in the little town of Bethlehem, they heard in the early morning hours, coming from a stable, what seemed to be the cry of a child, and they looked startled for a

moment, and they said, 'Is that not the cry of a baby? Oh it cannot be, for that is a stable.' They said, 'It is but the whimpering of an animal', and they hurried on, but in the obscurity of that stable, midst the hot warm smell of the hay, and the aroma of fresh cow dung, there was born from the virgin womb of a little peasant girl, one whose goings forth are from everlasting, and as that little baby was born, the hope of the nations was born, the new covenant was given, the beginning of a new day was inaugurated, and the world hurried by, but aha, heaven was alert, for up in heaven ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels banked the choir lots of glory, and the great choir director held his baton up as they waited for the natal cry of Emmanuel, 'God with us', and the minute the baby started to cry, he brought down his baton, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels broke out into a mighty anthem of praise, to celebrate the coming of the new covenant in the babe born in Bethlehem's manger.

Somebody said, 'How did you know that?'

The Bible says so. 'When he bringeth his first begotten into the world,' he says, 'let all the angels of God worship him.'

For thirty years he walked in obscurity. One single delightful flower is thrown over that wall of silence, and we see him as a lad of twelve coming to Jerusalem, like any Jewish boy starry-eyed, he hasn't been before, the temple, the city of God, the city of David, and he comes, and he sees, and something registers in his heart, and he goes back again, and he doesn't emerge from the silence until he walks down and his cousin John sees him coming, and says, 'Look people, there's the lamb of God.'

Walking down into the waters of baptism, the Holy Spirit like a dove descends upon his head, and the voice of the Father speaks and says, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

He'd never been able to do that before. David was a man after his own heart, Abraham was his friend, but never before could he unequivocally approve anybody, but three times during Christ's lifetime, he said, 'This is my Son. I am pleased with him.'

The perfect one had arrived, the new covenant was inaugurated, for three and a half years he didn't turn to the gentiles, he didn't take jet trips to America to hold evangelistic meetings, he didn't take off to South America to hold big camp meetings, for three and a half years he walked in the geographical boundaries of the country that had been promised by covenant, for three and a half years he wrought miracles and he preached and he taught, for three and a half years he gave that ethnic covenant nation its opportunity to repent, again and again he said, 'Repent, for the reign of God is at hand.'

And they plotted how they might kill him. And at last he knew the hour had come. How many times he'd said, 'Mine hour is not yet', but now it had come. And he said to them, 'The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone, this came about from the Lord and it is marvellous in our eyes, therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.'

God took the kingdom from the ethnic nation, and he gave it to a nation bringing forth the fruits. Now turn with me very quickly to Galatians, so that we can see what nation it is. Galatians 3:6-9. Remember Abraham now: 'Even so Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, therefore be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, "All the nations shall be blessed in you. All the nations shall be blessed in you." So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer.' Drop down to verse 13 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree", in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.' Alright, look at verse 15: 'Brethren I speak in terms of human relations, even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has

been ratified no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is Christ.' The promise was made to Christ and all who are in Christ, and all who are related to Christ by faith, from the time God spoke to Abraham, 'for they are not all Israel who are of Israel, but in Isaac shall the seed be called.' Now drop down to verse 29, and hear us tonight, hear it clearly, 'and if you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.' How many here tonight have believed in Abraham's God? How many here tonight are Christians? That's what I'm asking. Then hear me, you are Abraham's seed, and the promises that were made to Abraham are no longer made to an ethnic nation, no longer is God looking at blood, no longer is God looking at the genes and the blood of a race, God is no longer talking about race but grace.

1 Peter 2:9 'But you are a chosen race...' Now please listen to this, because I want this to do something for you. A Jew was known by his genes in his blood, but God says, 'The kingdom is taken from you and it is given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.' A new race is being formed, and it no longer is known by genes in the blood. You are born not of the will of man nor of the will of flesh, nor of blood. When they came to Jesus, and he said, 'You are of your father the devil', they said, 'Just a minute, we've heard about your birth. We were up at the temple the other day, we don't find your genealogy. Our genealogy is up there, our genes have been recorded. Who's your father?'

But Jesus was the beginning of a new order, and he was begotten of the Spirit, and what he was going to recreate in the new covenant was not a nation with genes in their blood, by which they could be identified, but a nation that would have genes in their spirit, and across the earth tonight there is a race of people that are not marked by their noses, or the colour of their skin, or their stature, whether they're wide or thin, tall or short, they're not marked that way, but God in heaven looks down and he sees this nation, and it's not confined between Egypt and the Euphrates, it's not with the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Hittites and all the other parasites are, but it's universal, it's international, there is no boundary that can hold this nation in, there is no Iron Curtain, Bamboo Curtain that can hold this nation in. This nation is across the earth and God in heaven looks down and he looks into the heart of the members of his new race, and he doesn't know them by the genes in their blood, but he knows them by the Holy Spirit in their spirit. They are an entire nation, and they're international, and they're all over the earth tonight, and they're getting ready to rise. Hallelujah. \*Hallelujah.\*

You are that chosen, select race. John sees them in the book of Revelation, coming up out of every tongue and tribe and nation. They're not Jews, oh, there are Jews there, but they're in there because they've got spiritual genes. You're not hearing me, are you? You see you can keep me out of Czechoslovakia, because my passport tells me I can't get in, but you can't keep the creator of the new race out, and in he goes. In 1932 Joseph Stalin said, 'By May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1937 the very name of God and Jesus will be erased from Russia.'

Contrariwise, the very name of Stalin is erased from Russia. \*laughter and applause\* And what's more, Jesus is alive and well behind the Iron Curtain, and there are hundreds and thousands of young people, \*applause\* there are hundreds and thousands of young people coming to Jesus Christ in Russia, in Czechoslovakia, in the Iron Curtain countries, the Holy Spirit is in mainland China, the Holy Spirit is across the earth, God is King of the earth, he is raising a new race. \*applause\*

One more scripture, and then I'll let you go because I'm tired! \*laughter\* People have said, 'God promised Abraham that little ground over there, and God's going to see to it that Abraham's seed gets it.'

Now look, an hour and a half ago I read you scriptures that told you they got it. And I read you scriptures that told you they got kicked out of it, okay? What is the larger thing that God was saying to Abraham? 'In thee shall all nations of the earth be blessed.' Remember a law's interpretation is that which is natural is first, then that which is spiritual, and that little

country that he identified in Genesis 15 is but a type of the larger thing in the new day, for the new race, for the new nation, for the new priesthood, out of every tongue and tribe and nation, including people like Cornelius. Romans 4:15. What a promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be... What? Heir of the...what? \*World.\* I dare you to read it out loud, heir of the...what? \*World.\* Heir of the...What? \*World.\* The word is heir of the world, if you don't have a Bible take the words from my mouth and use them, let the congregation declare, 'Heir of the world', come on, all together, \*Heir of the world.\* Okay, Abraham's seed are to inherit the earth, 'the meek shall inherit the earth', God's got a new race in the earth, he's got a new nation that's international and supernatural, he's got a race of people that are marked by spiritual genes, he's got a redeemed community throughout the earth, to whom he has promised the world. They shall plant the flag of Christ's lordship high atop the nations of the world, for the mountain of the Lord shall be at the top of the mountains, and the nations shall flow uphill to it. We are living in an hour, dear people, when Abraham's covenant is coming into fulfilment, when God is shaking us and saying, 'Get it together, people', because we are ready now to do the job. How many believe you're Abraham's seed? How many believe you're heirs of the world? How many believe it's time to take your inheritance? Let's do something about it.

**4. Man's Response to the Keys of the Kingdom** (Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1976, evening)

We are trying this week in the time that I am using for ministry to deal with the subject of covenant, and I confess that I have been, I trust by the Holy Spirit, somewhat side-tracked. This is not a new experience to me. I try very diligently to stay with my notes and my direction, and every once in a while, I get a nudge, and I try to withstand it, and then I get it again, and then away I go, and usually I find out there's a reason for it, despite my unhappiness about not being able to follow my well organised notes. And I'm reminded of George Whitfield, who on one occasion was charged with having wandered.

Somebody said, 'George, you wandered all over.'

He said, 'Well, if the sheep wander, I wander after them.' \*laughter\*

The reason that I felt impressed before I left America that I should speak to this conference on Covenant, as I am quick to admit, I'm speaking to a number of conferences on Covenant, is that I feel we are moving at the present time into a dimension of God's dealings where some of the emotional excitement, and the excitement of coming in to a new dimension of God's Spirit, must give way to some mature evaluation of what is happening to us, that every phase of life has its compensations and its joys, but to remain at any phase is a mark of immaturity. I look back on my boyhood with memories of joy, and yet I couldn't possibly at this stage in life reproduce the things that gave me joy, and nor would they give me joy if I could reproduce them. And I feel that God is speaking in to the redeemed community worldwide, at this present time when the world around us seems to have lost almost all sense of integrity, and loyalty, and quality of character, that God is speaking into the redeemed community, and saying, 'Now is your opportunity to display the divine attributes in the corporate demonstration of my person in the earth, as the body of Christ.'

And I feel that Covenant is probably the most important word in the Bible, because it's basic to the whole approach of God to man. 'Covenant' is the word that God has chosen to use as the vehicle through which he speaks to man, manifests his mind and desire and will to man, and through which he requires man's response. Now without going in to a lot of review tonight, for some of you have already gone through it twice, let me simply say that the Greek word *diatheke*, which is also the Septuagint or the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, is also the word that is used to translate the Hebrew word for covenant, *berith*, that the word *diatheke* means the imposition of the will of a superior on an inferior. The inferior may accept it, he may reject it, but he cannot alter it. Having said that it only remains to say that the entire Bible is divided into two sections, called the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant, that God has spoken to men from the beginning of time, as the sovereign, independent, self-existent God, who lives by underived life, who is infinitely perfect in all his ways, in whom is nothing that should be out of him, and out of whom is nothing that should be in him, who has to recall nothing because there is nothing he has forgotten, who needs to learn nothing, because there is nothing he does not know, the God who is inexplicable and beyond human comprehension, but who has chosen to invade, in love and mercy and compassion, human history, ultimately and finally, and most gloriously, in the person of his Son, has spoken to us, not a word inviting us to counsel on it, and offer amendments, but a word that is final, ultimate, to which nothing shall be added and from which nothing shall be taken, and to which you and I must offer a response, even if that response be negative. We may accept it, we may reject it, but we cannot alter it.

I'm taking this following scripture out of context, but I think it has something of a limited application at the present time, that God is pressing in on us in a way that some of us who are old enough to have had a record of Christian life, in a way in which he has not done before. It's almost, and now I use the scripture that I'm taking out of context, as though 'he winked at the ignorance of other days, but now is commanding all men everywhere to repent'. Now I know that that's been an age long thing, but there is a sense now in which God is



checking us out, boring in on us, making demands of us like he's not ever made before. I am personally aware that God has moved in to my being, making demands of me, such as he has not ever done before, and demands in areas that I felt were adequately responsive to his will, but it's almost like he is saying, 'I know that you have done your best in these areas, but I now must require more from you.'

I wonder if there are others that are finding this recently in God? Yes, quite a number. And I believe the reason is that we are at a crucial period in history, and as we learned last night, God is the God of history. I hope that no one thought that last night's message was a complete treatment of the subject, as I dealt with the covenant God in the area of providence, and the fact that God is the God of the nations, he's the God of the whole earth. I think that Christians have lost a sense of the providence of God, we have become so redemptive oriented that we have lost the consciousness that the earth does not belong to the devil, but that the earth is the Lord's, always has been the Lord's, will continue to be the Lord's, and it was the Lord's from the beginning. Satan has pulled a massive bluff on humanity, and he's left the impression that when Adam forfeited his delegated authority in the Fall, that he took that authority over, but that is not so. The authority did not pass from Adam to Satan, the authority passed from Adam back to God, and God reached down and took the sceptre of authority out of Adam's hand, and he said, 'I have designed and predestined that the world shall be governed by man, and until a man comes along who can handle this sceptre, I will hold it.'

Now Satan has circulated the big lie, that Adam having failed in the garden, that he, Satan, now controls the world. This is not so. He's like a dog on the end of a tether, he is permitted to do so much, and no more. He gathers those around him that are morally committed to him and that's his little world, but the world in its greatness, in its entirety, is the Lord's, the fullness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein. So you must make a choice between God's claim, which is a claim made in veracity and integrity, and Satan's claim, which is one made out of duplicity and downright lying. Satan does not have all authority, he has very limited authority, and to faith he has no authority. The most he can do to the man with faith is make a big noise, he can't even bite, he's had all his teeth extracted at a place called Calvary, the Bible says that at Calvary Jesus Christ made an open show of principalities and powers, and to faith Satan's power has been negated, and as men walk in the fullness of the will of God, they trample under foot serpents, and they walk in the victory of the risen Christ. So last night we dealt with the fact that a covenant was necessary because of the social nature of men. I felt somehow that some found last night a bit trying. I'm wondering, I hope I'm wrong, but I'm wondering if the fact that they found it a little trying was, that we have lost a sense of our responsibility to the world of unregenerate men, and that I should spend an evening showing you that God has a covenantal social order relationship with unregenerate men, you felt it was a bit of a waste, that I should be talking about Christians and Christianity, but until you and I can see ourselves in a setting on this earth, which is totally controlled by God, we are going to be missing one of the most vital foundational factors to a functional faith that is available to us. If I feel that I am fighting some gigantic devil who has got a whip hand on me, and who is ultimately going to win anyway, and I'm going to finish up with some little bedraggled group of people who have been literally beaten into submission and subjection by this gigantic enemy, then of course I don't have much ground for the kind of faith that I find surging in my heart. I don't see it that way at all. I see the earth as the Lord's and the fullness thereof. I see that God is in supreme control. I see that Satan has a limited control within the permissive will of God. I see emerging righteousness, I see the light shining in darkness, and the darkness can't arrest it, there is no question about the ultimate outcome, and for you to understand that God is in control of the nations tonight, establishing their boundaries and their time cycles, should give you that tremendous undergirding that says, 'The God who is the head of the nations is my Father.'

A covenant is necessary because of the creator-creature relationship, and because of the social nature of man, and we move on tonight to deal more specifically with the fact that a covenant is necessary because of the sinful nature of man, that when man sinned, God had to break once more in upon mankind with a new covenantal word. His first covenantal word to Adam was, 'Adam, I give you all this with one prohibition. Don't eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.'

After Adam sinned, God had to speak a redemptive word, 'the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent's seed', and from Genesis 3:15 the great *protoevangelium*, on down until Jesus Christ walked along the banks of the mighty Jordan where John the Baptist pointed his bony prophet-like finger at him, and said, 'There he is, the lamb of God, the ultimate gift of the Almighty to human need, there he is the Lamb of God that takes away something that the blood of bulls and of goats could never do, covering over the service credit notes until the time that they would be redeemed by better blood, all of that is true, but there he is, the ultimate answer, God's ultimate gift, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and offers man a complete and free pardon, based on the total legal acceptance of his precious blood before a holy God, in a moral universe, where Satan nor any other creature can come up and impugn God for being immoral, in justifying a sinner who believes in Jesus Christ. God's covenantal word has come through to sinful man, and he said, 'I have come on the scene to redeem you, I have come on the scene to undo the work that Satan and your own failure has brought about. I have come with a covenantal word', but it's at this point that we start to get into the nitty gritty of contemporary problems.

From the beginning, the covenant God chose to speak through men of his electing. He revealed his will to key people, to be communicated to the earth, for man's obedient response. This is the thing I want to talk about tonight, man's obedient response. I mentioned last night just in passing, that I could almost wish the word 'faith' could at least temporarily be replaced by the word 'obedience'. Faith has become to many Christians superstition, credulity, a kind of a repetition of religious phrases, an intellectual acquiescence to a creedal statement, the sort of a legalistic mental assent to certain historical facts, but separated somehow from the obedience that Bible faith requires. When God spoke his covenantal word of redeeming love into mankind it always required a response. You see, there is a sense in which you and I cannot forgive anyone unilaterally. For instance, if I may pick on Bryn, if Bryn were to do me wrong, and somebody said, 'You must forgive Bryn', and I said, 'I'd be glad to', and they said, 'Well, go and do it', so I go to Bryn's house, knock on his door, and I say, 'Bryn, I've come to forgive you for what you've done to me', and he's in no condition to receive my forgiveness, and he tells me so, he says, 'Who asked you for your forgiveness? Take your forgiveness and get out of here, and go jump in the lake.'

Now I can have an attitude of forgivingness toward him, but I cannot impose forgiveness on him until he wants to be forgiven. God has an attitude of forgivingness to all men, but he cannot give that forgiveness, and all of the other redemptive graces to man until man wants them, and wants them in the way that God has determined that he must want them, by the obedient response to God's covenantal offer. God spoke to Noah and Noah built an ark. Noah did what he was told. His faith was operative. In Noah's case it was, 'Build an ark.' God spoke to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees, and he said, 'Get out of the country.' And the Bible simply says that Abraham got out. 'Get out.' He got out. And yet this is an act of faith. Paul speaks of it as, 'the obedience of faith'. He spoke to Moses, and Moses left Egypt. He spoke to David, and David established a kingdom. He spoke to Jesus, and Jesus stood up and took off the purple royal toga of his coequal authority with the Father and the Spirit, laid it over the back of his throne, and in the mystery of incarnation came to earth, and was incarcerated in the Virgin womb of a little peasant girl, and in time was born man of very man and God of very God. And of him it is said that he was obedient, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Now as Jesus walked before the Father, he walked as man of very man,

and his humanity was perfected by the things which he suffered. I don't understand the mystery of our Lord's nature any more than I understand the mystery of the Trinity, but I believe in both. I cannot humanly comprehend the Chalcedon Creed about the nature of our Lord, but I embrace it. I can't understand the Athanasian Creed on the Trinity, but I believe it. I don't understand the mysteries of the nature of God and the incarnation, but all of these I receive and embrace, and in my spirit I know them to be true, and the Holy Spirit within me bears witness to their truth, and I rejoice in them and I affirm them as things that I receive by faith. How that God could take out of nothing everything is a mystery to me. How that God could speak into existence matter and energy that did not exist is beyond my comprehension, but this too I receive. And as I receive these things, I realise I'm in the presence of a God who requires, and has a right, to my obedient response, and that I have no right to cavil or quarrel, or debate or question, that which he has said. It is mine to obediently respond. So as we look at the obedience of our Lord, even unto death, we have in him the supreme example of one who kept covenant with God. All others who had been involved in covenant at some time or another, at least temporarily, proved to be disloyal in covenant. Even Abraham the man of faith was disloyal to covenant when he went down into Egypt, and urged his wife to lie about her true identity. This is the father of the faithful. David, a man after God's own heart, has standing next to his name that blotch of immorality.

All of those who have been in a covenantal relationship with God until the time of the man Christ Jesus, at some point, have proven disloyal to covenant, some more, some less. But Jesus Christ from the beginning to the end of his life proved himself loyal to the covenantal relationship with his Father. Everything he said and did, he did in response to the word of his Father. He said, 'I do nothing but what I see my Father doing, the words that I speak are not mine, but my Father's.' He said, 'I not only speak my Father's word, but I speak it the way he wants it spoken. I ask him about the inflexion of speech, I ask him whether it should be spoken softly, or whether I should cry it out, I am so totally committed to him in a covenantal relationship of obedience, that in the slightest thing I do not deviate from his absolute will.'

His humanity I think comes through so beautifully when kneeling in the garden he speaks as a son might to his father, without in any wise being accused of being disloyal. He said, 'Father, is there another way? Could this cup pass from me? But let me hasten to add, Father, that if this is the way it is, then this is the way it is.'

There's nothing wrong with that. That was the expression of his humanity in the presence of his Father, but still absolutely submitted to the will of the Father. He was obedient to God in life, he was obedient to God in death, and because of his obedience, God raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, and gave him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess, that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Jesus Christ was the perfect covenant man, and as the perfect covenant man, he became our saviour, and our Lord, and the one mediator between God and man. Now, one of the most important, pivotal scriptures in the entire Bible is Hebrews 1:1-2. 'God who at sundry times and in divers manners in time past spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son whom he hath made heir of all things.'

He said the climax of history is in the Son. 'The Son is my ultimate word. Down through the centuries, at various times and in various ways I gave you my covenantal will through prophetic voices, but now in the climax of history, I no longer mediate my word through prophetic voices of men who I've raised up for that purpose, but I now have given you my own Son, and my ultimate word comes through my Son.' Having given his Son, he then gave a covenantal word as to how we should respond to his Son, and it is at this point that I believe God is requiring us to do some restoration in this day. The things that I'm going to talk about for the next few minutes are not easy to talk about, because they are marked by wide divergence in the so-called Christian community. In some areas they have I'm afraid been

degraded and demeaned until they are no more than empty rites. In other areas they've been amplified out of proportion to supplemental truths, but I am going to have to, out of conscience, deal with them, and deal with them very directly. You recall when our Lord in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew said to his disciples, 'Who do men say that I am?'

And they said, 'Well some say you're Jeremiah, others say you're Elias.'

But he said, 'Whom do you say that I am?'

And Peter spoke up with one of his better attempts, and said, he had quote some bad ones, I know, but this was one of his better ones, he said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

And our Lord replied, 'Blessed art thou Simon bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.'

Now that says something to me, and I want to digress long enough to point it out. Because God's covenantal word not only says to you tonight that he has made a way whereby your sins may be blotted out, and you may be forgiven, and have a right standing with God, but the same word says that you may enter into a relationship with God in covenant, and in a relationship with one another in covenant, and by the cooperation of God's grace and the *koinonia* fellowship of the redeemed community, you can enter into a walk that is comparable to the walk of our Lord in the days of his flesh, that you can walk as he walked. How did he walk? He walked as a man, under the direct authority of the Father, with the same weapons of warfare, and the same means that are available to you and me.

'Blessed art thou Simon bar Jona.'

Peter had to have a divine revelation to know the true identity of the man whom he called Master. So human was Jesus, so beautifully human, so totally human, so completely human in the best sense, having read the Bible for over forty years, Jesus Christ as he moves across the stage of history, and walks upon this earth, takes on more poise and dignity every time I observe him walking through the gospels. He stands head and shoulders above the sons of men. Every situation he meets with total adequacy. His anger is pure and free of vengeful passion. His tears are pure and free of maudlin sentimentality. His words are pure and unsullied with unnecessary embellishment. His poise, his dignity, his words, his attitudes, he is the perfect man, he charms, he challenges my heart, and I find myself reaching to be like him, and to reach to be like anyone less than him is to deny our Christian heritage. I don't wish to be like Saint Augustine, or Jerome, or the apostle Peter or anybody else, Billy Graham or whoever. I want to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, this is my covenantal heritage.

Then he turned to Peter, and he said, 'Peter, I'm going to give you the keys of the kingdom.'

Now right here we have a problem, because a lot of people are very upset with the Lord giving Peter anything. \*laughter\* After all, Peter hadn't come out looking too good on some occasions.

Somebody says, 'Well, why did he give it to Peter?'

I don't want to be offensive, but it's really none of your business. \*laughter\* I know that isn't the answer you were expecting, but again I must remind you, dear people, that God reserves the total sovereign independent right to make his choices out of his own good pleasure, and if he chose Peter, he chose Peter. But let me ask you an equally embarrassing question. Why did he choose you? \*laughter\* It's almost like he's trying to tell us something, because he chose Peter, eventually, to become the apostle of the Jews. Did you ever notice who he chose to be the apostle to the gentiles? A little bowlegged, beetle-browed, hook-nosed, Jewish rabbi, riding along on his little donkey to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughters against the Christians, with papers in his pocket from the high priest to drag them into prison and have them flogged for their heresy, and he's almost apoplectic as he rides along on this little donkey. \*laughter and applause\* Now personally, I would hardly have considered him as a candidate for the apostolate. \*applause\* But the Lord, out of the good

pleasure and the purpose of his own heart, looks down and says, 'I'll take him.' And he bites the dust. \*laughter\* You can accept \*laughter\* it, you may reject it, but you can't change it.

I mean you can go from Genesis to Revelation, and God is trying to tell you, that he will do what he will do, and what he will do you had better be in agreement with if you want to be with him, and I want to be with him. Now when you look at all the impossible situations, and to some of us, the ludicrous situations, then I think that you're not going to be surprised at what God may require from you as a demonstration of your faith. And so he chose Peter. He chose Peter to have the keys. So after our Lord ascended, the disciples went back, and they waited in Jerusalem, and the Bible says, 'they were daily in the temple praising and glorifying God.' They just went to one of the temple courts, this was quite common, there were all different sects of Jews, some of them were rather strange, but this was understood, and this was a sect of Jews, this was all, there wasn't a gentile there. And they were daily in the temple praising God, and some curious people, you know, they come up and say, 'What are you doing?'

'Well, we're just praising Jesus Christ.'

'Oh, you're praising Jesus Christ. What for?'

'Well, he's sending us the comforter.'

'He's sending you the what?'

'The comforter.'

'What's that?'

'We really don't know.' \*laughter\*

'Now is this the same Jesus Christ that was crucified?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, well, he's dead.'

'Oh no, he rose from the dead.'

'Oh, he rose from the dead? And where is he now?'

'Oh, he's gone to heaven.'

'Oh, he's gone to heaven. And what's he doing there?'

'Well, he's getting the comforter for us.'

'Oh, we're back to that now, are we? \*laughter\* When he gets that, what is he going to do with it?'

'Oh, he's going to send it down to us here.'

'Oh, you people are incredible.'

You see how God puts everything in that impossible context. 'And when the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place, and there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and filled all the place where they were sitting, and cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them, and they were all furnished with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Holy Spirit delivered words unto them to utter.' And it was so noisy that they heard it all over Jerusalem, and they came running to find out what was happening in the temple. Nothing had happened in the temple for so long that you know, anything. Now Doctor AT Robertson, the great Greek scholar in America, who certainly is no charismatic, or was no charismatic, as is evident by his writings, but he says that the Greek structure there indicates that the people actually did come running from all over Jerusalem because of the noise that was being made by these people receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now the noise brought the throng together, and this is a very interesting thing, the only people who came into the temple, the only people who could come into the temple, were devout Jews. Gentiles couldn't come in. Others couldn't come in. But the Jews came, devout men out of every nation under heaven. These were not pagans. Now I'm making a point here, and he that hath an ear to hear let him hear. These were not pagans, these were not uninformed heathen, these were men who knew the sacred scriptures, these were men who were in the tradition of the covenant, these were men who were boastful of the fact they

were Abraham's seed, these were men who would fight for the tradition of their fathers, and they came in and they saw what was going on, and there were two reactions from these men. One group looked at them, and gave a sense evaluation to what was happening, and this, dear people, is what I want to warn you against. Be sure that your heart is honest before God, or you may fall into the trap of making a sense evaluation of a divine action. These people obviously were intoxicated. \*laughter\* This was obvious. \*laughter\* Now some of these very fine, devout religious people, who had walked respectably all their lives, in the traditions of the fathers, who saluted the Pharisees, and bowed to the rabbis, looked at this thing, and said, 'Disgusting. Nine o'clock in the morning, a bunch of drunks in the temple.'

And they walked out of the temple, and went down the street, chatting indignantly to each other, about what a terrible thing it was that at nine o'clock in the morning, there should be drunken people staggering around in one of the temple courts. Was that what it was? Or, was that what they said it was? Are you sure that you are rightly evaluating what God is doing? If I have any prayer in my heart tonight that supersedes any other prayer, concerning myself, it is, 'Oh God, I pray that as I sat here, oh God give me the purity of spirit that will enable me to discern you, even when you are acting in a manner that does not appeal to my cultural conditioned sensibilities.'

My friend, the Hebrew Christian Arthur Katz, has said something that I think is so significant, he said, 'Every time God puts a new call in my life, he calls me to inconvenience.'

Every new dimension of the revelation and the manifestation of God's ongoingness is disturbing, it's inconvenient, it's upsetting, it asks you to break with some form of the past, it upsets you, it uproots you, and there is built into us an inherent desire not to have to move. I want you to know that being a Christian is being a part of a movement that is not going to stop moving, until it moves into the presence of God. There is no stopping in this thing, and it's also interesting that people who move last are the ones that fight what moves next. And be careful that you don't put a sense evaluation on something God is doing.

Peter heard this word, and I'm sure Peter was enjoying himself. He was probably the biggest drunk there, knowing Peter. Peter at last stood up with the eleven. I like that. In those days the ministries stood together. When Peter stood up the eleven stood up with him. Nowadays when you stand up, you stand up and the ministers all sit and take notes, have tea afterward, take your grammar apart, dissect your theology, and generally leave you slain and lying, you know, alright, but Peter stood up with the eleven, and as Peter preached, they said, 'Go to it, Peter...' \*laughter\* You know the loneliest place in the world is to be standing where I am. You're all looking at me, \*laughter\* some of you quite sweetly, but that doesn't mean a thing, I don't know what you're thinking! \*laughter\* But you don't know what I'm thinking! \*laughter\* You see, you don't really see me, I don't really see you. I am not a body, I have a body, I am inside here, looking at you. Now I'm not just saying that to be funny, I'm saying that to let you know that all of us have the built-in possibility of playing the hypocrite. I can smile at you so sweetly, \*laughter\* and inside I'm saying, 'What a bunch of doodles!' \*laughter\* I'm not really. But then again, I could.

Peter stood up with the eleven, and he said, 'Men and brethren, these are not drunk as you think.'

Now, he didn't say, 'They're not drunk.'

He admitted they were drunk. \*laughter\* But he said, 'They're not drunk the way you think.'

He said, 'This is God intoxication.'

Thank you, \*laughter\* fellow drunk. \*applause\* I don't wish to be offensive, but if you notice in the Bible, the Bible draws an analogy between the influence of wine, and the influence of the Spirit. It says, 'Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but you can get a comparable and a much better effect, if you be filled with the Spirit.' \*applause\* You know the problem with most of us tonight? We're too sober. \*laughter\* You know, if you're going to

stay drunk, you've got to keep drinking? You can't stay drunk if you don't keep drinking. The problem with many Christians is they started out, they really put on a good one, in the beginning, but then they sobered up. They've been touchy ever since. You see when you're inebriated, you can't get hurt, it's very difficult to hurt somebody that is drunk, they're so totally relaxed. \*laughter\* That's right. In Vancouver, British Columbia, where I spent the major part of my ministry, we have one of the highest bridge spans over the inlet. One day a man under the influence of alcohol got right up at the top of the span, looked down, saw the ocean, and decided he'd have a swim. \*laughter\* He had on a leather jacket, the newspaper carried the story, and showed the jacket, they said that it was split up the back just like it had been cut with scissors, he landed on his back, and the impact had just split the leather jacket. Sobered him a bit. \*laughter\* But the paper went on to say that had the man been sober he would have broken every bone in his body, but because he was intoxicated it was just a nice ride. \*laughter\*

You see one of the reasons that you receive the Holy Spirit is not just as a crisis experience, but it is as the beginning of a whole lifelong experience where you are being constantly filled with the Spirit, and as you keep full of the Holy Spirit, you're not thin-skinned, you're not touchy, people can call you names, *you couldn't care less* [slurred voice]. \*laughter\* Makes you love everybody too. \*laughter and applause\* Sometimes you'll see one coming home late at night with his arms around a telephone pole. \*laughter\* Now don't get religious on me. I'm not advocating you all go out and get drunk, I'm just saying there's an analogy here. I'll tell you something else, you find a drunk man, brother, you've got no problem with the collection, he says, 'Take it all.' \*laughter and applause\* These are not drunk as ye think, but let there be no question about it, ladies and gentlemen, that historically the thing that has made men, men of God, is the fact that they have become God intoxicated men, they've walked with God, they've kept the flow of the wine of the Lord in their spirits, they've been men that could not be hurt, they've been men that couldn't be driven back, they've been liberal, large-hearted men, because they are walking in the intoxication of heaven's superior wine, and let me tell you something, the first miracle our Lord performed was to turn the ordinary drab water of everyday living into the sparkling vivacious life of the Holy Spirit, full of joy and exuberance, and this is an indication that God intends that you and I should have life, and have it more abundantly. We should offer the world a life that is total and full and running over. \*applause\*

I find the largest percentage of God's people are saucer drinkers. You know, have you ever noticed that? In every church there is a dear Brother So-and-so. I've travelled around the world, 'You've just got to meet Brother So-and-so. Dear Brother So-and-so is the saint in my church.'

I don't know what that makes the rest of the people, \*laughter\* but he's the saint. Now he's got a cup that overflows, and everybody gathers around, and when his cup overflows, they get his saucer. Thousands of people are living on the overflow of other people's lives. Go get your own cup. Don't just tend on the other fellow's saucer. I don't need your leftovers. \*laughter\* I have my own cup, and my cup runneth over. Now, somebody wants to come and drink out of my saucer, that's fine, but I'm not about to drink out of other people's, I'm going to get my own supply. Alright, so he goes on, some people don't like his homiletics, I don't know enough about homiletics to be critical about it, but I thought he preached a very good sermon. He said, 'These are not drunk as ye think, and having answered the subjective observation of the unbelievers, he goes on to preach, I think, a magnificent sermon, and he does what every preacher should do, he ties it into the Word of God. He says, 'This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, "In the last days will I pour out of my Spirit", says the Lord' - and incidentally in the light of what Joel says I just want to interpolate this, he said, 'Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams', and as Gerald was speaking tonight, I teared up a little bit, because this is one of my pet concerns,

that Christianity is not a youth movement, and Christianity does not belong to the old sages. Christianity is a combination of the young man's vision \*laughter\* and the old man's dream. A vision is made up of the things of the future, a dream consists of the memories of the past. Do you know one of the great mistakes we've made, we've put our old people out to pasture. We have lost, 'There's gold in them thar hills.' \*laughter\* When I was a young minister, and I'd go to a conference or something, the fellows would say, 'Where's Baxter?'

'Baxter, he's gone hunting up some old retired minister.'

You bet I had! I'd find out where some old retired minister was, I'd find him in a little cottage, disregarded, put out to pasture, bypassed, whatever, sitting there waiting to die, and I'd sit down and say, 'Talk to me.'

He hadn't talked to anybody in three years, and it would come out, beautiful distillations of truth, capsules of insight and information, man, I got more theology out of those old boys than I ever got out of my library, and I said, 'Why have they been put out to pasture too soon?'

Youth is fine, give it time, and it'll get over it. \*laughter\* When I was pastoring my large church, I had my elders and my deacons, and we'd meet, and sometimes we'd have a problem that we felt was too big for us, but not big enough to call a congregational meeting, and so I formed a council of businessmen, all the way from young executives to old retired men, and I would call them in, and I'd say, 'Gentlemen, we have come onto a problem, and we feel that we would like your advice. You are representative of the congregation, and rather than call them all together, would you please give us your counsel on this?'

And I'd lay it out, and then I'd sit back. First on his feet would be some young executive, he had the answer right at his fingertips. Out it would come, his eyes were sparkling, his face is flush, he lays it out, and sits down, looks around, as much as to say, 'You can close the meeting now. I've given you the answer.' \*laughter\*

And then some old greybeard rises up, and he says, 'Well, I do appreciate the enthusiasm of our young brother, \*laughter\* but it seems to me I recall we had a problem like this in the summer of '34.' \*laughter\*

And then he tells how they handled it in '34.

The second young man is up, he says, 'Sir, this is not '34', and he's off again, but it's a modified version of the first young man, and when the second young man sits down, another old boy gets up and says, 'We do appreciate these young men and their views, we praise God for them, but it seems to me, like my brother here, I recall the situation like this in the winter of '28.' \*laughter\*

You know something, that's where I learned the meaning of 'your young men shall see visions and your old men dream dreams.' Probably that would go on for a couple of hours, but you know when that was over, I'd have my answer. I was speaking to a young people's conference in the mountains of California, and the young people, the young leaders were getting up, and I remember one young woman got up, and she said, 'You old people, get off our backs, you've ruined' - you know, this whole anti-establishment thing - 'you've ruined the whole business, now leave it to us.'

And I sat there with my heart breaking, and I was to bring the very stereotype, it was that kind of a thing, I was to bring the very stereotype kind of a study, and I went to the leader, and I said, 'Sir, can I break with what I have been assigned?'

He said, 'Yes.'

I'll never forget, I stood, having to control my emotions, and I said, 'I love you young people, and I love you deeply and dearly, but please don't turn us off.'

And then I began to expound 'your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams.' I said, 'Don't throw us out. You need us. We've been through some of the places you're going. You think you're going the right way, but we went through there and had to retract our steps. Please don't turn us off.'



And God was in it, and when it was over, one by one they sought me out, and embraced me, and said, 'You've taught us a lesson. We do need you.'

And let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, it is the purpose of the Holy Ghost in this hour not to pick out any section of humanity and give it a special place, but God wants to use the totality of it, he wants the young, the middle aged, the old, they all have a part to play. I wish I had time to tell you how we have let the older women down. I wish I could tell you, because we've let the older women down and haven't given them their New Testament ministry to the younger women, that the younger women have had to go to the men, and the men and the younger women are not a combination that God permits. You can read that exciting bit of information in the second chapter of Titus.

Having tied this thing into the scriptures, he makes a present application, he says, 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by mighty signs and wonders among you which God did by him, you did with wicked hands take and crucify, but God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to his own right hand, and he has shed forth this which ye now see and hear.' Now some of the people who didn't believe that these people were drunk, there was more to it than that, that's all they knew, there was more to it than that, this was not the kind of drunkenness that those other people - there was something going on here, and they had to find out, they said, 'What does it mean?'

And Peter told them what it meant, he said, 'This is that which was spoken, this is historical, this is ethical, this is something the prophets have talked about, this is tremendous', and they cried out, being pricked in their hearts, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

And Peter had never been asked that before. Nobody had ever been asked that before. There had never been a before like then. This was the first time that the circumstances warranted the question, and the first time that the question required an answer, and I think Peter paused for a moment, and said, 'I hadn't really anticipated this.'

The Lord said, 'The keys, Peter, the keys.'

'The keys?'

'The keys, use the keys.'

And then out came the word of covenant, and Peter for the first time used the keys, and swung the kingdom gates wide to the Jews. The keys, oh yes, "'Repent and be baptised, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you and to your children, and to unto all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.'" And with many other words Peter spake unto them, and they that gladly received the word were baptised, and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls.'

You say, 'We know that. You don't have to shout. We know that.'

Are you sure you do? Why then are you inviting people to come down the aisle and receive Jesus as their buddy? Why are you asking people to raise their hands and give Jesus a chance? We wonder why it's been so difficult for the Christian society to receive the charismatic dimension. Do you know why? Because by and large the Christian society were never baptised into a charismatic community. They come in on an intellectual plane, they come in on 'only believe-ism', they come in on, 'Come down the aisle and receive Jesus as your saviour, and get an insurance policy that will guarantee you go to heaven when you die.' I don't read those things in the New Testament. This is the thing that I knew I had to come to tonight, and I've been sneaking up on it, but it's the covenantal word. What right have we to change the word? God said, 'Peter, I give you the keys', and Peter used the key in the day of Pentecost, and the key hasn't changed, and we wonder why we're having problems in Christendom, with people that are unbelievers, believe God is dead, believe this is a post Christian era, believe that all we have to do is accommodate some kind of a Christian ethic, do the best we can. Monkey business! God intends us to be a supernatural community of Spirit baptised men and women, filled with the Holy Ghost, functioning on the high level of heaven's

continuous endowment and anointing. Peter didn't ease them into the kingdom. He didn't say, 'Well now, please don't be emotional.'

They were pricked in their hearts. They didn't lift their hands to ask permission, they cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

Peter said, 'Let's have no emotion about this.'

What's wrong with emotions? Since when were emotions outdated? I thought emotions were standard equipment. I thought we came equipped with them from birth. Something bad about emotion? Is it wrong to laugh, is it wrong to cry? You don't seem to think so when you watch a soccer match. We don't seem to think so when we celebrate a birthday or some great occasion. We laugh, we play, we express ourselves physically and vocally, so when we come into the realm of Christianity, somehow emotion takes on indecency. And for years we've gone to our favourite Sunday morning club, checked our emotions at the door, sat down, heard the lecture, paid the club dues, and went home, thinking this was religion. \*applause\* The Bible's full of emotion. I've got a sermon on emotion, good thing you don't hear it. \*laughter\* Every emotion that you were born with has been redeemed, and raised into kingdom dimensions, you can leap before the Lord, you can dance before the Lord, you can clap your hands, you can laugh, you can cry, you can shout, you can groan, every emotion you have has a legitimate expression in kingdom life. \*applause\*

Here it doesn't say, 'Now please check emotions, while every head is bowed, and while John goes to the organ, \*laughter\* James, would you go back and lower the lights please? \*laughter\* Now while our heads are bowed, anyone who wants to make further inquiry into this matter, would you raise your hand? I see that hand. \*laughter\* I see that hand.'

Forgive me, I used to do it, that's why I feel I have a right to caricature it. William Penn says, 'He has no right to criticise who doesn't have a heart to help.' I did it every Sunday night with a great four manual organ, and the lights lowered, and that beautiful organist playing softly. I went through the religious act of trying to get buddies for Jesus. Ladies and gentlemen, we didn't touch the world with that. But do you know that in the first generation of Christianity, apostolic feet pounded Roman pavements, and turned the hearts of men to Christ, and altered the character of the world in a generation, and they didn't do it with soft organ, and soft lights, and they didn't do it with pulpits and pews, they did it in marketplaces and roadsides, they did it wherever they could find people, because people are who Christ came to redeem, people are what Christ wants, and he's provided a covenantal word that will not ease them into a Christian culture, but which will dynamite them into the kingdom of God. 'Repent, and be baptised, every one.'

When we enter into covenant in this age, we enter into covenant on God's terms. Hear me now. You can accept it, you can reject it, you can't change it. And let me say that since this charismatic dimension has come, I have been thrown into the company of every kind of Christianity, all of which practises some form of baptism, with one or two exceptions that you know about, that I won't refer to, but by and large all of the professing Christian faith believes in the initiatory validity of baptism as the expression of faith, whatever form you believe baptism is to be. And yet baptism has become so demeaned, baptism has become so ritualistic, so mechanical, that many no longer want to practise it because it is not related to reality. Now I'm not going to pursue that, but I'm telling you that the covenantal word of God hasn't altered from the day of Pentecost, and as you go through the Acts of the Apostles, you'll find that on every occasion when men repented and turned to God, they sealed the covenant with God by the act of baptism. Baptism is the divinely ordained way whereby a man sets seal to his faith, he declares he has repented and believed, and he declares that not with the raising of his hand, or going forward, that can be a preliminary step that I won't throw out, but I say that he has not expressed himself until he has expressed himself in the covenantal requirement of baptism, for it is the seal of his faith, as circumcision was the seal of Abraham's

faith, and when he comes into the waters of baptism the whole tableau, the whole expression of that act, speaks of his identification with the Christ who died, and in dying cut off the whole Adamic society. In coming out of the water, he comes out in the likeness of Christ's resurrection, he becomes a member of a new society, an alternate society, a counter-culture with his whole system of life, his whole new ethic, his whole new dimension of dynamic. This is the meaning of baptism, and when baptism was taken out of its proper place, a covenantal act was removed, that has left us vitiated and anaemic and reduced, because we never were required to be obedient at the beginning of our Christian confession.

The covenantal word, 'Repent and be baptised and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' When Paul was in that room in Damascus and Ananias came to him, you recall he said to him, 'Why tarriest thou?' Was Paul having a problem about baptism? Was he loitering in his obedience? Why did Ananias say, 'Why tarriest thou?'

'Arise and get thyself baptised', is the force of the Greek. Let me make a point here tonight, ladies and gentlemen. It would be far easier for me to bypass this. Hundreds of evangelists know that. All kinds of people know that if you drop baptism..., when I went to India the first time, some very high ranking Indian Christians of different denominations said to me, 'Baxter, you can go to India and make ten thousand secret converts, as long as you don't require baptism.'

That said something to me. I wasn't commissioned to make secret converts, I was commissioned to bring men into Jesus Christ where they have to make a public confession. Do you know what a confession in water baptism meant to a Jew, and means to him to this day? It means he's excommunicated from his Judaistic community, he's cut off, but that's the meaning of baptism. It is compared to circumcision. You are cut off, in the cutting off you are entering into a new dimension, cut off from the old, and enter into a new, and it's the first act of obedience. Now, oh it's not nearly midnight yet! \*laughter\* Let's not divide this all up. Somebody says, 'Tonight you repent, next week we'll talk to you about baptism, two months from now we'll take you down in a backroom in the basement at the back of the church and let you in on the secret initiation rites.'

Peter did it all right out there publicly. Why? It was the key. He didn't half turn the lock. He turned it the whole way. Now, let me say something. In Galatians it says, 'Whatsoever you sow, that shall ye also reap.' We preach that to sinners, don't we? We really skin them. But do you know that was written to Christians? And I'm going to make an application of it now, to preachers. Preacher, what you sow in your preaching is what you will reap in your response. I preached 'only believe-ism' for years, and had my altar filled with 'only' believers, who lived their Christian lives like intellectual Christian believers, but who did what they jolly well pleased most of the time. When God showed me what the keys of the kingdom were, I started calling men like Peter did, and I'll never forget the first time I dared to do it. I thought, 'It can't happen. It happened on the day of Pentecost but it can't happen.'

Oh it can happen, oh it can happen [in a singing voice]. See, some of you are sitting here looking at me, and saying, 'He's gone too far.' \*laughter\*

I'm getting your vibes. You're sitting there looking at me, saying, 'He's done it now.'

Well, what I've done I've done, but I want you to know that when I started to practise it, it worked. And I started it up in the backside of the Canadian North, as a missionary, where people didn't know anything. It's great where you find people who don't have a lot a profound doctrinal predispositions. These were bushwhackers, runaways from justice, people that were fed up with life, they'd gone to the backside of the Canadian North to hew a living out of the forest, and God sent me to them, and they believed what they were told, and I said, 'Repent and be baptised, and you'll receive the Holy Ghost.'

'Oh,' they said, 'is that right? Let's go!'

And we did, and they did, and he did. \*laughter\* Now if we'll do it the way God says, you see, man sets the seal to the covenantal word by his act of obedience in baptism. Now,

when you confess Christ, God isn't going to pick you up bodily and baptise you, or sprinkle you or whatever you like, he's not going to do it. It is your responsibility to respond to the covenantal word of God, and get yourself baptised. Now he says, once you do that then God will set his seal to you. And I have seen them by the multiplied dozens, as they come out of the water of baptism, knowing this is God's order, come out speaking with other tongues, and the ones that don't, we're ready to lay hands on them, and before they leave the waters they do. They have no problem from then on raising their hands, singing in the Spirit, shouting, praising God. Why? Because they have been dynamited into the whole realm of the supernatural. They've no problem handling the supernatural. You don't have to give them the six-week course on how to raise their hand. \*laughter\* You know I got to love baptismal services so much I wouldn't even let anybody else do it, I wanted to do it. I believe both in immersion and in sprinkling. I'd immerse the candidate and sprinkle the audience. \*laughter and applause\*

Now, he says that if you repent and be baptised, he will seal you with the Spirit. Now ladies and gentlemen, I don't know what you're going to do with this word, but I'm telling you that where this word is received it works. Now if you want to carry on that old laborious road, you stick with it, brother, I'm having too much fun, glory to God! Now God's act is to set his supernatural seal on the obedient responder to the covenantal word, and I was teaching this one Sunday morning in Vancouver, and there was a little man away at the back, and he was jumping up and down like he had ants in his pants, you know, and I knew that something was exciting him, and I had used the illustration from Ephesians, 'sealed with the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption'. Vancouver, British Columbia is in the heart of the great forest lumber areas of Canada. Ephesus was a lumbering city. Paul used all his illustrations from commerce and industry and whatever was going on, and when he spoke about being sealed unto the day of redemption, he had the man going up into the forest where they cut down the great logs, and he sets his seal on the log, puts it in the river, and it makes its way down to the seaport, the owner comes down and claims every log that's got his seal on it, that's what Paul is saying, that when you enter into a covenantal relationship with God, he sets a stamp on you, puts you in the river alright, says, 'I'll pick you up later on.' \*laughter\* But what this fellow was excited about, he told me after service, he literally ran up the aisle, he said, 'Pastor, I can hardly contain myself.'

He said, 'Do you know now, they have an electronic device whereby they put the stamp of ownership on logs?' And he said, 'It's so powerful that when they strike it at the end of the log, it runs all the way through the log, and you can cut the log any place, and you'll find that seal in the grain.'

'Oh,' I said, 'glory to God! Hallelujah, you get a Spirit filled Christian and cut him anywhere, you'll find the Holy Ghost.' \*applause\*

From then on my excitement was heightened, because when I'd be in a baptismal service, and the person would be coming out of the water, I could see God standing there going 'boing!' \*laughter and applause\*

God's covenantal word of initiation into the kingdom has been spoken. We have neglected it to our own hurt. We have tampered with it to our own hurt. I submit it to your judgement tonight, you do with it what you will, I know what I've done with it, I don't want to be arrogant, I don't want to appear pontifical, all I know is that God's word is designed to work, and I know that this works, because it is God's covenantal word. I know hundreds of people who haven't had to wait for six months or a year to get the whole covenantal Peter package, you can get the Peter package all at once, if the Peter package is presented as a Peter package. But if it's all divided up nicely and religiously, so that the decorum will not be disturbed, then you get what you get, which results in what we've got. But remember that's the covenantal word of entrance.

The second thing that is gravely neglected is the holy communion which is the covenantal word of continuity. Many people have stopped having communion because it is a

meaningless rite. If you don't understand covenant, it is. I hear people saying, 'I take my communion.'

You can't take 'my communion'. That's a contradiction of terms. Communion is the meal of community, and it belongs to those who have come in through the covenantal word into a community of life and relationship, for remember when you are baptised into Christ, you are not only baptised into the redeemer Christ, you are baptised into the Christ community, and you become a member of a covenantal community, you not only have made a covenant with God by your obedience, but you've made covenant with brothers and sisters. He sets the solitary in families, you are a member now of a holy community, an alternate society, a counterculture, you're part of the kingdom of God, you're an outpost of heaven, you belong to a new kind of people, a new species with spiritual genes, you're a member of a holy nation, a royal priesthood, it's a whole exciting new thing, and you ought to celebrate your coming in from time to time, and you will gather around the sacred meal, and you'll eat the bread, and you'll drink the wine, and you'll renew covenant. You'll renew covenant, not only with him, but with others.

For years I held the communion solemnly and 'reverently', and one morning as I was standing at the communion table I had an almost uncontrollable desire to say, 'Hallelujah!' But tradition said you shouldn't, this is a solemn affair, and so I squelched it, but it kept coming. I said, 'God, you've got to help me, this thing's coming out!' \*laughter\*

He said, 'I'll help you, \*laughter\* just let it out.'

But I said, 'Lord, what will they say?'

He said, 'After you've let it out, tell them that for years they've misunderstood communion. It has its solemn, sombre side. It has its tears and its remembrance, but it's a meal of victory, it's a meal of sharing, it's a meal of joy, it's a meal of celebration.'

And I let out my, 'Hallelujah!' And I felt my congregation was going to vacate immediately, but they had enough confidence to know that unless I'd completely lost my mind, I had a reason, and I told them what the Lord had said to me as I stood at the communion table. Then we did have a celebration. Since that time communion, the renewing of covenant, I don't make it just vertical, I make it horizontal, I say, 'Look around, these be your brothers and sisters, we're in covenant relationship with him, we're in covenant relationship with one another. Covenant made in baptism, covenant renewed in communion, I don't care if you're Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist or what you are, you know that these two great ordinances of the church have meaning. You also know if you're honest, that for thousands of people they've lost meaning. Why? Because the covenantal integrity and authority of God's word has been taken out, and the presence of the confirming Holy Spirit has fled, like the dove breathed, and now he's an empty thing if he's there at all, and I'm saying God is restoring it in this hour, and men are going to come into covenant with God God's way, and men are going to renew covenant with God.

We'll have to put on two nineties tomorrow night, Peter, I'm afraid<sup>3</sup>.

Let me just say something as I close. The most beautiful analogy between the covenant that you have with God, and the covenant you have with your wife, and I want to ask you tonight, don't show, don't raise your hands, I'm not doing it to embarrass you, how many of you really remembered or understood or registered what you said that day, when you exchanged covenantal vows? 'I take you to be my lawfully wedded husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part.' Did you really hear it? Or was it just something the minister was saying? You see America is drowning in divorce, and it's not the problems after marriage, it's the problem of not knowing what marriage is about. Christianity is drowning in disloyalty, and people are leaving it by the droves, because it has no meaning, because they did what you tell a young couple not to do, they entered into it thoughtlessly. Now I know you all have perfect marriages, so you'll bear with me as I just

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<sup>3</sup> Possibly a reference to the length of cassette to record the message – standard tapes were C90s.

expose my wife and myself. But there have been times when Ruth and I have been going through some very, very deep waters, interpersonally, because you see when you become one flesh that's just the beginning of becoming one flesh. It's like conversion, you get married, and then you spend the rest of your life putting two worlds together, but I have found myself as we're moving toward a solution, standing holding her hands and repeating my marriage vows, 'For better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health.' Do you know what that is? That's a kind of a renewal of covenant, it's a kind of communion service in marriage, and it needs to be done. And I have much more to say to you this week, but I want to say this, the measure of your integrity in relationship to your covenant with God and your obedience, and your continuity in covenant, will be the measure of your integrity and loyalty to your wife, to your husband, to your boss, towards society, to your minister, to those around you.

I wouldn't trust a man who cheats on God, because if he'll cheat on God, he'll cheat on me, and God in this hour is not only restoring integrity and loyalty to himself and his people, but he's putting us together and he's cementing us with integrity and loyalty and an unabating love. And we've laughed tonight, and we've cried, and we've clapped our hands, and we've questioned what the preacher has said, that's your prerogative: you can accept it, reject it, you can't alter it. I declare to you tonight we will either go back to God's covenantal principles, or God will let us die in the wilderness, and raise a generation up that will cross the Jordan. Without any soft music, or any lowered lights, or any emotional appeal, but on the basis of the facts presented to you tonight, I want to ask how many men and women in this audience desire to walk in covenant integrity with God, whatever it costs you? If you do, be physical about it, and stand up where you are. What a magnificent sight. I want to pray with you, and I'm going to turn this service back to Gerald.

*Oh God my Father, how our hearts long for the restoration of the pristine glory of the covenant days when three thousand came in, not by human coercion and sentimental persuasion, but under the powerful impact of a covenantal word. Grant our Father that once more the fields shall ring with the sound of a clear voice, a trumpet blowing a note that doesn't waver, that calls God's people to a standard that waves bravely in the breeze. Restore your people Lord, and then add to our ranks, and let the gentiles flow and bring their riches, until the kingdom of God is the stone that crushes every other power, and our Lord is declared to be the Lord of the whole earth. Sow that seed tonight, my Father, I ask for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

**5. Walking in Covenant** (Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> June 1976, evening)

That's just my wife I'm waving at. I can tell you now where she's been. She went to Wimbledon this afternoon. \*laughter\* She doesn't know very much about tennis, but ever since I've been a young lad tennis has been my game. She gets to go to Wimbledon, I have to spend the afternoon sitting with a bunch of stuffy preachers. \*laughter\*

Probably some of you have heard of the person that was taken to church for the first time and the one who took him was of course telling him about everything that was going on, and when the minister got up he said, 'What's he going to do now?' 'Well, he's going to announce a hymn.' Then a little later on, the choir director got up, and what was going to happen now? They were going to sing an anthem, and they were explaining everything, and at last the minister got up to preach, and he took off his watch, and he laid it down, and he said, 'What does that mean?' He says, 'That doesn't mean a thing.' \*laughter\*

Just think of another one. \*laughter\* A young lad in church and he saw the plaques, you know, to those that had died, and he was there with his grandma, and he said, 'Grandma, what are those?' She said, 'Oh, those are the plaques in memory of those who died in the service.' He said, 'Which one, the morning or the evening?' \*laughter\* Now that I've got those out of my system, we'll get on. Isn't it amazing how you can run the whole gamut of legitimate emotional responses and not feel under some kind of improper condemnation, because as I've sat here tonight, I was really moved to tears as Gerald led you in that magnificent old hymn, and I found myself saying, 'God, I thank you for the honour, the privilege and the joy of being one of God's people.' I just felt so privileged, sitting here with you and singing that hymn, and I thought of the great tradition behind this of multiplied thousands who've loved our Lord, and in the book of Revelation, when the redeemed come in, it's a great multitude that's humanly incomputable, a number which no man can number, God knows the number, he works it out and gives in terms of Bible geometria a number, twelve thousand squared, one hundred and forty-four thousand, if you can count that high, I can't. It's a great number which no man can number. Now this will be superfluous to say, but I'll say it anyway. I've not been attempting to preach to you sermons, I've been attempting to share with you a concern on my heart. I've been talking to you about covenant, as I announced first of the week. I feel that God is calling us back to understand our foundations, what we're all about, what he has designed for us, and tomorrow night I'm going to get right down to interpersonal covenant. Up until now, and including tonight, I've been trying to build a large overview into which we could fit ourselves in the purpose of God. I've tried to lift you out of demeaning yourselves and thinking less of yourselves as God's people than you should, to let you see how important you are in the grace of God, to make you to know that God has no other plan but you. You're plan A, he has no plan B. But he has chosen to show forth his glory through the church, in every generation of this age. This is the last age, so there's nothing further coming up, and I believe it is the combination of the work of the Spirit and the ministry of the word to bring God's people to a place of valid activity, as they respond to the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit and rise to the challenge. I believe that we will be and must be and must become the people of God in the earth who are to show forth his glory in its ultimate form. For God has no greater thing up ahead. The body of Christ, his Son, is his greatest redemptive accomplishment and it is through us across the world that he will bring his last message of love, not only concerning his Son, our Saviour, who died and gave his blood for our sin, but concerning a redeemed community who have secured the values of that blood and the values of the Holy Spirit to put together a relationship in God on the earth in our mortality, that will make men want to join us. I've often said you'll search the Acts of the Apostles in vain to find an altar call. The New Testament church was so attractive that men wanted to get into it, and none durst join himself. The Lord added to the church. But it was so attractive that as this beautiful young thing, fresh from the womb of God's purpose, moved throughout Jerusalem they had favour

with the people, they were so attractive. The beauty of their relational love was so attractive that people were drawn to them, and of course the question is, are they drawn to us? I'm afraid the answer has to be, by and large, no.

We pray that God will make us understand covenant in such a way that we will respond to the love of his heart and the purpose of his mind and then we'll start to relate to one another until every city and town and hamlet has communities of Christ, and if somebody comes to that town they can find where Christ lives, they can find his residence in that place. It may not be in a building with a tall steeple, it may not be in a building marked by ecclesiastical architecture at all. In fact, in some instances it may be such a large house that they'll have to find that house in a field, because it'll be the company of people, not where they are, but who they are. Tomorrow night will be very important, and I haven't urged you at all this week to come any night. I haven't said, 'Please come tomorrow night', but if I'm going to say, 'Please come', I'm going to say, 'Please come tomorrow night', because what I have to say is bringing this all down to Ruth and me, me and Bryn, me and Michael, Peter and me, Joe and Jim, Bill and Mary, putting them right where it belongs, when I talk tomorrow night about interpersonal covenant. Now tonight I want to talk about the New Covenant a little more, we touched on it last night, and I want to start out by going back to Jeremiah 31, reminding our hearts that the prophets began to speak a new message as the nation deteriorated yet more and more, God dropped into their heart the vision of the day when, and let me digress to put this in parenthesis, and please listen to it very carefully, and it will save you asking questions of yourself later on, when the prophets spoke of the new covenant, they did speak of it as having been made with Israel and with Judah, but if you read carefully the prophets, and not read them through theologically tinted eyeglasses, you will find that in that new day the covenant was also to include the world of the gentiles. It was this that the Jews didn't understand, even the saved Spirit-filled Pentecostal Jews didn't understand in the New Testament, until God had to deal specifically with Peter to use the keys of the kingdom the second time and opened the door to the gentiles at Cornelius's household, so as we talk of the new covenant, while the new covenant is said to have been made with Israel and Judah, remember that that includes, as we will show as we move along tonight, that includes the great gentile company that would be coming in, but many of the things that are spoken of the new age have to be put in the language and in the phraseology that would be understandable to a people who had already a vocabulary in divine things. This is why you cannot read the Old Testament without the New, as Saint Augustine has said, 'The new is in the old concealed, and the old is in the new revealed', and when you come into the new and then take it back to the old, then there are so many things that become clear to you that were not clear to them, for even as the prophets prophesied, they desired to look into the things that they were supernaturally uttering, saying, 'What does this mean?' It wasn't given to them to know, but in the New Testament we have the fulfilment and the revelation of what was intended in so many Old Testament passages, and you must understand this, or you'll get hung up on some nails and won't be able to move on.

Alright. Jeremiah 31: 31. I'm using the New American Standard Bible, I hope that's not offensive to you, I think some of you are using it. I have great admiration for the King James but I'm finding more and more that the New American Standard is most helpful in getting meanings over. Alright, 'Behold the days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt.' 'My covenant', notice over and over, 'My covenant. My covenant. Remember the covenant.' I forgot that some of you haven't been here, the covenant as we understand it, both in the Hebrew word *berith* and in the Greek word *diatheke* is the imposition, or the revelation, of the will of a superior on an inferior, it's not a peer arrangement, it's not two equals entering into an arrangement. When the Bible speaks of covenant it's talking about



God's declaration of his will and purpose into the human situation, and one of the meanings of *diatheke* is that it is something which you can accept, or reject, but you cannot alter. Alright, I like that, the way you say 'alter'. \*laughter\* I think if I stayed around here I could get some of the harshness out of my intonation, you say such beautiful things, I like it, 'alter'. Say it again. \*Alter.\* Oh, that's nice. \*laughter\* Alright, 'My covenant which they broke.' God has imposed on us his will. Don't let that come through as something nasty, that's God's love, mercy, compassion, desire for your highest best. But they broke his covenant, 'although I was a husband to them' declares the Lord. 'But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' declares the Lord, 'I will put my law within them and on their heart I will write it, and I will be their God and they shall be my people, they shall not teach again each man his neighbour and each man his brother saying, "Know the Lord", for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them,' declares the Lord, 'for I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more.'

Now I want to make a personal choice of one or two other scriptures in the Old Testament that prophesy of the new coming, there are a great number of them, but it would take all evening to read, but I think just probably two of them and we'll go to Isaiah, the great Old Testament evangelist, and we'll turn first of all to Isaiah 42. I just want to remind you, and you'll recognise it as soon as you hear the language, that we are talking about something that relates to our Lord Jesus and this age in which we are living. Isaiah 42, and we'll look at the first thirteen verses. Please expose your hearts now to God's incomparable word. 'Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have put my Spirit upon him. He will bring forth justice to the nations.' I don't know about you, but from time to time God alerts me to words that I have not seemed to be aware of previously. The last six or seven years the word 'nations' has become very prominent in my vocabulary, and I began to realise that God has a mission for us in the nations, and that he sent us forth to make disciples of all nations. And I was speaking on this one day and I could see the people were incredulous, they weren't even able to witness to their neighbour, let alone take over a nation, and the Lord whispered into my spirit, he said, 'It will help them if you tell them how I consider a nation.' He said, 'as I consider a nation a drop in a bucket.' And as he said that in my spirit whilst I was preaching, I thought how marvellous that a nation to God is a drop in a bucket, and he's commissioned me to take over a nation, I think I can handle a drop, and it was almost like he was saying, 'Don't be staggered at the size of the task', and I might also say that I think that the rising tide of nationalism, whilst some feel that it is God getting the nations ready like ten pins to bowl over in judgement, which maybe, I believe that the rising tide of nationalism across the earth is the preparation for nations in national entities to be visited and taken over by the gospel, and disciplined by God's people.

Alright, 'He will bring forth justice to the nations.' Verse 2 'He will not cry out, nor raise his voice, nor make his voice heard in the street, a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not extinguish. He will faithfully bring forth justice.' And then verse 4 is one of my favourites, 'He will not be disheartened or crushed until he has established justice in the earth, and the coastlands will wait expectantly for his law.' Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, that ought to encourage you, the one who's asked us to do the things he's asked us to do is the one who's created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit those who walk on it. 'I am the Lord. I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to...' what? '...the nations,' alright, 'to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison. I am the Lord, that is my name, I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven images. Behold the former things have come to pass, behold now I declare new things, before they spring forth I proclaim them to you. Sing to the Lord a new song, sing his praise from the end of the earth, you who

go down to the sea and all that is in it, you islands and those who dwell in them, let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voice, the settlement where Kedhar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Selah sing aloud, let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare his praise in the coastlands. The Lord will go forth like a warrior, he will arouse his zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout, yes, he will raise a war cry, and he will prevail against his enemies.' 'I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail.'

Now let's go to another one. Chapter 61 of Isaiah. Nothing quite as refreshing as God's pure word, is there? Now you'll recognise this immediately. 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners, to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to grant those who mourn in Zion, giving them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins. They will raise up the former devastations and they will repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations, and strangers will stand and pasture your flocks, and foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers, but you will be called the priests of the Lord. You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations and in their riches you will boast.' You won't have to worry about finance. Verse 7 'Instead of your shame you will have a double portion and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore they will possess a double portion in their land. Everlasting joy will be theirs, for I the Lord love justice. I hate robbery in the burnt offering, and I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Then their offspring will be known among the nations and their descendants in the midst of the peoples, all who see them will recognise them, because they are the offspring whom the Lord has blessed. I will rejoice greatly in the Lord. My soul will exalt in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes the things sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all nations.'

Alright, that's the new covenant that is going to be made with the new people in the new day, which will be God's day of salvation, the accepted time, the ultimate appeal to humanity, God's last redemptive thrust. Now I know that some of this is going over some of your heads, because you have theological predispositions that render you incapable of receiving what I'm saying. You've got neatly packaged little doctrinal things all worked out, and when I suggest to you that you are going to be a part, I hope, in this generation, of reaching the nation for God in dimensions that you have never imagined, you just kind of courteously turn down your hearing aid until I get onto something with which you agree. But I believe that this is the teaching of the scripture, that it is through the gospel, through the redeemed community of the new covenant, that God is going to show forth his ultimate manifestation of glory. Now I want you to turn to Exodus if you will, chapter 24, as we see Moses representing God bringing the nation of Israel into covenant. 'Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance. Moses alone, however, shall come near to the Lord, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him." Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the Lord, and all the ordinances, and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken, we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Then he arose early in the morning.'

When you're reading through the Old Testament next time, notice how many references there are to God's servants rising up early in the morning. There's a reason for that, if you don't get up early, you won't get the thing done that you planned to do. You'll talk yourself out of it. 'And he arose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the Mount, and with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel, and he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.' Now do you see the two covenanting parties? Remember covenant in the Old Testament and in the custom of ancient nations and the continuing nations of ancient times in the Middle East to this day, when they covenanted, there was always blood involved, there was always the giving of life, either the cutting of animals which is called cutting a covenant, or they would cut their wrists and they would join their wrists together and let their lifeblood mingle, so that they would say to each other, 'We are now blood brothers. We are bound together by blood.' Or they would take a goblet of wine and they would each put the blood from their slashed wrists into the goblet of wine, and then they would drink together so that they would drink each other's blood, mingled with the wine. The blood was the sacred tie between the covenanting parties, and so now Moses is representing God before Israel and Israel before God, and he is bringing now the community into a covenant relationship with God. In Abraham's case God made covenant with Abraham. The time has come now when God is going to make covenant with the corporate redeemed community, and so he took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar, and that was God's half, then he took the book of the covenant, now the book of the covenant was that in which he had written the words that he'd received from God on the mountain. Remember *berith* is a binding sentence, it is the word of a judge, it is the sentence of one of authority. *Berith* first speaks of God's binding, covenantal, unchangeable word. The word is primary in covenant, not even blood is primary in covenant. The blood ratifies a word, the word is basic. This is where superstition gets in, people get taken up with blood and sacramental rites, and they don't understand that the blood is to confirm the word, and that I don't go out sprinkling people with blood. I preach the word, when they receive the word then the blood is applied and made available to them, and is put to their account. But the word is supreme, the word is prior, the word is all important. This is a tremendous protection against what has been called historically in theology antinomianism, that is to think that you're saved and you can do whatever you like, that's because you never heard the word of the covenant. Somebody simply told you that if you said, 'I believe in the blood', that all of your sins would be washed away and that you'd stand right before God. That is not the truth. That's the truth when you come to that part of the truth but that isn't the starting of the truth. The starting of the truth is that you must take up a moral position, a decision to repent and turn from your sin, and to receive Christ as your Lord, who will keep you delivered from ongoing sin. You must first make this avowal. You say, 'This sounds very much to me like a person can save themselves.'

Not at all. There is no works involved in it. It is simply that you are declaring that you will turn from your sin insofar as you can will to do it, that you will walk in the covenant so far as you can will to walk in the covenant, knowing that the minute that you make that affirmation of will, God will move in by his enabling power and enable you to do that which you have willed to do. We have been afraid of the word 'will', but Jesus said if any man wills to do the will of God, he shall then know. God will not let a man know what his will is until the man wills to do his will. So some people, when they're listening to the will of God, they say, 'It thundered.' That's all they hear because they don't have a will to do the will of God, and if you don't have a will to do the will of God, I can't say anything to you. If God himself was standing here he couldn't tell anything to you, unless he violated your will, because you've just said, 'I

will not hear that.' First of all, you must will to do the will of God, whatever that is. Once you will to do the will of God, then God will let you know what that will is. Alright.

'And so he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that Lord has spoken, we will do. And we will be obedient.'" Now somebody has said that they were ridiculous to do this, but up until now God had brought them along without any moral requirement. This is not so, this just isn't so, and I'm not going to go into it, but you know it isn't so. There were creation ordinances from the beginning of time, from the garden of Eden, God had laid a word on his creatures, and so when these people stood on this awesome occasion before God, and the book of the covenant was read, and what God had required of them was read, what would you expect them to say? 'We can't do that, so we're not going to do it'? They said exactly what they should say, 'All that Lord has said we will do and we will be obedient.' That's the position of a covenanting party entering into a covenant with God. Is there anyone here tonight who thinks themselves to be in a relationship with God, who would dare to say to him, 'I can't accept the high standards of your word, and I don't propose to obey them, but I will presume on your grace and hope that you will be merciful to me at the end, though I break all your laws and violate all your statutes'?

It sounds ludicrous, I'm sure to your ears, and it is. Of course we are obedient people. I'm not saying we will not fail, I'm not saying we will not need forgiveness, but if there should be in your heart or mine, the kind of deception that says, 'I will enter into this contract, all the time knowing that I will presume on the grace and mercy of God', I doubt whether you understand the true nature of relationship with God at all. I have failed God, I have had to seek forgiveness, I have tossed as you have, sleepless at night concerning my being out of fellowship with God for something that I have done which grieved the Holy Spirit, and God has forgiven me, and God has restored me. But that does not mean that every day I get up, I say, 'Aha, this day I'll do what I jolly well please, and sometime in the middle of the night, I'll get absolution.' Do you know something? If you're a Christian tonight, answer me this, do you know what it is when you're out of fellowship with God through some violation of his will in your life, do you know what it is to toss in a delirium of unhappiness? How many know what that is? Brother, that's as close to hell that I want to get. I want to tell you something else, you are only as happy as you are holy. I'm not using holiness in some legalistic religious sense, I'm talking about walking joyfully in the will of God. It is said of Jesus that he loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Sin will take the joy out of your Christian life. Mr. Moody had written in the flyleaf of his Bible, 'Sin will keep you from this book, and this book will keep you from sin.'

Alright. 'Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient." So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'" Now he took half of the blood, he sprinkled it on the altar. He took the other half in the basin just like this. And he took that half of the blood, having read the book of the covenant, and he sprinkled it out over the audience. And there were many Israelites who looked down at their coats. I don't think they laughed. I think it was with very reverent trembling fingers that they touched those bloody spots on their garments. This was the blood of the covenant, made between them and Jehovah God. This is purely my imagination, but I imagine that many took those garments home, probably never wore them again, or certainly never washed that blood out, and time and again they'd look at it with tears, and say, 'That is the covenant blood of my God.'

I'd like you to go to Matthew 26:26. Jesus is celebrating the last valid Passover with his disciples in the upper room, and it is very significant that the covenant communion meal is a continuation of the covenant communion meal under the old covenant, that the celebration of Passover, which was the celebration of the shedding of the blood of the multitude of lambs

that were slain on the night of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, that the celebration of that night should give way to a new celebration, the Lord's Supper, inaugurated by the Lamb himself, that the old communion meal, which incidentally was a communion meal, Israel came up three times a year as a redeemed community, when they celebrated Passover, they didn't celebrate it alone, each man going away, they celebrated it in community. Why? They were redeemed in community, they'd come out of the land as a community, they came out as a nation, this is what I'm trying to say to you this week, I'm not trying to take away from you your individual relationship to God, your individual communion with God, but that is what we have heard for years. 'Are you saved? Are you right with God? Is your heart right with God? Are you walking correctly?' And we've stood out as a lot of units, redeemed and relating to God, like a lot of pickets going up to heaven but no uniform, or form at all, horizontally. It was as a nation that they were brought out of Egypt and our Lord is talking now as he moves from the Passover Feast and inaugurates the new meal, he's talking of the meal called communion, or the Lord's supper, or the Eucharist, or whatever you want to call it. They're all valid terms, but it is the meal, not of the individual's relationship with God, but it is the meal of the redeemed community's relationship with God.

Now there's a superstition that has got in here because the communion has been so ritualised, liturgised and individualised, that people talk about 'taking my communion', and I know people, for years I've known people, that's the only thing they ever do is whenever the communion is celebrated in their church, once a month or once a year, they go to take their communion as a kind of mechanical continuum between them and God. It's a sort of a superstitious rite, they don't understand it at all, until like baptism, communion has become demeaned and disregarded, and meaningless to thousands of Christian people. The communion is the celebration of the redeemed community of their deliverance as a *people* from the power of death to become the new Israel, not going into Canaan to subdue the nations, but going into the world itself, to disciple all nations and make Jesus Christ Lord of all. Verse 26 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take eat, this is my body." He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."'

Now, do you notice how much alike the language is between the Exodus passage and this passage? 'This is my blood of the new covenant, drink ye all of it. All of you drink it. All of you drink it.' He didn't say, 'Drink all of it.' I don't want to be irreverent here, but I remember one place I had an elder who thought it meant you should literally drink it all. But at the end of the communion, to be sure that we obeyed the Lord, he drank all the wine that was left, which can be a little dangerous if you use wine for communion. But what he is saying here is very significant, he's saying, 'All of you drink it.' Now to show you that some people have a sneaking suspicion as to what is involved in this, I can tell you not only of people who go to communion to take their communion as a kind of a superstitious ritual to keep them in cups with whatever's up there, but I know of other people who recognise that there's something of significance in the communion, who absent themselves from communion, because in a very real sense the communion meal is not only the meal of celebration, but it is the meal of calling in accounts.

It's when you and I come to communion, with the body of men and women with whom we have a redeemed covenant, or a covenant of redemption, men and women to whom we have pledged our lives, or maybe you didn't know you'd done that, did you understand that in baptism that you not only gave up your life to the Lord Jesus, but that you were laying it down for the new community into which you were being baptised? Did you know tonight that everyone of you do not own your lives, that you have already pledged them to the other members of the redeemed community? And when you come and renew covenant at communion, you're coming to say not only, 'I love you Lord for what you've done for me

and for us', but, 'I have come to seal the renewal of communion with my brothers and sisters, and let them know that I continue my covenantal relationship with them, and that I will lay down my life for them.' I just want to read one or two more New Testament scriptures to show you that the new covenant meal which ratified the new covenant, and I have a purpose in this, I don't know if I'm making it clear to you, Jeremiah said it would be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Jesus said to his disciples, 'This is the blood of the new covenant.' Now that new covenant is for the new nation, we'll come to that in a moment, but that it is for the church of God consisting of Jew and gentile is evident when we read 1 Corinthians 11:25. Now remember that the Corinthian church is largely gentile, it consists largely of gentiles, and yet the apostle Paul directs them concerning the covenant meal, and that there is no question but that it is the same meal that our Lord inaugurated in the last Passover with his disciples, he quotes it, but that is not all, the communion is so important that Paul does not relate it to the Corinthians from oral tradition. Let me explain what I mean by that.

Jesus made a promise to his disciples before he went away. He said, 'When the Holy Spirit comes, he will bring to remembrance all things that I've spoken unto you.' That was a pre New Testament guarantee that when the New Testament was written, the book of the New Testament, that it would be correct, that it would be accurate because one of the ministries of the Holy Spirit was to bring accurately to the memory of Christ's disciples the things that he had said to them, so that they would accurately inscripturate them and inscribe them for posterity. This is the guarantee of the accuracy of the New Testament, is the pledge of our Lord, that the Holy Spirit would see to it that his disciples remembered. I don't think that they kept notes, they may have, I don't know. But I know that the things our Lord spoke into them were deeply recorded in their memories, and when the time came for them to write them down, the promise of the Lord Jesus concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit came to pass, and the Holy Spirit reached down into their memories, and brought forth with infinite accuracy those things that were to be recorded. Now in the beginning, when the apostles got up to preach, they didn't turn to Matthew chapter 13, or First Corinthians chapter 15. They spoke out of oral tradition, the things that had been passed along, and the Apostle Paul many times speaks of the things that were in the oral tradition of the early church. But so important was the Lord's Supper that although all of the apostles had been present, Judas had gone from it to betray the Lord, that it is of sufficient importance that the risen Lord does not leave Paul to record the demand of the communion meal to oral tradition, but he comes to Paul, now I don't understand how revelation was communicated, but holy men were borne along by the Holy Spirit. The mystery of the communication of the divine word is beyond me, and I'm sure it's beyond you, and I'm not going to argue about it. But however it happened, on the occasion when the Lord wanted to tell the Apostle Paul about the communion, the holy Supper, which was to be perpetuated in the churches until his return, he does not leave Paul to get that from oral tradition, but he comes himself to tell him about it. Now here's an interesting thing, and I don't want to attribute more to it than the word would seem to. He's in the glory now, our Lord Jesus, far beyond the touch of Calvary's suffering, but it seems that there is something in his mind, and I'm not going to say that it is still hurting him, I'm not going to say it's not, but I think he tells it to us for a reason. When he's telling the Apostle Paul about the communion, Paul says in verse 23, 'I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.' He says, 'I didn't get this from the other apostles, or in the oral tradition that is extant. But the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread.'

Now when the risen Lord approached Paul to tell him about the communion, isn't it interesting that he started out by saying, 'Paul, I want to tell you about the communion. It happened on the night I was betrayed.' Isn't that interesting? That he should have such high priority in the revelation of the communion. Does this say anything to you? Does it tell you that when we come together to eat and to drink and to break bread and to commune, that we

are coming together in a community where betrayal is a possibility, but it is the exception, but it is the thing that our Lord impresses first of all. The communion meal is a meal of fidelity, integrity, holy pledge of my heart to his heart, of my heart to your heart, your heart to my heart. Now we're talking about covenant. Brothers and sisters, I know I am funny sometimes, and I use that as a means to get truth over, but I want you to know I've never been more serious in my life than I am this week. I'm telling you that the church of God, the redeemed community, must rediscover the meaning of covenant. They must rediscover the integrity, the authenticity, the authority, the ultimate right of God to speak his word into our life situations and the holy requirement for us to respond in obedience, and that he has provided us with a divinely ordained reminder. While our baptism is one baptism, not to be repeated, our renewal of covenant is as oft as you come together to remember the Lord, we are to be reminded that we are a covenant people, that it is the same meal, in verse 24, that our Lord spoke about on the night he inaugurated it, is shown here, 'And when he had given thanks he brake it and said, "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me." After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do ye as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me."'

Alright, the new covenant meal for the new covenant people. Now, I think we will leave that there. I think we're sufficiently convinced, there's an abundance of scripture, but I want us to go quickly to Ephesians 2. I have a concern this week to get you to see the unity of the redeemed community and covenant. I want us to break in about verse 11 of chapter 2. 'Wherefore remember that ye being in time past gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called the circumcision in the flesh made by hands', or, 'you are known by those whose bodies were circumcised as the uncircumcised.' Circumcision was the national sign, or the sign to the nation that they were in covenant. Every male child was circumcised. Incidentally, in the new covenant men and women are baptised, under the old covenant men alone were circumcised, the boy being circumcised on the eighth day, and it's an interesting thing if you've read the book *None of These Diseases* that modern science has discovered that the eighth day of the child's life is the one day in his whole life when he has a certain factor in his blood that produces an immediate coagulant, so that the blood congealed and there's not excessive bleeding. God seemed to know his medicine pretty well. What is circumcision? Circumcision to the Israelite was the cutting of the male foreskin, it was the mark of death at the point of life, it was saying to this people, you are a people who have died to the behaviour patterns of all the other nations, and you bear in your body the mark of your having been cut off, and you are now to be a people for my possession, and you bear in your body that mark. That's why Paul in Colossians draws a parallel between the circumcision under the old covenant and baptism under the new, for just as in circumcision there was a cutting off, which made Israelites different from every other nation, in that he was circumcised and he was known as the circumcision. I'm not saying other people didn't practise circumcision, but I am saying that an Israelite had to be circumcised, or he'd be cut off from the people.

Moses forgot about that you know, he was in the wilderness for so long, he had a couple of boys come along, he didn't circumcise them. God called Moses and told him that he was to go and deliver his people, so Moses said to Zipporah, 'I gotta go and do a job for my God.'

She said, 'Who is your God?'

'Well, he's Jehovah, I just met him at the burning bush.' He said, 'I gotta go and deliver my people Israel.'

She said, 'I don't know your people Israel.'

He said, 'Come on, you're my wife. Let's go, pack up and bring the kids.'

She packed up the two boys and drags along behind reluctantly, and all of a sudden God tries to kill Moses. I don't know how he tried to kill him, he probably came down with a

strep throat or something, he's lying at the side of the road, and he says, 'God you told me to go, and I'm on my way.'

God said, 'How can you go and deliver the people when you haven't obeyed the Lord yourself in the circumcising of your sons?'

And he lies there choking to death, he says, 'Zipporah!'

She says, 'What do you want?'

'I'm dying!'

'Well, what can I do for you?'

'Get a flinty stone.'

'Get a what?'

'Get a flinty stone, one with a sharp edge.'

'What for?'

'I want you to circumcise our boys.'

'You what?'

Well he explained it to her. When she got through, she flung the foreskins at his feet and said, 'Thou art a bloody husband unto me. I've had enough of you and your God. Goodbye.'

And away she went home, and he went on alone. She joined him later on the trip, but he went on alone, that's how important it was. Now I'm only going to make this suggestion, if there is a parallel between circumcision and baptism, then I don't think that you can afford to treat baptism with the lightness with which multitudes of people are treating it. 'Repent, and be baptised every one of you. Drink ye all of it, all of you drink it. All of you get into it and all of you stay in it.' Alright. 'Wherefore remember that ye being in time past gentiles in the flesh, known by those whose bodies were circumcised as the uncircumcised, that at that time ye were without Christ.' You were shut out from the citizenship of Israel. You were utter strangers to God's chosen community Israel, you were outside at that time, and you were strangers from the covenants of promise. You did not have covenants, God did not enter into a covenantal arrangement with you. The only way you could get into God's covenant was to come in as a proselyte and become a proselyte Israelite. But you as a gentile did not have a covenant, having no hope and without God in the world. Verse 13 'But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off', or outside the pale, 'are made nigh by the blood of Christ.' The blood of bulls and of goats was destined for you in the Levitical code to keep you right with your God, Jehovah. But when Christ came, he not only came to redeem all your Levitical credit notes but he came to be the Lamb of God, to take away the sins of the world, and now every man in the world is on a common basis before God, and it's no longer the bloods of bulls or of goats, but it's the blood of Jesus, and if a gentile gets in through the blood of Jesus and a Jew gets in through the blood of Jesus, that common sacrifice makes them common members of the new community. Verse 14 'For he is our peace, who hath made both one', let's say it altogether. \*Who hath made both one.\* Let's say, 'both one'. \*Both one.\* Are you sure it's both one? Alright. He made the two divisions of mankind one, the Jew and gentile, and had broken down the middle wall of partition between them, and theologians are desperately trying to rebuild it.

Are you there? Good, I wasn't sure there for a moment. He broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and gentile through the blood of Jesus Christ, and made both one, so that in Christ there is neither Jew nor gentile, he broke the wall down and any man who tries to build it up again does so at the risk of violating God's breaking it down. Verse 15 'Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to making himself of twain...' what? '...one new man.' That's the same new man we have later on in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter. Incidentally, just to titillate your curiosity, especially some of you Bible students, this might enrage some of you, but that only shows you need more sanctification, \*laughter\* did you know that the old man is not something in you? But



it's something that you were in. And do you know that the new man is not something in you but something you are in? I told you I was only going to titillate you.

Verse 16 'And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you, which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.' That's the Jews, the gentiles and the Jews. 'For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' It's no longer race, but grace. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, becomes the common legal basis upon which all men have access to God. There is no other way. Now, I have to underscore this a little further because, just because I have to. I was attending with my father, who was a prominent businessman, a service club one day at my father's invitation, because the man that was going to address the club was a noted rabbi. The padre of the club, or the chaplain of the club, was a fundamentalist Christian minister, and of course it seemed proper that the chaplain should introduce the rabbi. So the chaplain introduced the rabbi and he said this, he said, 'Rabbi so-and-so and I have many points of disagreement, but we are at one on one point and that is that we both honour and serve the same God.' And I leaned over to my father, and I said, 'I believe that is incorrect.' You cannot conveniently divide God up so that you've got Jehovah that was still satisfied with the Christ-rejecting Jew, and then you've got Jesus to accommodate the Christians. This is the worst form of trinitarian tritheism, where you divide God conveniently up and somebody can have one part of God while they reject another part of God. May I remind you that Jesus simply said, 'Had you known my Father, you would have known me also. You can't have my Father and reject me. For he that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' All the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in Christ. There is no Jehovah to relate to outside of Jesus. In fact, the very name of Jesus is Jehoshua, or Jehovah the Saviour. So that to say, 'I believe in God, but I don't believe in Jesus', the God that you believe in then is not the God that is in Jesus, for Jesus came forth from the bosom of the Father to declare him, and no man can come unto the Father but by Jesus. You can't even get to Jehovah, God the Father, but by Jesus, and so to speak about people believing in God but not believing... I'll tell you how to check this out. You'll get some unusual reactions to it. Have you ever noticed how it's quite a common thing among people that have been raised in some kind of a religious background to 'God bless you', you know, 'God bless you.' I remember when I was in Cape Town, South Africa, we were having some colossal meetings. We had to use an aerodrome to hold the people, they were spilling out onto the tarmac, and our pictures were in the paper and everyone knew us, and I came into the hotel one night after a service, and there were a number of obviously worldly type people there and they suddenly saw us, and immediately of course related us to the big religious thing that was going on, and immediately became religious. And they were saying goodnight to each other, and 'God bless you dear', and 'God bless you dear.' And they were cockeyed, one eye looking at the God blessed one, and the other looking to us to see if they'd got the effect. Now I'll tell you how to really put some bite into that. Just say, 'The Lord Jesus Christ bless you.' 'God' is not offensive, but give him his name. 'God bless you', that can be any old god. Paul says there are gods many. Which God do you want to bless me? I'm not sure I want your blessing until I know which god it's coming from. \*applause\* How many understand what I'm saying? Wave it at me, I want to know if you're alive too, you're so quiet tonight. You must have all taken tranquillisers.

Alright. Verse 19 'Now therefore watch ye', remember he's addressing this to gentile Christians, 'ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints', with Christ's people you share citizenship, you are members of the new nation. Remember last night, he said the kingdom shall be taken from you as an ethnic people with genes that have been regarded from the time of Abraham, the kingdom is taken from you, and it's going to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. What nation is that? It's no longer a nation marked by blood genetics, but by Spirit genetics, no longer born into the right families with your genealogy recorded in the temple tablets, but you are now a people born of the Holy

Spirit, whose name is written in heaven, and you're not down for your genetic distinction, you are known for your spiritual genes that you are born again, a member of the new community, the new nation that consists of all who have been born again by the Spirit of God, and brought into the redeemed community, and have access by one Spirit to one Father. If you like, you are now the new Israel.

Paul says in Galatians 6 'and peace be on you and upon the Israel of God.' You are the new Israel, you are the new nation. And as the new nation, hear me clearly now, what God laid on Israel as a picked out nation from the family of nations, brought them out, crossed the Jordan into Canaan, and said 'I want you to be my evangelistic centre for the earth from Canaan.' Now the new nation consists not of Jews or Amorites or Gergashites or Englishmen or Czechoslovakians, or Canadians or whatever, but the new nation consists of all those who are born again, and if the nation of Israel under the old covenant, which is a lesser covenant, were to be a light to the world as a nation governed by Jehovah, how much more the new nation under a better covenant, who have within them the Spirit of Christ, and by one Spirit access to one Father. How much more shall they fulfil their world commission of going into all the world and making disciples of all nations? I don't believe, ladies and gentlemen, I don't believe that we have ever really risen to the implications of what God has said to us as the redeemed community in the earth. I don't think we've ever understood it. We've saved some souls, we've run some evangelistic meetings and gospel services, but we've never thought in terms of being God's nation in the earth. We've never thought in terms of salting the earth, lighting the world, discipling nations, being such a manifest community that we are God's people in the midst of the earth, co-reigning with the risen Christ, who has all authority in heaven and in earth. We've not thought of it in those terms. We thought of it simply as getting somebody saved, taking them to the Sunday night gospel service, getting them to a Billy Graham meeting, all of which is fine, but I believe the hour has come when God is saying to us, 'Nations of mine in the earth, whom I have destined to be my vehicle of authority, through whom I will mediate my glory and my power and my love, it is time for you to come together in the true meaning of covenant, it's time for you to become in very deed the blood brothers that you are in theory. It's time for you to stand shoulder to shoulder in every community.'

Now don't start this thing by loving the people in Africa. Now one of the easiest ways to get out of this is, 'Well, I'm a member of the body of Christ.'

What's that?

'Well, I'm one of God's people.'

You know what that usually means? 'I don't want to take any local responsibility.'

Now I'm glad you love the Christians in Africa. \*Amen [lone voice from audience]\* Bless you brother. \*laughter\* I'm glad you love the Christians in India, I'm glad you love the Christians in America, but what about the Christian next door? The one you really have to manifest to.

'Oh Lord, I love the Africans and Indians and the Americans and the Czechs.'

But what about the ones next door?

'Well, I am having some problems there.' \*laughter\*

Brother, that's where it starts. That's what it's all about, look, I've got some terrific sermons, you know that, I've got some wing dingers I tell you. I got about twenty books of them back home that would make this tent rock.

You say, 'How do you know that?'

I've done it many times, until God started to burden my heart, that my job wasn't to go around and just excite God's people, and tell them how blessed they were and how good it was to be saved and how marvellous to have faith in Jesus' blood, but that the time had come when God's people had to grow up and face their mature corporate responsibility and move into the world as the army of God, as the people of the Lord, as people who would get along with one another and start relate to one another and stop sitting at a bus station waiting to be

whisked off to heaven, when there's a job to be done in the earth. \*applause\* I'm going to surprise you tonight, because I'm going to stop in a few minutes. \*laughter\* Ruth, put that person on our prayer list. \*laughter\*

I want you to turn, please to Ephesians Chapter 3 and verse 20. I could say so very, very more about that, I could go all through Hebrews tonight, tell you about the new covenant, better than angels, the blood is better than that of Abel, better promises, everything is better about this covenant. But I'm not going to do that, I'm going to stop right here with this passage, and I'm going to show you the implications of the covenant. As members of the covenant, this is exactly where we stand tonight. I don't have to tell you that the blood of Jesus is better than the bloods of bulls or of goats. I don't have to tell you that our covenants got..., you've heard all of that. It'd be nice to talk about, I'd be thrilled to talk about it, I'd get great joy, but you don't need to hear that. What you need to hear tonight is that covenant means community, and community means get together, and get together means get together at home, husband and wife and children, and get together in your community, not with your particular little group of people who all believe the same Bible doctrines. This is where it gets sticky, but you've got to get it together where it matters.

Alright. Verse 20 'Now unto him that is able. Now unto him that is able.' How many believe he is able? Good, I'm glad you believe he's able. You sure voted yourself into a corner. \*laughter\* Have you ever had a boil on your whatchamacallit, or a sore ear, or something, and you've had it for a long time, and some happy Christian comes along and says, 'God is able.' I don't know what that does for you, but I want to give them one free trip to the moon. \*laughter\* You think I don't know God is able? Lord, I know God is able. My problem is that there's something wrong, I can't plug into his ability. Now, if you can tell me how to plug in, come talk to me, but don't tell me there's electricity in those wires when I can't get my shaver to work. 'Now unto him that he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or conceive, according to the power that...' Oh yes. How many believe God is able? The vote isn't so enthusiastic. \*laughter\* Where does that ability lie? Come on. 'According to the power that worketh in us.' Now that 'us' is not me, that's the plural we. You see a lot of us have gone through the whole nervous breakdown thing. I remember when I had my first church somebody gave me Wigglesworth's *Ever Increasing Faith*. Awful embarrassing going to a Funeral Home and trying to raise a corpse. That book almost sent me to the nuthouse. \*laughter\* Because when the person gave it to me, the implication was, 'Be like him.' And I tried. And I almost came apart trying. Now I can tell you that over forty years I have looked into the strained, anxious, almost hysterical on the border of going out of sanity, faces of dear precious, sincere Christian people who have interpreted the 'us' as 'me'. I'm not going to have a personal nervous breakdown being unable to do what God never asked me to do. Thank God I'm through with that. God never asked me to disciple the nations. God never asked me to light the world. God never asked me to salt the earth. God never asked me to be the total voice of God in my community.

Once I got through that, and once I understood that all I had in the body of Christ was one little part to play, I was probably the toenail on the little toe, and the job that had to be done wasn't to be done by me, it was to be done by us. What you are hearing this week is the nail on the little toe crying out the rest of the body, 'Let's get it together.' That little toe's wiggling in there, says, 'Let's go.' \*laughter\* How many have got a 'Let's go' in here? Boy, you're terrible voters tonight. \*laughter\* I want you for a moment to think dear people, of what you'd like to see God do in your communities. Think about it. Release your thinking now, come on, release your thinking, try to conceive of the greatest thing, and if you're Presbyterian in your background like I am, don't let election get in your road. Try to believe maybe for once that God elected your whole town, which he seemed to do in Mr Finney's day, a whole town seemed to be elected. Now think, think what you would like and remember something, that he is able to go beyond that. If you can find out the secret of how to release the divine energy

that is in us. You know that Satan knows about that? He knows about that. He said, 'Boy, I can't let that happen, I've got to keep these people separated. Now I don't mind if there are four or five of them in that little bunch, and three or four of them in that little bunch, and two of them meet over there, I've just got to keep them separate. If they ever get together, they'll blow me out of the water.'

And all he has to do is keep us separate, and he doesn't mind being religious, oh, he's quite religious. He says, 'Take a stand on that. Take a stand. Don't compromise. After all, you're right on the interpretation of that Greek word. That's enough for you to draw away a following after yourself. Have them meet in your kitchen.' \*laughter\* You feel so religious about it, and what are you doing? Playing right into his hands. 'Unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that you ask or think.' Verse 21 'Unto him be glory...' Where? Where? \*In the church.\* Are you sure? \*Yes.\*

'I thought the church was a pitiful little group of people, standing, waiting, shivering, huddled together at the bus stop, waiting to get taken out of this dirty old world.'

No. You've got it wrong. Well, I'll tell you something. 'Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus.' Now in the King James, what does this mean? 'Throughout all ages, world without end.' See, what does that mean? I think that Doctor Conybeare has given us probably the most scholarly translation of this, and I'm going to use it. 'Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus even to all the generations of the age.' What is he saying? He's saying God is going to do it, and he's going to do it in the church, if it takes generation after generation after generation, it's going to be done in the generations of this age, that there's going to be one generation that's going to get it together and that will be the climactic generation, when quantitatively and qualitatively, the righteous will outnumber the wicked in both quantity and quality, and Christ will return for a glorious church, without spot, it's not only been washed, but without wrinkle, it's been ironed. \*laughter\*

I'm going to close by telling you of one of only two visions I've ever had in my life. It's about twelve years' ago now, and I was preaching in a large church in Canada at a convention, and I'd gone through at that time a great personal tragedy, and I was very sensitive, emotionally and spiritually, and I asked the conveners if it would be alright if I didn't sit on the platform until I had to speak. And in that church, the architectural contour of the church, it was a large semi-circle such that over on that side, on each side I presume, this is the side I can remember so well, one of the great wide Corinthian type pillars that came down, to fit the pews in so that they would be in symmetry, and one row of pews had to go by this post, but to keep the straight line of the side of the pews, there was just room for one on the other side of this great column. And I spied it, and nobody wanted it. You could see the platform, but you were completely cut off from the congregation, it was merely an architectural accommodation, but it became a providential provision for me. Each night I went there and sat, and I'd sit there, and I'd feel the meeting, get a sense of what God was doing. One night I was strongly constrained to kneel. I don't think it's a good thing to make an exhibition of yourself, or to draw attention to yourself, but I realised that for me to kneel there would draw attention to no one. It was like I had a private office right in the sanctuary, so I knelt and I knew the Spirit of God was pressing me to kneel, and as I knelt, I had a vision, and projected out from me in space was the earth as an orb. To help you understand what I saw, it was just like the pictures that the astronauts took of the earth from the moon. There it was. But what I saw was this orb that I recognised as the earth and all over it were Quonset huts. Now I may be in trouble here, how many know what Quonset huts are? Alright, I'll explain it to you. After the last great war, you probably had them here, there were aluminium sheds that were sold as war surplus in Canada, did you have any of that here? Do you know what I'm talking about? Alright, as long as you know what I'm talking about. Pardon me? \*Nissan huts.\* Some kind of puffs, I don't know. \*laughter\* 'Huts', oh well, I've half of it right. What's your first part? \*Nissan.\* Nissan huts. How many know what a Nissan hut is? \*laughter and applause\* That's

the best vote I've got all night. You voted on something that wasn't going to involve you. \*laughter\* But I saw these all over the globe, and I was very conscious of the Spirit of God on me and I knew that I was into something, and I said, 'Lord, what are they?'

And he said, 'I am going to have in every place a people that are known for the anointing, and when you travel from place to place, you will not ask for my people by this name or that name, but you will simply go into a place and you will say, "Where are the people of the anointing?"'

By this time I was frightened. I don't know if you've ever been frightened in a spiritual experience, but I was, and I sat up hoping that somehow this would stop. I really don't know what I thought, but the word kept coming. 'They went out from us because they were not of us. Had they been of us, they would have remained with us. But you have an unction, or an anointing from the Holy One.' And then one more scripture he spoke into my heart, 'And the disciples were first called Christians, or anointed ones, at Antioch.' For the first time at Antioch, the church was released to the sovereignty of the Spirit's direction, and the Holy Spirit was able to say, 'Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work.' And I knew what I was hearing, that God was going to have across the earth, in every place he was going to have a body of people who would be known for moving in the anointing of his Spirit, and I saw in vision before I comprehended fully in the Word, that it was God's purpose, to have in every geographical communicable area a body of people that was so united and knit together in the spirit of covenant, that they would be one, and everywhere you went, they would have this common point of reference, that it would be the people of the anointing, and when this charismatic thing began to break out, especially with the singing in the Spirit, and I started to move across the country, it didn't matter what city in America I went to, there it was. It didn't matter where I went in Australia or New Zealand or come over here, there it was. I could hear the sound, I could sense the flow, I wanted to know where are the people of the anointing? Everywhere I go, I want to know, is that the people of the anointing? Are they moving in what God is doing?

Now please don't misunderstand me. You say, 'You're being sectarian.' No, I want all of God's people in every place to come together, but they're going to have to start to come together where the anointing is moving. It's the anointing that's going to break the yoke, it's the anointing that's going to bring the people together. You can't come together on the basis of doctrine, you can't come together on the basis of culture, you can't come together on the basis of colour, you come together on the basis of the unity of the Spirit, subject to the lordship of Christ, and in that unity you work out any head differences you have, because before the world you've got to manifest the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and show that you have the ability to be the people of the anointing in your community. 'Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that energises us, unto him be glory'. What's glory? The visible manifestation of the invisible attributes of God. Unto him be visible manifestation of his invisible attributes in the church of God, in Capel, in Cobham, in wherever, in every generation to the end of this age. You see you don't dare go out of this marquee tonight if you are honest, you don't dare go out of here with an untroubled conscience, if you are playing any part in keeping the redeemed community divided in the area where you live.

You are the people of the covenant, you're God's covenant people. Is there a Christian in your community that you have never broken bread with? In the light of this book, that's unthinkable. Is it true that there are Christians in your area that you speak demeaningly of because they don't hold your doctrinal viewpoint? How dare we do that? How dare we do that? Stand at the foot of his bloody cross and here the drip, drip, drip, as blood drips to the ground, and look up at his mangled form, the gangrenous swollen and protruding tongue, the pathetic cry, 'I thirst', and then tell me that we have the audacity to fly in the face of such love and withhold not only our hearts, but even the hand of Christian friendship from a man in our

town who loves Jesus. But you say, 'He will not speak to me.' Aha, lay your love on him, tell him you love him. Let him slam the door, but you've put your love in his conscience. He may say, 'How dare...' But he won't get the words finished until if he's a Christian, something inside him will say, 'You should have responded differently.' I heard Gerald teaching you a little chorus last night, or repeating it, 'Jesus in me'. I was teaching that in Elim Bible College in New York. And there was a young couple who did the sign language for the deaf, and they taught me how to do it. Jesus. That's the sign for Jesus, the middle finger in the palm of the hand, the sign for Jesus, the ever living nail print. Jesus. And then pocketing your fingers in your hand, in me loves. Don't do it this way, that's puppy love. Clench the fist, loves. That's adult, mature agape. I'll take you with all your garbage, brother, I'll take you with all your faults, because you'll take me with mine, and together we'll work it out, won't we? Loves you. Amen.

Gerald, number 3 I've wanted to hear sung since I've come. I wonder if we could close with it tonight? I'm letting you out early tonight, because tomorrow night I want you here. Bring a friend. We'll put seats on the tent posts. \*laughter\* I want you to be here tomorrow night, please, I plead.

6. **Interpersonal Covenant** (Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June 1976, evening)

I have during this week been pouring out really my heart's cry to you. I said it on two or three occasions that what I have been saying has not come in the form of sermons, it's just really been a message that I feel God has laid on my heart for his people, and up until tonight, while there had been references made to our need of entering into interpersonal covenant, I have not dealt with that. Last night we spoke about the meaning of the communion to some extent, and we have spoken about the general inter-relationship of the redeemed community, and yet I have deliberately left it that way until tonight, when I want to talk to you about the necessity of entering into a real covenantal relationship with persons, and it seems so long ago since the first night we spoke to you, if you recall we spent some time in the second chapter of Genesis and pointed out that after the Fall, after Adam and Eve had eaten the forbidden fruit, that God came down to confront his delegated authorities in the earth, his king and his consort, Adam and Eve, with what they have done, and one of the things that resulted from sin coming into Adam and Eve through disobedience, was not only that their fellowship was broken with God and had to be restored by blood sacrifice and the covering of the animal skins, but there had been a horizontal rupture. Up until that time Adam and Eve had walked in a beautiful, unrippled and unruffled relationship, because there was no sin in their situation, and when God came upon the scene they both were deceitful, dishonest, ungrateful. Adam seemed to have really sinned the deepest with his mouth to God, when he not only said, 'The woman that you gave me taught me to do what I did', and so blamed the woman, but blamed God as the one who had given him the woman, a very serious act on Adam's part. If you can imagine what that must have meant to Eve, as she heard for the first time those kind of words falling from the lips of this man with whom she had had the intimate relationship of a perfect marriage, unsullied by sin, to hear this man who had held her so tenderly, spoken to her so beautifully, to hear this man with whom she had had this ideal relationship, suddenly point the finger of accusation at her, and charge her with the responsibility of his sin, we can imagine what it must have done to her, and you can probably imagine what must have transpired between them somewhere along the line after God visited them in redemptive love. There has to come a point where in the new dimension of redemption, Adam and Eve stood face to face and said, 'It's not like it was, but it can't remain like it is', and I'm sure that Adam said, 'Eve, forgive me', and Eve said, 'Adam, I am so sorry', and they re-covenanted.

God came into the sin scene not only to restore man to God, and God to man, but to restore man to man, human being to human being. The covenantal relationship between Christians must be based on an understanding of our covenantal relationship with God, that if you and I have entered in through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in obedient response to his word, and probably I put those in the wrong order, if you have entered into a covenantal relationship of obedience to his word and faith in his blood, and you feel that you have a covenant with God tonight that is valid, which constitutes you a man or a woman in covenant relationship with God, with all that that means in the light of the things we've said, and in the light of much more than we've been able to say, but I hope we have said enough to make you to understand what it means to be rightly related to God, that that vertical relationship is the foundation upon which you build your horizontal relationship, and that you cannot have a right relationship with God if you have a wrong relationship with your brother, or with your wife, or in any area where there is a covenantal situation required. One of the reasons that I have felt impressed to talk about covenant across America and everywhere I've been, is because there is a desperate sense that the disloyalty, the lack of integrity, that characterises so much of the world conduct, has made its way deep into the fibre of the Christian scene, and that it's not uncommon for Christians to betray one another, that even the marriage covenant is no longer held with a depth of conviction and commitment in the Christian community, which once characterised it, and I believe that God is rising up in the midst of his people to say,

‘You must stem this tide of invasion, you must turn back this incursion of worldly dissolution of principle’, and he is speaking not only through me, but through many of his servants, about loyalty and authority, submission and discipleship, and relationship and shepherding. All of these words are designed to bring back into the redeemed community the kind of integrity and purity of motive and loyalty of purpose and uprightness of heart, and *agape* love, which doesn’t need to have a finger pointed at it. If I love you, I will not steal your wife’s affection, and if I love you I will not steal your property, if I love you I will not steal your character by bearing false witness. These are things that must be restored among us. We can no longer glibly bare a kind of a verbal witness to the Christian thing, as long as we are living in superficial relationship. People are not stupid, they hear what is coming from our mouths, and they don’t judge us by our words, they judge us by the timbre of our voice, they can tell whether it’s sincere, and whether we’re speaking out of reality, or whether we are just reciting cant and formulae.

In the early church and Acts chapter 2, and Bryn has been so beautifully riding with me this week and supplementing and supporting, as I trust I’ve been supporting him in the morning services, we read that the early church, it’s all capsulated so beautifully in Acts 2:41-42 ‘They that gladly received his word were baptised’, and then it goes on to say, ‘and they continued...’ I pointed out to you that baptism is the initiatory rite into covenant, mixed with faith and understanding, but then it says that having entered into covenant with God through baptism and with one another, being baptised into the Christ community ‘that they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and in fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayer.’ ‘In the apostles’ teaching and in fellowship’, now that word for fellowship in the Greek is a very beautiful word, the word *koinonia*. It’s a word that our Lord reached down into the Greek vocabulary and picked out and chose to fill with much deeper meanings than the Greeks had ever been able to put into it, as an expression of their interpersonal relationships, although the Greeks had held it at a very high level. *Koinonia* was the word of marriage, *koinonia* was the word of a business arrangement between two or three men who pooled their common resources in a covenant of business venture. *Koinonia* was already a very fine word in the Greek language, it didn’t have to be washed and purged and cleansed to the extent many other Greek words did before God pulled them into the divine vocabulary and filled them with his own meanings. *Koinonia* came into the divine vocabulary already a very fine word, then the Lord poured new meanings into it, and one of the characteristics of a valid Christ community is that they tenaciously cling to one another in a relationship that is likened to marriage, that we Christians are to be characterised by an interpersonal relationship that will be of such a kind, that nothing that the world has to offer in interpersonal relationship will begin to measure up to the kind and sort of relationships that we have. I think that I could probably most simply define the difference between the vertical and the horizontal by taking 1 John 3:16. We’re all well acquainted with the gospel of John 3:16, how that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life, but turning to John’s epistle, the first one, chapter 3 and verse 16, we find the horizontal dimension. ‘We know love by this that he - our Lord Jesus - avowed and affirmed and spoke much about his love for us’ - that is not what it says. He did by a supreme act demonstrate his love, ‘We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us’.

Now are we prepared to accept what comes next as a valid means whereby we express our love for one another? ‘... and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.’ We can be very idealistic about this and say, ‘Well, I’m sure if the time ever came I certainly would do that’, and we conveniently put it off for the future, but the next verse arrests us, and tells us that whoever has the world’s goods and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Now there’s a simple equation in here that I think you’ll immediately appreciate, the Holy Spirit equates life with money. Have you ever thought of that? A husband goes to work, earns a wage, what for? To bring home, to look



after his family, it is life that money represents, the investment of eight hours or whatever of his life's energy, he puts his life into his labour, and for his labour he receives a wage, and with that wage he not only maintains his own life, but the life of his family, so that in laying down my life for my brother I'm not just talking about dying for him physically, I am saying that what happened in Jerusalem after Pentecost, when there was great economic need among the Christians, and it's recurred from time to time, that the laying down of life was not a requirement that they should be killed for one another, but that they should gladly bring what represented life to them, their goods, their means. Let me hasten to add, I don't believe that the order of God permanently is that we should have a common purse. I believe that there were periods, and have been periods in history, when the pressures of persecution have been such that a common purse has been essential, and it was with the New Testament, but as you read all that the New Testament has to say on the ownership of goods, you'll find that as God prospered a man, he was to bring his offering, but it was private ownership. But what I would say is this, that if the same spirit prevails among us tonight as prevailed upon the Pentecostal saints in the first days of the Christian thing, I have no question in my mind that if suddenly in this country there was a persecution broke out, that every man and woman would be glad to bring all that they had and make it available for the common good. I believe that it is the spirit of community that we have to keep healthy and alive among us. However, covenant requires that we understand that we must lay down our lives one for another.

Now there are a number of instances in the Bible of interpersonal one-to-one covenants, but probably the most beautiful and the most illustrative is the covenant between Jonathan and David, and so tonight I want to talk to you about that, and I want you to be thinking about it as we go along, because it is a picture of how God intends us to respond to his covenant with us. It's a picture of how we are to make covenant with one another. David and Jonathan both were raised in a community where covenant was understood, indeed they were constantly reminded that they were a people of covenant, they were the people of the divine *berith*, God had cut covenant with their father Abraham, God had renewed covenant with Isaac and Jacob, God had made covenant as we saw last night with the nation, when the blood was sprinkled on the altar and thrown over the congregation of the people. They understood covenant, they understood what it meant to cut covenant, they knew the solemnity of covenant, they knew that when you cut a sacrificial animal in half, and arm in arm walked through that bloody path, that you were saying to one another, 'The words that have been exchanged between us are now bound by the blood of covenant, and if either of us violate the words of covenant, may it happen to us as it has happened to this animal.' They knew the sacredness of taking the flesh of that animal and cooking it and sitting down, and eating together, and of sprinkling salt, because salt to this day is a very meaningful part of covenant, if you share salt with a man, even if he's your enemy, he becomes your friend. They understood covenantal language, they understood what it was to cut one another's wrists and join them so that blood mingled with blood, they understood what it was to take the covenantal goblet with wine and pressed their own blood into it, each putting his blood in the goblet and then sharing commonly the goblet filled with wine and blood, they understood all of this language that may be very foreign to us westerners, who have not been raised to think in eastern ways, they understood this when they made their covenant with one another. I just want to point out two or three passages quickly to show that they patterned their covenant on the covenant of God.

Now I've already given you at least one scripture that establishes this, that if our Lord Jesus laid down his life for us, then there is a covenant patterned on that, then we lay down our lives for one another. That Jonathan and David understood this is shown by the fact that this was no covenant made between two idolatrous nomadic Ishmaelites, or Jebusites, or whatever, this was a solemn, serious, meaningful relationship entered into with the full knowledge of the kind of covenant that the one true Jehovah God had made with his people

Israel, they understood all the meaning of *berith*, cutting a covenant. And so if you'll look quickly at 1 Samuel 20:8, now I'm only going to read this to point out that they related their covenant to the covenant of the Lord: 'Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you.' Notice that? He goes so far as to speak of the covenant he had with Jonathan as a covenant of the Lord, so patterned is it, the sacredness of the word, the inviolability of the oath, the presence of the blood, the threat of sanctions if there is betrayal. If you leave out any of these ingredients dear people, then you don't understand covenant. I don't want us tonight at the end of this service, either in the service or however God leads, to enter into some covenant with someone if you think it's a kind of a sloppy, sentimental, emotional agreement, but when the chips are down and one of you has failed, the other can opt out. I want to leave you tonight with the understanding that this matter of covenant is a life and death and unbreakable relationship. Let me give you another scripture to show you, in verse 12 of the same chapter 20. 'Then Jonathan said to David, "The Lord, the God of Israel be witness!"' And another one in verse 42 'Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord.'" This is the kind of covenant we're talking about tonight. That will do, there are others.

Let's turn to chapter 18 now of First Samuel, as we talk about making covenant. I affirm tonight that by my faith and obedience in the covenant of grace, that I am in a covenantal relationship with God through Jesus Christ my Lord, but if that is all I say, I do not understand Christianity, if I do not go on to say, and because I am in a covenantal relationship with God through Jesus Christ my Lord, I am by that fact also in a covenantal relationship with every man and woman across the face of the earth who is in the same covenantal relationship with God through Jesus Christ my Lord. If I'm in covenant with him, I'm in covenant with you. Now God's a very practical God, and while I'm in covenant with the whole body of Christ, I can't be in functional covenant with the whole body of Christ. My little finger is in covenant with my big toe, but they are functionally a long way apart, but my little finger is in a very intimate relationship with the joints in my hands, that's very functional, there is a relationship. Now the Bible says that we are knit together. Now it's true that we're all knit together in the body, but God in his providence has put you, you remember what we said about providence, God in his providence has put you into geographical relational situations that are divinely designed. I believe in the providence of God. I believe that if you were born an Englishman that was just no chance thing. I believe that I am what I am by a providential design. I believe that God has put you where you are, because that's where God has intended you to be. Now if God could change you, and he doesn't change that many of us geographically, and move us around, but if he should, he will have design in that, but let's stick with the local concept for now.

For me to talk of being in fellowship with the body of Christ worldwide has become one of the simplest cop outs for personal responsibility that I can reach for. 'I love everybody', and really mean, 'I'm responsible to no-one.' 'I'm in fellowship with the whole body of Christ', and really mean that I'm a church friend who does not want to submit to any authority. I might well be, and I don't wish this to be taken offensively, I might well be a rebellious wife who is not submitted to my husband, or I may be a rebellious man, who is not submitted to the authority in the shop or the store, and my rebellion is coming through into the Christian area by saying, 'I love everybody', and it's almost a hypothesis, for in actuality I love no one but myself. We are knit to some Christians specifically, based on love and in self-giving. You are in a local situation, where you live, you are there in the providence of God, that's where God has put you, that's where your employment is, that's where God has placed you. How many Christians in this marquee tonight are satisfied that you are where you are by the providential placement of God? Alright. That being so, God has made available in your area a Christian body to which you not only should but you must relate, for your own survival, and your covenantal relationship with the whole body of Christ will only be as real as your

covenantal relationship on the local level with a God appointed body of believers who represent the covenantal people in that community.

Now I can't sort out all the sub-normality, I'm talking about the normal situation, and so we see covenant entered into in chapter 18. 'Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David.' Notice the word 'knit'. In the New Testament it says we are knit together. Let me ask you at this point, who is the person or the few persons, that you are literally knit together with in the body of Christ? Do you know with whom you are knit, who is your life joint? You say, 'What in the world are you talking about?'

I've been handicapped this week without a chalkboard, because I can put things down so simply that will make them clear to you. Let's take the vine and the branches. Jesus said, 'I am the vine and you are the branches.' Now he didn't say, 'I am the roof.' He is the roof. He didn't say, 'I am the trunk.' He is the trunk. He said, 'I am the whole vine.' Now he said, 'You are the branches, but I'm you, and you're me.' There's that intermingling. 'If any man be joined to the Lord he is one spirit.' Now notice, 'I am the vine and you are the branches.' Now here's the branch out here, and the life of God is going through the branch, here is a branch joining a branch. Now it's not attached to the trunk, it's attached to a branch. Where is it deriving its life? It's deriving its body life, its body functions, or its vine function if you like, it's deriving its life from the point where it's joined to the vine. It may be a way out there in a grapevine five, six, seven feet away from the trunk, but at the point where it joins, that is its joint. Now let me make it very clear, I'm not talking about your vertical relationship with our God, I'm talking about your function. All of the metaphors in the New Testament that are used to describe us relationally require this intimacy of a relationship if we are to be a part of the whole, whether it's the branch and the vine, whether it's the cell or the member in the body, whether it's the stone in the building, this stone has to be related to some other stone, if it's going to be in the building it can't be floating out here in a sort of an animated suspension all by itself, it has to be incorporated into the building, but it can't be incorporated into the stones on the second floor if it's a third floor stone. Its point of security and life is a stone on either side of it, and the stone underneath it, but it is not only dependent for the stone beside it on either side, and the stone beneath it, but then it itself becomes a source of strength for a stone above it.

The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. Now I've got to labour this point just a little more, because as we hurry on into the story, you'll miss what I'm saying if you don't get it. I shared this with the ministers the other day. Bob Mumford, who will be returning with me in August for the other two conferences that we'll be at this year, he and I were in California, we spent a day with a number of leaders in Los Angeles, and we were talking about the whole matter of relationship, and how functional and practical it is. Obviously, it's not very functional or practical if you are a member of a congregation of five thousand, and don't know anyone in the congregation. That becomes a kind of an academic situation where you attend a large class, hear a lecture and go home. It's not a living body, it's not a flowing reality, you don't have a life source or a life relationship, you have an intellectual ear. This has characterised Christianity so much that what I'm saying tonight risks being received by some of you with smiles, almost of incredulity.

You say, 'I don't think I know what you're saying.'

Some of us have been members of the First Church of So-and-so for so long, where we went in, sat down, heard the lecture, paid our dues and went home. This was a weekly exercise, the rest of the week we had no contact with it, whereas if you look at the early church it was a community that they went from house to house with gladness and singleness of heart, and broke bread. They were a people that had entered into a dimension of relationship where they couldn't live without one another, they couldn't go on one cold meal Sunday morning, and live the rest of the week, they couldn't stand not to see one another



just as really I believe that a man and a woman walking in God can expect God to give them the right mate, I believe that as you and I are walking in God in the redeemed community, the Lord will bring to you the person with whom you are to be knit, I believe this goes for ministry. For over forty years I walked relatively alone. I had many friends in the ministry but I'd never been knit to anyone. I didn't know what it meant. In Montreat, at the great Presbyterian conference ground where we held the second Shepherds Conference what, three, four years, about four years,<sup>4</sup> I had been in ministry with Derek Prince, Bob Mumford, Charles Simpson for a number of years, we had a respect and a love for one another, but I remember at that conference that they simply said to me, 'We're going to have a meeting this morning in a small room. Would you care to attend?'

I went into a room where there were probably fifty or sixty brothers assembled, and the minute I walked through the door I began to weep, and I couldn't understand my tears. I sat at the back and I wept. Basically I'm not a crier, I'm a laugher. Some people are criers, some people are laughers. By nature I'm a laugher, I like to joke, I like legitimate humour, but here I found myself weeping, and I sensed that I was in the presence of a dimension that I had never been in my life before. I don't want to be a name dropper, but I had known Derek Prince for years. I knew that he was an academically skilled philosopher who had lectured in Cambridge, and all of that, so I know that. I knew him as a minister, logical, British, unapproachable, \*laughter\* I knew that he came from a military family, straight as a ramrod, his yeses were yeses, his noes were noes, and sometimes the noes came out very strong. You can imagine how I felt when I saw him literally draped over the pulpit, bathed in tears, as he poured out his concern for various areas of God's work, and then I heard these men talking about having entered into covenant with one another, and then they turned to me because they loved me and respected me, and had done for years, and they said, 'Ern, would you care to speak?'

I said, 'If I can compose myself I will.' And I got up, and I simply said, 'Brothers, if I did what I felt to do, I would fall on my face on the floor, and I'd simply say to you, "Please cover me."' I said, 'After forty years in the ministry it seemed somehow that when I walked into this room tonight, that I came home.' Out of that experience there came a relationship where we entered into a covenant with one another, not based on theology, not based on doctrinal unanimity, but based on the fact that we knew that God had put us together, that meant that we bought each other's friends, we bought each other's enemies, we bought each other's garbage, we bought each other's victories, but in life and in death we were covenanted together.

It has been a beautiful thing, it has not been without its rough places, it's not been without its testing, but I want to say that for the first time in a ministry that spans almost forty-five years, I know what it is to move with peer brothers who have cut covenant with me, and who will love me and stand by me and pursue me when I'm erring, and rejoice with me in victory, and will not withhold rebuke from me when I need it, and will not withhold support from me when I need it, and so I am talking, not out of theory. Now I can't be in that relationship with every minister in the world. I can only be in relationship with a man that I can viably function and operate with, but God joined me to them. I don't want this to become a legal thing, I want you to see that God will join you, and they will become life joints to you, and in the form of the body of Christ, while God will minister to you in your private devotions, you find these people you are covenanted to are the life joints in the body of Christ by which the life of God flows from one cell to another, and from one member to another, for there's life in my body, and the life in my body is served by the various joints, the circulatory system and the muscular system, my whole body with its variety of functions is joined together, but there are joints that are very important where there's various parts of my body are joined to the body, and cell to cell. Now this cell and this cell are in a very close covenantal relationship, and they

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<sup>4</sup> The Montreat conference was actually in 1974.

can't relate in the same relationship as this cell and this cell, and yet they're all in the body, it's where you are that the relationship must be made.

And Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, Jonathan loved him as himself. Verse 2 'And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan cut a covenant with David because he loved him as himself, and Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armour including his sword and his bow and his belt.' I want you to notice something, I am not sure, I haven't researched this, I just throw it out as a suggestion. I'm not sure but what covenant always involves a greater and a lesser. I want you to notice that Jonathan was Saul's heir, he was the king's son. You and I think of David as Israel's illustrious king, but at this point he was the son of a sheep owner, he was just an ordinary commoner who had enjoyed some success as a soldier, but he didn't have Jonathan's pedigree, he didn't have Jonathan's status socially, he wasn't the heir of a king, he was the eighth son of a sheep owner, and it was Jonathan who loved David, and who urged David to enter a covenant with him. I can see David drawing back, and saying, 'Who am I? I'm only a sheep herder, I'm just a shepherd. How can I enter a covenant with the king's son?' Furthermore, David even then carried the anointing oil, he was king already before God, although secretly for Saul was still the monarch of the country. To show the sincerity of his covenantal commitment Jonathan stripped himself of his robe, that was no mean robe, that was no rough shepherd's cloak, that had been spun and knit by the expert craftsmen in the king's court, that was a beautiful robe, and he took it off and he gave it to David, and he took his bow and his belt, and everything that spoke of his authority and his strength and his very life, and he tokened to David what he meant, and he said, 'David, here is my throne, here is my self-defence, here's my belt, my strength, I'm saying to you David, I give you my life.' That's making covenant horizontally.

Brothers and sisters, I am not going to be critical of anyone of you in this marquee if tonight you find the things I'm saying hard to receive, because I myself walked for forty years in unilateral strength, 'Ern Baxter could handle it alone', but Ern Baxter went down many a time. Bob Mumford and I have sat many a time, because we have a very deep relationship, we've looked at one another and we've said, 'How did we ever survive?' Many a time an Amalekite wounded me, many times I was cut down in the battle, and I arose by sheer dint of stubbornness to go on alone. Nobody told me, I would have probably considered it cowardice, so let me tell you brothers and sisters, God does not intend you to go alone. Two are better than one. God has set us together, we are not meant to go it alone. Don't get infected with false heroics, don't try to be nobler than God has asked you to be. God has given you brothers and sisters to relate to, but what I'm talking about is, that we must understand the depth and the meaning of that relationship in this hour, for I believe God is preparing us for something that is coming up, when we're going to have to have covenantal relationships with people that are so tight, and we're knit so closely that the strength of the church of God will be in the fact that believers are in covenant relationship with one another, and this doesn't mean there'll be cliques, because if there are twelve atomic cells in my body, or atoms in my body that are neighbour to one another, there is a thirteenth as Jesus was the thirteenth, there's a thirteenth cell they tell me that joins this twelve to the other twelve, but you can only be functionally and operatively involved with a small group of people. That doesn't break you up, that brings you together, and so covenant was made.

Now it's all sounded very sober and sombre up until this time, and I want you to turn to chapter 19 and verse 1, and I want you to know that it's a lot of fun. The paradox of Christianity is expressed in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. 'You received the word of the Lord with much persecution and joy of the Holy Ghost.' You didn't hear me. '...much persecution and joy of the Holy Ghost.' Brother, you'd better find out what I'm talking about tonight, because when much persecution comes, you better have somebody that you can delight in, that you can share the joy of the Lord with. 'Now Saul told Jonathan his son', verse

1 of chapter 19, 'and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David.' Now, do you know what I read in that? I don't want an impure thought to rear up in this audience tonight, or I'll hit it on the head myself personally, I won't even ask the Lord to do it, don't go giving me this bit about Jonathan and David being homosexuals and all that rotten filth, these were two strong virile young men that had proven their courage and their physical ability by the wielding of the sword in the field of battle, they both were lovers of women, they both were men. But we've become so suspect of all of our relationships, that we have to read something nasty into a relationship between men. There is a place for a relationship between men within the boundaries and disciplines of divine order that is beautiful, where a man can only enjoy a man, it's true of women, we talk about 'woman talk', and 'man talk'. Have you ever seen two couples that are very close come together for an evening, and they maybe chit-chat for a while, and then the two men go out to do some man talk, and the two women go to do some woman talk? Now does that mean that there's an indissoluble cleavage in their relationship? No. It just means that there's a legitimate area for men, and I believe this brothers, I believe that your marriages are going to be better for men having covenant relationships with men, your women are going to start to understand the strength of loyalty, when you have covenanted with another brother it's going to come through to your woman, and she's going to feel a strength that she never felt before, because this is the nature of God's order.

Now I believe that David and Jonathan got together many times, and they had great times together, I believe that they had sword play together, and they enjoyed each other, and they sat down and talked about their exploits in the battlefield, and clinked their glasses of orange juice. \*laughter and applause\* Isn't that what Jesus turned water into? \*laughter\* This is going to finish up quite seriously, but I want you to hear me, while I have to talk about the seriousness of it, I have never in my life known the joy of relationship as I have since I've come into covenant with my brothers. I've never known what it is, we love to get together, I tell you we just..., it's a joy to get, we have a time, I never thought I'd hear Derek Prince say, 'We've got to get together more, brothers.' Derek Prince wanting to get together more? The great loner of other days is the one that wants to get together. Why? We found a strength in each other, we found an adjustment in each other, we found something in each other that wasn't there. Now I'm using my brothers' names, and I hope that they don't mind, and I hope that you don't mind. I speak of them with affection and love. You've got brothers here that know what I'm talking about, that are entering in, and it's not always easy, as we'll find out, but there is a joy, and look Christians, have fun! My Lord, we've gone through the solemn bit for so many years, I've got forty years to make up. \*laughter and applause\* I tell you if I went on a perpetual party from now till I die I wouldn't catch up on the fun I've missed. There's joy in the Lord, there's rejoicing, they went from house to house with gladness and singleness of heart, broke bread together, ate together, rejoiced together, had fun together. Hallelujah! \*laughter\*

You know this sounds strange coming out of my mouth. I can remember the days when I didn't think it was right for Christians to have fun. \*laughter\* I had to look like a Christian. \*laughter and applause\* Those were the days also when I was a handshaker. \*laughter\* That's before I became a hugger. Therein lies a story that's very meaningful. Alright, you make covenant, it's going to be tested. Let's turn to chapter 20, remember Saul is after David. If you get the five tapes, and that's not a sales pitch, but the five tapes on *The King and His Army*, you'll hear all the sequel to this. 'Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life?" Jonathan said, 'Far from it, you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. So why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!' But David came right back, he said, 'Oh come off it, Jonathan. Don't be a dumb-dumb!'

Oh, you say, 'He didn't say that.'

Well, maybe he didn't, but I tell you, when you're in covenant relationship with a man you can talk like that, because you don't have 'sensitive feelings'. \*laughter\*

'He hurt me.' \*laughter\*

Okay, David said, 'Come off it, Jonathan, your father knows that you and I have a covenant. He knows that I have found favour in your sight, and he said to all his servants, "Don't let Jonathan know that I'm after David. Because if Jonathan knows he'll be upset, a lot of problems in the court, and he'll even probably go and tell David.'" Which he did. \*laughter\* And David goes on, he says, 'But as truly as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there's hardly a step between me and death', and Jonathan heard him, and Jonathan remembers his covenant, and he hears what David is saying, and he says, 'That's sensible.' And listen to this beautiful response, 'Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say I will do for you.'" That's covenant under test. 'Whatever you say I will do.' That was rough, because Jonathan had to consider his father in a dual role, he had to see him as his father, had to see him as his king, he had to walk a tightrope in covenant with David, and in relation to his father as his father and as his king, and he had to make his decisions in terms of righteousness, and also in terms of covenant love as we'll find out.

Alright, let us go on. 'So David said to Jonathan...' I'm not going to read this, he said, 'Now tomorrow I'm supposed to sit at the king's table, but,' he said, 'I'm going to ask you to ask for me to be excused, you can tell him that I want to go to Bethlehem to visit my father, and that we're going to have a feast, and so on, and if your father is upset, somebody should come and tell me.' Jonathan said, 'Alright.' Verse 12 'Then Jonathan said to David, "The Lord the God of Israel be witness, when I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow or the third day, behold if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you. If it please my father to do you harm may the Lord do so to Jonathan more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away that you may go in safety, and may the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.'" Now Jonathan said, "If my father is angry and he is going to do you harm, I will come myself.'"

Do you hear what this man is saying? Do you understand, if you've read the book of Esther you'll understand, that a monarch in those days was an absolute monarch, that no one was indispensable to him, wife, son, daughter, and if his father was angry at David, and Jonathan got up and walked across the courtyard and went out the court gates to go and tell David, that he might well expect an arrow in his back. His father would have his head for it, that was the nature of an absolute monarchy, and yet he was in a covenant relationship with David, and he said, 'David, if my father is angry at you, at the risk of my life I will come and tell you myself. I'll not send some errand boy to do it, I will fulfil my covenant obligation to you, and I will come to you myself.' Now Jonathan knew, Jonathan knew that the anointing oil was on David, and Jonathan knew that his father was on the way out. Jonathan also knew something else, Jonathan knew that when one king takes over from another king, that the king that is taking over kills off all the seed of the other king, so that there will be no heirs left. And so he says, 'If I am still alive will you not show me the lovingkindness of the Lord, that I may not die, and you shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the Lord cuts off everyone of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.' So Jonathan cut a covenant this time with the house of David, saying, 'May the Lord require it at the hands of David's enemies', and Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life. Now the covenant is extended and it is renewed and it now includes the house. He says, 'David, will you covenant with my house? And I'll covenant with your house, that means, will you take my kids and I'll take your kids, will you be responsible for my wife? I'll be responsible for yours, we cut a covenant between houses.'

Do you understand what it means to enter into covenant? You're not entering into some nice little religious rigamarole between two people, if I enter in the covenant with you, I



buy your problems, I buy your children, I buy the whole field to get the treasure. You're the treasure, but I take the whole field. Not too long after I had entered into covenant with my brothers, Ruth had to go into hospital for investigative surgery that could have proved to be malignant. Naturally, my soul was torn up, and I'll never forget one of my covenant brothers coming to me and very simply saying, 'My bank book is at your disposal.' Nobody had ever put their bank book at my disposal before. What was he saying? He was saying, 'When I covenanted with you Ern, I covenanted with Ruth. I took Ruth, I took you, and your wife, and your children, and your problem.'

I'm putting it on the negative side. I'm also taking you and your joy, and your provision, for you in turn are buying my problems, but you better know what you're getting into and understand it. Alright, so what happened? They cut covenant again, now look at verse 18 'Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon. You'll be missed from your seat, will be empty and so on." And he said, "What I will do is that if there is danger I will bring my armour bearer out, and I will shoot an arrow, and if the arrow goes beyond my boy, I'll say, 'It is beyond you', then you will know that my father wants to kill you. If the arrow falls short then you will know that everything is fine.'"

Alright, so the stage is set, and the next day, out comes Jonathan with his boy, and he shoots the arrow and it flies beyond his armour bearer, and he said to him, 'Son, it's beyond you.' And as the boy picked up the arrow and came running back, he said, 'Hurry!' and he handed him the bow and the arrow, and he said, 'Here, take this back to town.' And then David came out of his hiding place, and I want to talk to you for just a moment about what I've called 'covenant emotion'. I want you to look at verse 41 of chapter 20. 'When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times.' Now if you'll notice, up until now it's been Jonathan who's been the aggressor in the covenant, but Jonathan has proved his loyalty over and over and over to David, until he has so won David's heart that David can respond not only in kind but overwhelmingly, and look what it says, 'and they kissed each other and wept together, but David wept more than Jonathan.' These two strong men in each other's arms kissed each other and wept, but David sobbed the more, David seemed to see what this implied, and he wept. And Jonathan said to David, 'Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" Then he rose and departed while Jonathan went into the city.'

Now I want you to turn to chapter 23 and verse 15. Saul is still after David, trying to take his life. 'Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God.' You know I just have to stop here and tell you that Jonathan in all of our thinking is a kind of a dim figure in the granite massiveness of David's overwhelming character and reputation. He's one of the most neglected characters in scripture, and I've come to love him, I've almost wanted to make up a covenant with Jonathan myself. I see this man again and again going out of the presence of an angry, murderous, demon-possessed father at the risk of his life, to go to his covenant brother David, and I see him now as he leaves his father and he comes to David at Horesh, to do what? To encourage David in God at the risk of his own life. Brothers, sisters, tonight I'm not worthy to be in covenant with anybody, there's too much self-preservation left in me, there's too much Ern Baxter, I see myself as a grasping, avaricious person that I am, and as I read this I realise that, God, I haven't given half as much as I've received.

And this next statement is beautiful, there's a pathos and a poignancy in it, there's a hope in it and a hopelessness, there's a complex of emotions in this verse that if you understand them will tear your heart out. 'Jonathan said to David, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, and you will be king over Israel, and I will be next to you, and Saul my father knows that.'" Jonathan knew better than that, but he so loved

David that he put down the helplessness of his own situation. He said, 'David, my father will not get you,' and he said, 'one day you'll be king and I'll stand at your side.' This was the hope of a beautiful covenant. This was Jonathan daydreaming, this was Jonathan trying to encourage David, that David would have the throne and he'd have Jonathan too, when down deep in Jonathan's heart he knew it'll never come to pass. He knew he'd die on the battlefield. He knew he'd never stand by David's side, but this is covenant love that puts self-interest aside and looks deep into the eyes of a suffering brother, and even though you know you're going to your own death, you put your own self-interest aside, and you encourage your brother. He said, 'Psalm buddy, be encouraged, my father's not going to get you. I'll tell you something else, you're going to be king someday, and I'm not going to mind it. I should be king, but I'd rather you be king. I want you to know I'll be right with you, I'll stand at your side, and my father knows that.' And so solemn and holy were those moments, that they agreed to confirm covenant again.

And in verse 18 'So the two of them cut a covenant before the Lord, and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house.' In the light of what follows we could say that David stayed in Horesh, and Jonathan went to his death. I don't know if David knew it as he saw the manly figure of his covenant brother walking away from him, I'm sure he stood misty-eyed and said, 'Goodbye Jonathan, dear covenant brother, goodbye.' I think they both knew, I think that as they cut covenant that last time, and maybe sat down to break bread and break the flesh of the sacrificial animal and drink wine together, I think it was maybe a pretty solemn moment, and as David saw Jonathan walking down the road something gripped his heart, and he said, 'Jonathan, we've eaten the covenant meal together for the last time.' Now when I was here a year ago I think I said, and it would be on the tape, that Jonathan made only one mistake, and that was that he should have joined David<sup>5</sup>. I've reversed myself. I believe the more I've studied David and Jonathan, the more I am convinced that if David had said with just one snap of his finger, 'Jonathan, brother, come with me', I believe Jonathan would have been with him, but I'm sure they discussed it, and Jonathan said, 'You know there's no place I'd rather be than at your side, but I think I can serve you better in my father's court. I can keep you appraised of his attitude, I can serve you better staying there as your advocate.' And David and Jonathan, both thinking of the larger dimension of the responsibility for the kingdom, agreed that Jonathan should stay. You know what I'm really saying, I'm saying that Jonathan laid down his life for David<sup>6</sup>. He could have been beside him at Hebron, he could have sat with him on Zion, but he laid down his life.

You say, 'Baxter, that's not a happy ending.'

No, it's not. There are people sitting here tonight who are probably bitter in their souls because of some unhappy ending. While we were here last year Ruth's brother was in Canada, both of his kidneys gone, hoping for a transplant, gripping light, we'd phone him, he hung on, hoping against hope. We prayed over the long distance phone that God would heal him, and at last one night his poor body had taken all it could take, they'd cut glands out of him, they'd opened his chest to massage his heart, his body was covered with surgical scars, cried out one night, 'God heal me or take me home.' God took him home. That's not a happy ending, but I have to say this to you, if your philosophy is dependent on everything having a happy ending, you're going to be some of the most disillusioned people in the world. Jesus' philosophy reached beyond a happy ending. The Bible says he endured the cross and he despised the shame, because he saw something on the other side. When my brother-in-law said 'God heal me or take me home', he knew that it wasn't a happy ending for his wife, for his sister, for his precious mother, for hundreds of friends, he knew it wasn't a happy ending, but for him he knew that it wasn't the ending. And I read that when Jonathan stood by his demon-possessed

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<sup>5</sup> See *The King and His Army*, p.35

<sup>6</sup> Baxter speaks very emotionally in this whole section, in tears, right to the end of his prayer about half an hour (four pages on) from this point.

father and fended off the enemy until at last an enemy sword found him, I believe as he slumped in the dust, he said, 'Oh David, my brother David, God bless you and make you a great king.'

There are a lot of endings that aren't happy, and I'm not saying to you tonight that if you enter into a covenant relationship, we sat one day in a meeting very quietly and unemotionally, and I remember Charles Simpson simply saying as we talked about the future without any emotion, he just said, 'Brothers, some of us may give our lives for this', and we sat in quietness, knowing that somehow he had spoken God's truth. Are you better than tens of thousands of people that have sealed their testimonies in death? You may stand with your back against a wall waiting for a barrage of bullets to cut you down. I'm not trying to be dramatic, I'm just trying to prepare you for what may happen. I'm trying to tell you that life is not all happy endings. You may see your wife torn from your side and ravished before your eyes, you may see your children thrust through with a sword, you yourself may be tortured, and if you don't have something beyond the ending of life to hold you steady, then brother, you don't know what this is all about. Paul sat in a Roman dungeon and he said, 'I fought a good fight, I've kept the faith, I've finished my course', and he was waiting for a soldier to come and lop his head off, put it into the Roman sewer and stuff his body through the hole in the side of the dungeon to run down into some unmarked spot in the ocean, but he said, 'There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.' He said, 'I'm ready.'

Now if you want to know how David felt about this, as we close let's turn to Second Samuel. And he gets word about the death of Saul, and David, verse 24 chapter 1 'Oh daughters of Israel weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel, how have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you my brother Jonathan, you've been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished.'

The years went by, and David was sitting on his throne and all his enemies had been defeated, as he was sitting there, I think many times, many times, as David sat on his throne, I believe there were many times that he looked away off in the distance, and he said, 'Oh Jonathan, Jonathan, if you could have been here to share this, how wonderful it would have been if you could have been at my side as you said that day', but this day it's a deeper thought, he said, 'I wonder, could it be possible that in the war between the house of Saul and David, I wonder if it's possible that there's one of Jonathan's kin left, that I can show him mercy for Jonathan's sake?'

Chapter 9 of Second Samuel says, 'Then David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"' That's covenant love.

'And they said, "Yes, there's a servant of the house of Saul whose name is Ziba."

They called him to David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

And he said, "I am your servant."

The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul whom I may show the kindness of God?"

And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who's crippled in both feet."

David I'm sure came off his throne with a leap, and he said, "Where is he?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Behold he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar."

Then King David send and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar. Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself, and David said, "Mephibosheth."

And he said, "Here is your servant."

And David said to him, "Don't fear."

Mephibosheth expected a sword to sever his head on the very spot, because he was heir to the throne, and that was the way they did it in those days, but listen to this: 'Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I'll restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you shall eat at my table regularly.'

Do you remember what Jonathan had said away back? He said, 'David, I want to cut a covenant between our houses, that you will be kind to any of my sons that may survive me.' And David remembers that, and here is this poor crippled creature Mephibosheth that can't walk from place to place and has to be carried, and there he lies prostrate before David, knowing that he should die as a member of Saul's house, but David remembers the wrists that were put together, Jonathan's blood is in his veins, he would be breaking the very vows of God now, and he looks down at this poor hulk of a man with crippled feet, and he said, 'For the sake of your father Jonathan, whom I loved with a deep covenant love, I will restore to you the land of your grandfather, and I'll appoint Ziba as your servant, and you shall sit at my table regularly. There will be slaves every day that will carry your poor hopeless hulking crippled body, and those crippled feet will be put under the royal table, and you'll eat the royal fare.'

I don't think that that really satisfied David. I think that every day as he sat across the table from Mephibosheth, he saw the lines of Jonathan in his face. I think many times he said, 'Mephibosheth, talk to me about your father.' I think he carried to his death the memory of that covenant love, and I don't think it's over yet. I think that someday at the greatest assizes, when the judge of all the earth mounts his throne, and he calls the name of David, king of Israel, David will walk forward to step in the presence of his God, and he'll say, 'Oh Jehovah, stay thy hand, and call the name of my brother Jonathan.' He'll ask for permission to do it himself, he'll turn to the assembled throng, and he'll say, 'Jonathan, Jonathan, look I'm striving for that strong young man', and he'll say, 'God, whatever credits, whatever reward you were going to give me, please share them, I'd be glad if you'd put the laurels on his head. I would never have been king of Israel if it hadn't been for him. Oh Jonathan, how good it is, we'll never be separated now, please God, can he share it?' I don't think it'll end until then.

Brothers and sisters, I'm sorry I'm so deeply moved, I'm just, this is what happens to me when I see what God has done for me, first in my relationship to God through Christ, and what God has done for me, I felt a little of it I think last night when I sat here, and I got up, and I said, 'I feel so honoured to be among you, my covenant brothers and sisters', but I'm so thrilled tonight that back in America I've got some men, we've mingled our blood, we've joined our porches, our hearts are knit, I'm not alone, and it's going to take this in this hour of battle, and I want it to start first between you husbands and wives, you've got to have this kind of covenant. You can't go on as you are, some of you, you can't for your own sakes, and you can't for the sake of God's church, you can't keep those barriers between you, you know you can't. You say, 'How do you know that? Ruth and I are very human. We're very human, but Ruth knows and I know, that I can't come through the door of this tent and come up onto this pulpit if there is something between us. We don't have to have a big long prayer meeting, just a squeeze of a hand, because I can't serve God if she and I are not walking together. I can't serve God if I have ought against my brother, but what I want to say tonight is I can't serve God without brothers and sisters. Brother, you say, 'I'm saved, I'm a Christian, I'm going to heaven when I die.'

That's not what it's all about right now. You may not go to heaven for another twenty years. What are you going to do in the meantime? Who's your life joint? Who is your covenant brother? I'm not going to ask you to do anything dramatic tonight, I'm not going to ask you to do anything out of emotion, but as you go home tonight I want you to think first of all husbands and wives, do you remember what you said when you stood in front of that minister? Or were you so enamoured with each other that the words went right over your head? Maybe you should go back and recite them, maybe you should bring that marriage ceremony out, wherever you've tucked it away, and sit down when you go home tonight and

just quietly before God renew your covenant. Maybe your marriage is strained tonight, no, you wouldn't get divorced, you wouldn't do that, but you may live on and on in the same house. That's the girl, you remember, that in the moonlight you asked her. That's the man that you pledged your life to. How can you walk through the house ignoring each other? Bring out the covenant, speak it together in God's presence, and then let me say just one more thing. Under the oversight of your shepherd, find your life joints, cultivate covenantal relationships. Our communion services will become scenes of deep joy and love. We'll probably no longer sit in the pews to take communion because we want to get at each other. I don't like taking communion in pews anymore, I want to take communion where I can get at my brothers and sisters. I want to take the bread to them and share it. I want to share the cup with them.

You say, 'Baxter, you're breaking all our ecclesiastical traditions.' \*laughter\*

Maybe, but I tell you brother, I'll break any ecclesiastical tradition that is keeping you coldly aloof from your fellow Christians. I'm pleading with you tonight, I've been pleading with you all week with all the power that is in me, Christians, we've got to get it together. It's not optional, you can't go out of this tent and say, 'That man, he just gave us an emotional appeal.' I didn't do that, I vowed I wouldn't do this, but I can't help it if this thing grips me like this, this is how I feel about it down in the deeps of me, and I'm saying to you, 'You've got to go deeper than that superficial crust, you've got to get into each other's lives, I know it'll be pretty upsetting what you find. I know that many of you honour me and love me tonight, but I want you to know I'm just a man. I want you to know that woman just loves a man. I'm not God, I'm a man. I get tired, I get irritable, sometimes it's difficult for her, but we're in covenant and she loves me and she supports me, and I trust that she can say the same about me. I want to be loyal to her till the day that we're separated in death, that's the covenant I made. I want to be loyal to you, I'm saying, 'Oh God, put Jonathan-David loyalty back into the hearts of your people, and let men and women tonight go out and first put their marriages together, and then find your life joints and your assemblies, find it, you know that God's put some of you together, develop that, make covenant with one another, allow each other into your lives, let there be honour and integrity, don't be afraid to confess your spots one to another, that you may be healed. God give us this loyalty tonight that'll allow us to get into each other's lives and strengthen the weak places, and pour oil on the wounds, and speak into the strictures and the open sores, God take away the religious ecclesiastical crustacean and the whole accretion of the years, the barnacles on the bottom of the boat, God purge us and purify us tonight, and help us to find one another in the purity of a real covenant, that doesn't say, 'I require from you brother, that if you're going to be in covenant with me, you've got to be perfect.' No sir, if God's joined us together I'll take you the way you are, and I'll stand with you brother, I'll rebuke you in love when you need rebuke, and I'll comfort you, and I'll expect the same from you, and we'll go through tough times together, and sometimes we'll wonder if we'll make it, we'll stand at the foot of the cross and we'll see a man bleeding his life out, and we'll say 'We'll make it.'

Tonight I'm going to ask if you'll bow your heads please.

*Father, I confess before this people, before thee and the elect angels, that I'm far from the best servant you've ever had, and I know that right well, but God, I poured my heart out this week to this people, and I'd do it again tonight unashamedly. I know God what it has meant for me to find open, candid, covenant love, where men have been allowed into my life, they've been allowed to see my garbage, my weaknesses and my failings, and they've loved me and stood with me and strengthened me, and they've opened their lives. God, I know the strength of this, and tonight Lord, you know how for years I've yearned over this country, I've said Lord, thirty years' ago, God let me go to the land of my father, and the years went by, and it didn't seem possible, this last two years you let me come, but I love this little island God, it's been the source of your love to multiplied thousands. God revive your work in the midst of years, touch this nation Lord, start in this marquee tonight, let men and women find each other*

*in the days ahead, let wounds be healed Lord, let divisions, God, be healed, let us all think more of each other than we do of ourselves, God, let us not hold grudges, let us open our hearts, let's dump our garbage bags Lord, we've held them long enough, no wonder we feel bad inside. Please God, let some good come out of tonight, let some good come out of this week, let something good come out of it for this nation Lord, I'm asking that largely, that out of this week in this marquee there shall have come something that will touch this nation, that there'll come a dimension of integrity and loyalty, an openness and love and covenant commitment that will become the foundation for a visitation of God.*

*Father, as we're bowed in your presence, each man and woman alone with his own heart, like we'll be in the day of judgement, first of all Father, very simply, I'm going to ask for the healing of marriages, I'm not going to ask for some dramatic scene here in the marquee Lord, but I'm going to ask that before heads are pillowed tonight, that there'll be a number of husbands and wives will renew covenant, then Father I'm going to ask for your servants, the ministers, the shepherds, that they will find each other and make covenant. God, they're not going to make covenant because they believe each other's perfect, but they're just going to say, 'Look, I'm God's servant and you're God's servant, and in the divine providence we're placed in the same geographical spot. Can you and I enter into a covenant?' Let it not be done hastily Lord, that the ground be well planned, and then Father, I pray for every man and woman here tonight who is in a church situation, who's a member of a flock, many of whom have been somewhat aloof, they've come and gone, they didn't want to become involved, they didn't want to be hurt. There are many people here tonight, Father, that have been hurt in churches, they've been hurt by carnal ministers, and they've been hurt by carnal Christians, and they've been hurt by their own thin skins, and I pray for them tonight, Lord, that they'll realise that they'll be hurt again, but God, I'd rather be hurt in covenant relationship than hurt standing out alone, and so I pray for every man and woman tonight, that they will get involved in the flock of God, and that they will prayerfully look for the ones that they should be plugged into, they'll look for the part of the vine where they should relate. Put your people together Lord, put them together, stone to stone, cell to cell, member to member, branch to branch. Oh, Lord Jesus Christ, this means more to you than it does to me, and it seems to mean so much to me, so I know you're here tonight, by your brooding Spirit, and I'm asking Father, as a result of tonight's meeting there will be personal healings, the effect of which will be felt the length and breadth of this nation. I ask these things, Father, for the sake of your Son, our saviour, our Lord, our covenant brother, who shed his blood for us, that we might lay down our lives one for the other. Amen.*

I'm wondering if I could ask you to just do something. Gerald, do you have a direction in God, brother, or can I go ahead? [Gerald: You carry on.] I was so happy that Gerald sang before I spoke, *Father I adore you*. I notice you didn't do it, but in our circles where we've entered into covenant, we've gone on after 'Spirit', and we've said, 'Brother'. Now if you feel it's too much to say 'Brother I adore you', you feel that you're putting man in God's place, there is a real sense in which that is true, that's where God helped me. I used to get into my devotions and I'd say, 'God I love you', and somehow it didn't seem to work out till God took me into the epistle of John, and he said if you say you love God whom you've not seen and don't love your brother whom you've seen, suddenly I realised the dimension that I'd been missing, it was my brother dimension, that's when I became a hugger, really. Now when I put my arms around a believer I'm saying, 'God I love you.' It's the only way I can express it, because I can't get my arms around him, but I can around you. Now if you can't say, 'Brother I adore you', if you feel that that's too much, then sing, 'Brother I do love you', but let's remember Jonathan and David made a covenant of the Lord, don't feel that you're being blasphemous or disrespectful, you're God's dear children, and Jesus set the standard of covenant, and I want you to be able to look into each other's eyes and say, 'Brother, I adore you, I love you, I see Jesus in you, you're my brother.' Can you do that? You choose your

words, I'm not going to ask<sup>7</sup> you what to do. Let's do it sitting down first, shall we? Jesus I adore you, Spirit I adore you, then we'll sing 'Brother' and then we'll sing 'Sister'. Maybe we'd better stand because you may want to start hugging before we get through. \*laughter\*

Father I adore you  
Lay my life before you  
How I love you

Jesus I adore you  
Lay my life before you  
How I love you

Spirit I adore you  
Lay my life before you  
How I love you

Now we're going to sing 'Brother', already I see people linked arm in arm, do what you feel to do, maybe husbands and wives want to put their arm round each other, squeeze hands, I'm not going to dictate your emotional responses.

Brother I adore you  
Lay my life before you  
How I love you

Sister I adore you  
Lay my life before you  
How I love you

[Gerald: Let's just sing that in the Spirit. Then Gerald speaks as the singing in tongues continues:]

*Thank you Lord Jesus, for all you're doing amongst us tonight. We worship you and bless you.*

Let us stand in the presence of God. Allow him to reach in draw out.

*Father, there's not one of us here who is adequate to close such a time as this. You have spoken your word Lord God, your word with all its intrinsic power and beauty, with all its seriousness and joy. Father you know too that I am not a man to cry, a man who's known so much of your joy, but oh Father, with all my brothers and sisters who in any measure understand the word covenant, we say we worship you, we worship you. Through Christ you've entered into covenant with us, now we can enter into covenant with one another. Lord, we thank you for the covenant with our wives and our husbands, the covenant with our brothers and sisters. Lord how unworthy we do feel, we have given so little, and we have been given so much, Lord how I identify with Ern, you know Lord but days past I sat in my office with one of my covenanted brothers and wept, for in him I see your life, and he has given and given, and I feel so unworthy, but Lord, all I can do is receive him with all his love, because Lord that is just like you. Lord, there were times when I wished you wouldn't give of your love, when you wouldn't give of your grace, but you come with chastisement Lord, and with a rod, but you would not, you loved and loved and loved. Lord we have broken, Lord the deep wellsprings are broken, the way we have treated one another at times, Lord it has been abomination, an abomination in the earth, Lord we will not have it, we will not have it, we desire to go on*

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<sup>7</sup> Tell?

*together, Lord even when there is an impasse it seems we cannot go on, we say we shall not go on alone, but we shall go on together.*

Brethren, sisters, let us just be still for a moment, because God has brought people to each one of our hearts and minds that we want to move into covenant with, we can't do it tonight, but as the days and the weeks go on, God is going to open doors, situations are going to be arranged by him, we shall be disciplined in circumstances way beyond our control, and life shall meet that you thought could never meet, and God's going to do it, but I believe God wants a response from us tonight, related to those who God has laid upon our hearts, related to those who we may feel far from, and those so close to but we've never ever expressed our covenant love. I actually know men, baptised in the Spirit, who for years have been married, and have always felt silly about telling their wives that they love them, men, men who are embarrassed in each other's company, sisters embarrassed in each other's company, talk about so many other things than what God is doing in their relationship.

Two years' ago the church in Cobham stood together and we entered into covenant. Our church did not come easy, it has not been easy, but that is what God is doing throughout the earth, and I put something to the saints, that we came back, days' later to pray out, and I shall put it to you, and those who wish to respond may respond, and those who wish to stand and be silent may be silent, don't go beyond your faith, don't go beyond your peace, but move in God. The prayer that I put to our saints at home and in so many other places around this country is this, 'If anything brings separation to us that I am to blame for, I ask God to bring judgement upon me, for I am steadfastly minded to go through with you. You are safe in my presence even when absent, and I will defend you and stand unswervingly beside you and behind you. You are preferred above my self interests, your burdens are my burdens, your victories my victories, your joy my joy, and your glory my glory, and with humble perseverance I will work toward being of one mind with you through standing with you in one Spirit', and I'm not going to ask all of you to pray that prayer, some of you can't pray that prayer, you know that, but there are some in your own households and in your own company and others that you've wounded, and you need to pray that prayer and speak it out before God, speak it out as though in his or her presence, walk the way of God until that word is able to take on flesh and blood and be clothed with reality in that relationship, and I just want to read it line by line, and if tonight in your heart there's an 'Amen', that is exactly how I feel, that is what God has put on my heart, then just take these few words and speak them out loud so that the enemy can hear and every demon power can hear, the angels can hear and the saints of God can hear, and God, God, God shall be glorified and beautified in this assembly. Just be still. Those of you that want to bring this now, I invite you to speak it out with me. I'll read it line by line, and you follow.

[The congregation repeat each line of the following after Gerald.]

If anything brings separation to us  
if I am to blame for  
I ask God to bring judgement upon me  
I am steadfastly minded to go through with you  
You are safe in my presence even when absent  
I will defend you and stand unswervingly beside you  
and behind you  
you are preferred above my self interests  
your burdens are my burdens  
your victories my victories  
your joy my joy  
and your glory my glory



with humble perseverance I will work toward being of one mind with you through standing with you in one spirit

*Father, we thank you for the power of the life of your Son, we thank you that he came two thousand years' ago, a thousand miles away from where we stand tonight, and he said 'I am the sum total of all reality.' In him and through him you blew away the philosophies of men, but every life has a happy ending, and he laid down his life, that we who had no life might be inheritors of eternal life. We thank you it was for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame. Lord God, receive of the joy of our hearts in our tears and laughter tonight, in some small finite measure, something of the joy that was set before your Son as he endured the cross and despised the shame, in his covenant love toward you and toward his brethren, that he laid down his life. Father raise up a people across this nation and throughout the lands, who will be glad to lay their lives down for the sheep, who will not regard it as being irksome, but something as part of a call, something to enrich the earth, something to glorify your very name. We thank you that you will take the fruit of every saint down throughout the ages and crush it out at that glorious feast we shall share together, and you shall drink at that great marriage supper of the fruit of the lives of those who have laid down their lives for the sheep, in your name, and we together with you shall drink it and you with you in your Father's kingdom. Lord we glory in the greatness of your saviour, the greatness of your Son, the greatness of your King, the power of his word at work in the earth today, that has whisked us Lord, and dynamited us out of darkness into light, and caused us to enter into covenant with you and the brotherhood. Father, we stand here together as comrades of the altar of God, and we leave this place as comrades of the altar of God. Now Father, be it unto each of your servants according to your sovereign will, bring your word to pass, that every desire and aspiration that you've laid on each heart, bring it to pass in your way and in your time, for your name's sake. Amen.*

I'm going to ask that we do exactly the same as we did last night, and don't enter into too...