

Not to be Wasted

By Paris Reidhead*

I'm asking you this evening to consider with me, at least as the point of beginning, one of the most familiar verses in the entire Bible, John 3:16. It is a verse that we have all seen and known since earliest childhood, and yet, however much we may spend with this verse. It is an inexhaustible store of treasures of grace. It comprises more of God's grace in fewer words than any other statement in the Scripture, in my opinion.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

It is a verse that is little understood by us because its first truth is so clear and is so needful to us, we have a tendency to feel that is all there is in it. But this verse was spoken to a teacher in Israel, one who had, at least in germ form, insight into the offerings and the sacrifices and the purposes and the promises of God, and consequently, he would have some background to understand the significance of the verse beyond the simple truth that it so clearly carries. Our Lord is speaking to Nicodemus and assures him that the means by which we enter into this that He calls the Kingdom of Heaven is not by blood, nor by nature, nor by the will of man, but by God and the glorious and the supernatural work of God's grace. And so it is that the verse carries to us this primary meaning.

I want you to notice the very word in the verse that is usually neglect by us. It is the little word, "perish"... "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." Some years ago I was given the privilege of a trip to the Holy land. My wife and I had five weeks in the land of our Lord. One of the most impressive experiences was to stand on the Mount of Olives and have the guide point out to us the Beautiful Gate that had been sealed by Suleiman, the Mohammedan, ruler of Jerusalem, who said it would not be opened until Christ came through it again. And the wall, that only portion of the wall of the original Jerusalem of our Lord. And to look at the city that was spread out before us, and to realize that down at the foot were the very olive trees that had been old and gnarled when our Lord had knelt among them 2000 years ago.

Then the guide pointed down the Valley of Jehoshaphat, to the Brook Kidron. And he said that down in there was the place that they brought the refuse. In the time of our Lord they carried all the straw, the hay and the cloth that littered the streets and the homes out and buried and dumped it. Because it was of such a nature that spontaneous combustion would set it on fire, this area gave off a noxious stench and carried with it also smoke which evidenced fire. This place had given rise to the New Testament concept of Hell; a place of burning, a place of smoke, and thus of torment.

But, as I looked at it and thought upon it, my heart seized upon a truth, that had not up until that time, been emphasized to me, that this was not only a place of burning, a place, if you please, because of the fire, torment or personality that might be there as it would be applied to Hell; a place of punishment. But it was also a place of refuse, a dump, if you please, where waste material was taken. A new meaning of the word "perish" came to my mind and heart, and I would like to just give you that as a very brief paraphrase.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not be wasted and become refuse, but should begin to live now and go on living in the full meaning of life forever." Now if you can accept this, then you are going to see far more in the gift of God's Son than escape from punishment. Now, certainly you will see that. The Bible makes it very clear-patently clear, that our Lord Jesus taught that there was beyond the threshold of time a place of suffering, a place we call Hell, a place to which the rich man went, not because he was rich, but because he was impenitent and unbelieving. The impenitence of his heart is evidenced that even in the midst of his flames and suffering, he does not repent of his sin and plead for mercy; he only asks for comfort.

And so it is that we understand that God had to provide a penitentiary, a place to which the traitor, the rebel, the anarchist, the transgressor must be consigned. For were God to make such to go to heaven and spend their time sing the praises of Him whom they despise, heaven would be an infinitely more intolerable place than Hell would be. Consequently, He provided a

place that would be the residence of those whose moral gravitation drew them there. We are told of Judas that he went out and went to his own place.

As I speak to you tonight, there is a moral gravitation in every one of our minds and hearts and spirits. Maybe some of you are here because you have been inveigled into coming by your wife or your husband or your sister, your brother, your children. And if you were where you wanted to be, it would be some distance from here.

By the same token, there is a moral gravitation in the human spirit, and when a person dies, they go to the kind of a place they wanted or the direction of the desire or the moral gravitation of their hearts while they were alive. And so God has provided this place for Satan and the angels that fell with him, the demons of darkness and those who choose to live under the moral government of Satan and despise the grace and mercy of God will certainly go there. Now God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This is so clear in the Word of God. “‘As I live’, saith the Lord, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?’” (Eze. 33:11) “This is the entreaty of God—the call to the unconverted,” said Richard Baxter¹, as he dwelt on these verses from Ezekiel and tried to uncover to the heart of a sinful generation the heart of God that breaks with compassion for lost Man.

If anyone here, for instance, should go into eternity lost, and makes their eternal dwelling place in this place we have described as the penitentiary of the universe called Hell, they will have to do it over the pleadings of the Word of God, and remonstrance of conscience, the warning of friends, and the wooing of the Holy Ghost. It is possible for a person to die unsaved, and many do, but it is impossible to die unloved. We have got to understand this. Now God did not want man, made in His image and His likeness, made for Himself, made to be the object of His love, to be loved by Him, and in turn to love Him, to go out of time into eternity, lost.

Oh, how marvelous is this thing, human personality, human beings...man, woman. Think of the fact that the wisest person who ever lived has never used more than 10% of potential brain power. Some psychologists who have measured it, and said that it is merely two to three percent, and I met one man who very seriously declared that it was less than 1% of the potential of the human brain that has been utilized by the wisest man that has ever lived. Why, just the brain itself, with its enormous capacity for knowledge and thought, demands an eternity.

One of the hardest things that students have to do when they go to the university is to narrow down their field of study. The higher you go in education, the narrower becomes the field. I had a professor in college at the same college that Dr. Logan has served for these ten years past John Fletcher College, the good Dr. Bowles, who had a PhD in diseases of apple trees, but not just all diseases. He wrote his thesis on warts of apple trees, but not all warts; just one kind of wart on one kind of apple tree. As someone has said, “You study more and more about less and less, until you know everything about almost nothing.” In a sense, this is the requirement because the ocean of knowledge is infinite. The human brain is capable of all of this, and it demands an eternity. Therefore, I’m sure that the fellowship of His sufferings, when you rightly understand it, is to see a man or a woman with this enormous capacity and potentiality deem themselves worthy of nothing more than to go into this penitentiary of darkness, this place where there can never be the fulfillment of personality. One has described Hell to be a place where there can never even be the fulfillment of sin. That it will be the eternal raging of lust with the inability to ever gratify that lust. And so it is that this becomes the most horrible place that the human mind can imagine, a penitentiary where God finds it absolutely necessary to keep a semblance of moral order in the universe, that certain personalities must be there, and so in darkness dwell forever. God sent His Son into the world that Christ might live a sinless life and die a sacrificial death, that whosoever believeth in Him should not go to Hell, a place of punishment. But again, should not add to the waste of the universe and be there forever thus deprived of the possibility of fulfilling God’s grand purpose for humanity. He’s not willing that any should perish; He’s not willing that any should be wasted. I speak to you tonight. Are you lost?

I knew I grew up in a Christian home here in this city of Minneapolis. I had been trained in Sunday School and church and at the knee of my mother, and from a godly pastor. . I had everything but life! There at old Red Rock Camp Meeting, in that two

¹ Richard Baxter (1615 – 1691) An English Puritan church leader, poet, hymn-writer, theologian, and controversialist.

weeks meeting, God the Spirit exposed my heart to me. At first I thought they were talking about me; then I thought they were talking about another kind of Christian, and then I thought perhaps I was a semi-Christian. Finally, the Spirit of God forced me to face the awful fact that if I died as I was and God didn't have a Hell, He would have to make one to take care of me. That I was lost, lost!

Dear friend, God saved the one who stands before you, and if you're here tonight and you do not know that you've passed from death to life, I have good news for you. Christ died for lost Man! He came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. That is certainly the teaching of John 3:16, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. But are we through with the verse? No, not if we take this word perish and give it this larger dimension. That whosoever believeth in Him should not be wasted. For it is quite possible for one to have been saved from the penalty of sin and have the assurance of the forgiveness of sin, yet being overtaken in a fault and led aside by appetites, you do that which grieves God.

I recall, and you'll permit a personal testimony, there with that wonderful assurance of sins forgiven, I went back to our farm in Anoka County and started to work. I recall so clearly the joy of trying to witness to the hired man and share this testimony with the youngsters that I played with and worked with, that God the Son had come into my heart, and I was a Christian, and I had the assurance of sins forgiven. It was during the drought of 1934, we had a farm and our only power for work was horses. You may recall how dry and hot those drought years were. We had planted 66 acres of corn, no rain. And we thought the only way to save any of it was to continue to cultivate it and try to keep the soil stirred so there would not be too much evaporation. But, the horses couldn't stand the heat through the day. So, we would awaken at three in the morning, harness the horses in the dark, as I learned to do and get out there just as soon as the light was enough to see the shoots in the corn row. We'd begin cultivating 6 o' clock we'd come in, and I had to milk six or seven cows, eat a quick bite of breakfast, aiming to be in the field at 7, because we had to get out again at 9:30 or 10.

This particular morning, as I left the horses at the end of the row, and took the old Mason jar wrapped in burlap up to the well to fill the jar with water and wet the burlap so evaporation would keep it cool, I came around the side of the house, my mother came out. When she saw me, she said, "Oh Sonny, I'm so glad to see you. I've got some errands for you to do." What I needed right then, least of all, was errands. Now I was tired and hot and I had been up since 3 working, and I didn't seem to get to bed any earlier than otherwise. And I did something that I hope none of you understand. I sassed my mother. And she spoke, and I sassed her again! And she spoke, and I spoke the same way the third time.

When I had said that the third time, she looked at me and she said, "Sonny I thought you were a Christian." And she turned and walked through the screen door and back into the kitchen.

I was smitten through. I went out, set the jar on the top of the cow tank, went out to the hay barn, walked down between the mangers, crawled up the ladder into the mow and found a valley in the hay. I threw myself down, and I sobbed like a baby. I was smitten through, because I had discovered in that moment that I had carried into this Christian life a traitor that if given leash, would betray me. I was frightened; because these first hours of conversion had been so exquisite--such a delight--such joy! One of the things God had used to show me that I had never been born of God, though a church member was that I had dishonored my parents in so many ways. And now here, I'd done it again. I can recall saying, "Oh God, I don't know what this has done to me, it's unsaved me, or what it's done, but oh God," and in bitterness I wept.

Then in the midst of my weeping, I heard the faint echo of a song we had sung at one of the meetings a few weeks before:

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin; the blood of Jesus whispers peace within."²

And I knew that He had forgiven me, but I knew then, in that moment, that I had in me a nature, disposition, traits, attitudes, which unless they were dealt with somewhere, somehow, some way, would betray me and rob God of all the glory that He wanted to get out of my life, and my life would be wasted!

² "Peace, Perfect Peace, in the Dark World of Sin" Words by Edward Henry Bickersteth (1825-1906), Music by George Thomas Caldbeck (1852-1918)

Well, I went on I remember one day talking with a teacher at Bible school. I told him about this problem and others. He looked at me and said, "Oh, you're just too sensitive. Your conscience is too sensitive." He patted me on the head and said, "You're going to grow out of a lot of these problems. Don't worry too much about them. When you sin, ask the Lord to forgive you." And he sent me on my way.

In a few years, 1943, I went to the mission field. There I discovered, in this abrasive environment, that I had, as I mentioned to you, a critical mind, a censorious spirit, and a sarcastic tongue. Those three years on the mission field, for all practical purposes, though I worked so hard doing linguistic survey work among the tribes that had not had contact with the Gospel. I so irritated my fellow workers, my wife, and myself that one told to me, "Paris, we know you. We have reason to think you're converted, but the way you talk with the sarcasm you use, sometimes I have wondered."

Now, I hated it! I knew I was converted because I detested it! But I also knew that unless somewhere I found an answer to this, my life, my ministry, would be wasted. I knew back there, that if I had sinned against my mother in sassing her and refusing to honor her, that it would have put a barrier between God and me. I dealt with it. But now, years later, as a missionary, supported by a church, I am face to face with the fact that somewhere somehow, there has to be an answer to the tyranny of traits and disposition and personality, for these same traits, and this disposition, and personality is going to utterly ruin my service for Christ. I'll not forget that awful revelation from reading Rodams translation of I Corinthians 13 states, "Love is very patient, very kind, never rude, never selfish, and never irritated." Oh, my soul! How that cut and burned and seared, and brought me to the realization that God isn't glorified by what we say, or what we know, or what we do, but by what we are! "He that beareth much fruit, herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." (John 15:8) "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace." (Gal. 5:22) This I had not, not it it would honor Him.

The truth I wish to press to your heart is this. I know you. I know about you, and I know that my problem is similar to yours. Oh, maybe not identical. Maybe the woof is a little different, but, my dear the warp is the same. And I know you. I know that early after you were pardoned and forgiven, discovered that you needed more than pardon from past sins and forgiveness against the crimes you committed against the Lord. You had that, but if you were honest with your spirit, you were crying out as Paul did in Romans 7 when he gave that universal echo of the forgiven heart, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24) For he discovered that there was the Law of Moses, yes, and from its penalty he had been set free. But there was the law of sin and death, the laws that he had learned when he was in sin and under the sentence of death. And, pardoned and forgiven, he carried these habits and attitudes and dispositions over with him into the new life. And the result, the result is that his heart is crying out for deliverance from something that is eating and burning in him...this realization that he has a traitor in his heart that will rob God of the glory that He deserves in his life.

Now we have got to see that the Spirit of God is moving through the Word of God to teach us that there is a sense in which you can be saved from Hell and perish as far as your usefulness and effectiveness as your life is concerned. In other words, the days of your life can be wasted because you have not entered into the secret of victory and deliverance. Now, whenever a child of God sins, we've seen several things happen: fellowship with God is broken, God no longer uses him, prayer goes unanswered, he falls into the attacking clutches of Satan, and into the chastening hands of God. And sin must be ever dealt with the way God prescribes: judged, forsaken, hated. But, whenever we permit sin thus to have dominion over us, we in that sense, are robbing the Lord of the glory He should be getting out of our lives. Therefore, His concern is not just to provide some means of cleansing after we sin, but to provide victory.

I was speaking to a group of students up in Boston. Students from Harvard, Wellesley, and MIT, and some other universities in the Boston area, I was outlining to them this way and means of victory that God has provided. A year later I was back. One of the young boys met me. One of the things I love about students is the great candor and honesty with which they come to those who minister to them.

He said, "You know, it doesn't work, this teaching you have; it doesn't work. I want you to know that if you're going to talk about this victory business, that as far as I'm concerned, you might as well not, because I have tried it, and it doesn't work."

“Well,” I said, “I’m awfully glad to find out now, rather than in the last day of these three we’re spending together. But now let’s find out what you tried and what doesn’t work. What is it?”

He said, “You said that there is victory for the child of God.”

“Yes,” I replied, “and what did you do to have it?”

“Well,” he said, “I took that verse that says that God is faithful and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation make a way of escape that you may be able to bear it.”

I said, “Yes, go on.”

“Well,” he said, “every time I was tempted I would quote that verse back to God and say, ‘God, your Word says that you are able to make a way of escape.’ And it doesn’t work. It just doesn’t work. I never had victory.”

I said, “Now let’s just open our Bibles.” We turned to the verse. (1 Corinthians. 10:13). “Now read it.” And he read it.

I said, “Now what does the verse say?” “It says, ‘He will make a way of escape!’”

He said, “This verse.”

“Oh no,” I said, “This verse says He’s going to make a way of escape. What is the way of escape?”

He said, “This verse.”

“No,” I said, “this verse tells you there is a way of escape, now what is it?”

He said, “I don’t know.”

“Well,” I said, “then let’s not say it doesn’t work; let’s say that you didn’t know how to work it.”

“Yes,” he said, “I guess so.”

And then we went over to Romans 6. I said, “Now this is the way of escape. He, Christ, not only wanted to save you from what you’ve done; He wanted to save you from what you are! So He not only died for you, He died AS you. He took you with Him to the Cross, and since He was there AS you, you were there with Him. And notice what it says. ‘Our old man is crucified with Christ.’”

He said, “I never saw that.”

I said, “You should have. I spent three days talking about it.”

He said, “Yes, I guess I didn’t understand, did I?”

“No, maybe you didn’t.” I said, “But you’re going to understand.”

He said, “I certainly want to, because I’m so ashamed of myself this past year.”

As we went on into the truth, he began to see that the Lord Jesus Christ not only died to save him from Hell, but died to save him from himself—died to save him from bondage to temptation and appetite—died so that he could be delivered from the tyranny of his own nature and his personality. We went on a little, and he saw that the way of escape was to, in the moment of temptation, recognize that he was on the cross with Christ. “Father, the part of me that would say this, or think this, or want this, or do this, is the part that died the day Christ died.”

I saw him some months later. One of the first things he said was, “It works! It works!” Yes, it works, because, you see, God so loved the world, that He wanted you to be a witness to the world, and His purpose was not only to save you from Hell, but to

save you from everything that would interfere with your being that witness. He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that if you'd believe on His Son, you wouldn't be wasted! But you could begin to live now in the meaning of this resurrection life, and go on living forever.

Here we see another aspect of it. But come on for a moment. The Word of God clearly teaches that God has a plan for your life, a plan that He made before He made the world. He saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was in Christ Jesus before the world began.

Now really the essence of consecration is to say, "Father, I want thy will to be done in my life." Our Lord taught us to pray that way. "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy will be done, on earth, (make it personal—in my life) as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:9,10) This implies that the Father has a will. He knows everything, and He knows what's best. And because He is love, He wants what's best. And because He's God and sovereign, He's able to produce what's best, when you want what He wants. Thus it is, that if you, as a child of God, saved from the penalty of your sin, and even if you please, saved from the power of temptation, somehow are so inconsiderate of Him who made a plan for your life, and unconcerned about the best use of your life, that you want to go on simply living a decent life, secure against Hell, and embarrassment by your temperament, you may be able to do it.

Oh, I have talked with many, that at the close have said, "You know, I believe that somewhere back there I missed God's plan for my life and my life has been wasted." Now, what do they mean? They've been living in open sin? Not so. They've been living in grossness? No! They are lost? No! They know that the past is under the blood. They know that they know the way of victory. But, you see, they have been content to go on without that embrace of the will of God for one's life. It isn't just enough to have a moment of surrender. "Lord, I want thy will done." But it is that we are to live every day from that time, and every issue that arises must be met in the light of that fact. Or else, five, six months, or years down the way, having forgotten that in some moment of crisis we said, "Thy will be done," thoughtlessly we make a decision that becomes to us a dead end street. Therefore, every issue, every decision ought to be made in the light of that decision which committed us to the will of God.

For instance, if you were to start to drive from here Minneapolis to New York state, the first thing you had have to do is to decide to go east instead of north, or south, or west. And there are many areas of the East that you could visit. You could get to Chicago, and go out on the turnpike and take the Pennsylvania Turnpike that would take you down toward Washington instead of taking the New York Thruway. So, it's not only the decision, but then there's a series of decisions.

But it's not only these major decisions along the way, but perhaps there is a crosswind over the highway, and though you say, "I'm going to New York," if you do not correct against that crosswind, you'll end up in the ditch without having made any major decision to go into the ditch. Your carelessness and indifference to your destination can have the effect of putting you into the ditch. I find that along the way there are many of God's children did begin to run well, but they were hindered. A cross breeze came in, or a groove in the road caught them, and instead of correcting to the overall master passion of their lives, they followed the groove or went with the wind, and ended up in the ditch. The ditch of what? the ditch of stalling; the ditch of waiting; the ditch of lost days or years. It's so extremely important, therefore, that you should understand that God's love for a lost world is so keen and so constant, that He not only wants to save you from hell, and save you from the heartache that comes from sin, and from the disappointment and loss that comes from being bound by habit and attitude, but He wants to save you from the frustration that comes from having gone through days and years, decent, honorable, upright in some measure of victory and rejoicing in the pardon that will take you to Heaven if you die.

And yet, in that day, to stand before Him and find that these days and months and years have been burned up because you were living, somehow, instead of in the Sovereign will and purpose and plan of God for your life. God doesn't want you to be wasted. But there's something else. God not only wants your time to be of value so that every day becomes precious, because after all, all He gave you when you came into the world was life and time, and life is made up of time. Therefore, every minute is a responsibility, and therefore He doesn't want you to waste days or years. But He also doesn't want you to waste talent and potentiality.

Now the Apostle Paul had great talent. His forensic ability is unchallenged. His logical powers are perhaps unequaled. He is said to be one of the five greatest intellects of history. But when God saved him, it wasn't to sanctify the abilities that he had honed and developed up at the University of Tarsus. It wasn't at all. God was not going to use this particular area of the talent and strengths and powers of Saul of Tarsus. Why, in fact, he had to spend three years in unlearning! Three years... to the point at which he could say that in me, in my flesh there is no good thing. That certainly wasn't the attitude of a man who was the successor to the head of the Sanhedrin, that wasn't the attitude of a man who was determined to be the ruler of his people Israel. That is the attitude of a man who has discovered that the things he counted gain to him were loss to Christ. Therefore, it behooves you to recognize that God has a right to use anything and everything that He has invested in you---anything and everything He has invested in you! There may be abilities and powers and capacities that you don't know about, and there are His, and He has a perfect right to use them. You have an obligation, therefore, to abandon to Him all that is in your life and to let Him bring out of your life anything and everything that He wants.

I think of those young men that came to see Keith and Vi Hunt in the University of Michigan. Keith and Vi worked for Intervarsity Christian Fellowship staff workers in Michigan. This young fellow came several times to talk to them about Christ, because as a second year medical student, the witness of the other students had moved him to the point where he was considering the claims of Christ and possibility of becoming a Christian.

One night he was sitting in the Hunt home and talking with them about it, and he said, "Now what difference is it going to make to me personally when I become a Christian?"

This stirred Keith up to say, "Well, tell me, how did you decide to become a doctor?"

He said, "My grandfather was a doctor, my father was a doctor, and all my life I've been planned to be a doctor."

"This is the difference coming to Christ makes. When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you have to take your plans to be a doctor and put them in His nail-pierced hands. Because, you see, you made these plans to be a doctor before you came to Christ, and when you come to Christ, then you don't just say, 'Now Lord, I'm coming to you as a doctor.' You come to Him and you say, 'I'm coming to You, period! Thy will be done.'"

He said, "Now wait a minute, Keith, let's get something straight. I'm considering becoming a Christian, but there's one thing you have got to understand. I'm going to be a Christian doctor. I'm going to be a doctor! Christian or no Christian. I'm going to be a doctor. See, I'm going to be a doctor!"

After about three or four minutes, Keith went over to the closet and said, "I'm awfully sorry; I'm terribly tired, and I know Vi is tired. If you don't mind," and he brought his coat over and held it for him. Just five minutes after this statement, maybe ten, the young fellow was out and on the way back to his dormitory room. He knew he's been given the brush-off, and cold shoulder, and when he left, it was kind of stony.

Keith and Vi went up to the bed, but they couldn't go to sleep. They prayed for a long time that God somehow would get to this young fellow. To get him to see, to understand what was involved in coming to Christ. About six in the morning they heard a ringing. Keith said, "I was so tired, I was sure it was just bells ringing in my head, and I put my head under the pillow to make them go away. But they didn't go away. They just kept on, and on, and on, and on." Finally, he said, "I got up and went down, and here was the second year medical student with blurry, furry eyes, and a fuzzy face. What's the matter, forget something?" He said, "No, Keith, when I left here I was cursing you under my breath and determined never to step back into this house. I know you gave me the brush off, but I deserved it. About three o'clock this morning, I realized that if I came to Jesus Christ, I would have to take Him on His terms, and not He take me on mine. Keith, I'm ready to pray. I'll be anything Jesus Christ wants me to be. Will you pray with me?"

A few minutes later this second year medical student had opened his heart to receive the Son of God, because he discovered that when you come to Christ, you don't bring Him your plans for Him to approve. You come and say, "Lord, Thy will be done."

I am afraid there are a great many people that have received Christ, and they've just assumed that they were to go on being what they were.

I was talking to one fellow this past winter, and he used a word about himself that I won't use, and I got furious with him. I've known him for many years.

I turned on him and I said, "Listen, don't you ever say that about yourself again."

He said, "What's the matter?"

I said, "No man is a noun! No man is a noun! You're far bigger than any noun. You are a man, you're made in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ, and brought into the family of God, and don't call yourself a noun!"

I find some people say they're a farmer, a teacher, a doctor, a lawyer or I'm a preacher. I don't believe a Christian has a right to equate himself with a noun. You are a child of God! You are anything He wants you to be! If He wants you to be a prince in the house of Pharaoh, well and good. And if He wants you to be a shepherd on the backside of a Midian desert, you're a shepherd! Do you understand you're not a noun! You don't commit yourself to a noun. You commit yourself to the Son of God. You are what He wants you to be. Oh, how many there will be that will end their days and found that they accepted the security and comfort of being a "noun", instead of being a man or woman obedient to the Father.

Have you ever taken the life of Paul, and take the time element from his ministry. This is what you discover. Out of the 35 years of service, over which his ministry extended, you can account for only eighteen years of it. Seventeen years, as far as we know, he was doing what God wanted him to do, but in no conspicuous public place. We don't know what he did. Maybe he was farming; maybe he was running a tent store, maybe he was.... Maybe he was what? We don't know! But out of 35 years you can only account for 18 years! But he was utterly available to Jesus Christ. He finished the course!

This is what I am trying to press on your hearts. He died to save you from the futility of a dead-end street, to save you from wasting your life as a victim of attitude and habit. He died that there might be brought out of your life everything that can glorify Him and bless a needy world. He doesn't want any of it to be wasted.

Something else; it is possible for one who has been saved from the fear of Hell, the time of dying, to have been saved from habits and attitudes, and trait and nature, and to have been saved from blundering through life and groping through time, still, even being on the right road, walking in the right direction, to go on that trip unprepared. Oh, what a sad thing it's going to be in that day, to find: saved from Hell, saved from sin and the tyranny of it, and yet, wasted, wasted, as far as the matter of walking in the fullness of the Holy Spirit is concerned.

And God's great delight and desire is that you should walk, not in your own strength or your own energy, but in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. And so it says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that if you should believe on Him," you'll not be wasted! Wasted in the sense of walking on in the energy of human personality, trying to do divine service with natural ability, but that on the contrary, you could know the fullness of Christ and walk in that fullness. And it would be no longer be you, but it would be Christ living in you. Oh friend, if you can see this, if you can understand this, that this is in part of it. God doesn't want you to try to live this life in the energy that is utterly inadequate for it. For the Christ life is utterly unnatural to me, to you, and perfectly natural to Christ.

What is He asking us to do? To present our bodies to Him and to permit Him to fill us with Himself and to live in us His own life. For a person to go through time, forgiven of past sins, victory over trait and temptation, walking even in the way that is, in essence, God's plan and purpose, but failing to walk in the Spirit. Of this Charles Finney³ said, "God has commanded us to be filled with the Spirit. If we do not walk in the fullness of the Spirit, we're going to be responsible for everything wrong that we did because we weren't filled with the Spirit, and we're going to be responsible for all the good we didn't do because we

³ Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) An American Presbyterian minister and leader in the Second Great Awakening in the United States.

weren't filled with the Spirit." And so, He, Christ, doesn't want you to waste one day, one hour. His desire is that you should not only have the crisis experience of being filled with the Spirit, and that you should walk in the fullness of Christ. His Word is literally, "Be ye being filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18)

F.B. Meyer⁴ came to George Mueller⁵ at Keswick on one occasion and said to him, "Father, why is it that sometimes I preach with power and sometimes it seems so flat?"

The old man said, "It's because you breathe out twice when you have only breathed in once." And oh, to breathe out without breathing in is a waste of time.

Dr. Simpson⁶ spoke and wrote in his hymn of inbreathing the life of the Lord. And I find so many of God's dear children do not understand the necessity of a secret place alone with God, a place of not just going through Bible reading and prayer, but a place primarily of worship. A place of breathing out in worship and breathing in, drinking of Him Who is the living water; breathing of Him Who is the holy breath. And God doesn't want one day or hour of your life to be wasted, lived merely in the energy of a dedicated human personality. But He wants you to live and walk in the Spirit!

There must be discipline if you are to walk in the Spirit's fullness, and one of these disciplines is given in a hymn, "Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord. Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone."⁷ We sing it, but do we do it? Do you have a time, and oh, for you that have known the fullness of the Holy Spirit, I prescribe for you even beginning now and going on as long as you live, some moments, minutes, or longer a day, and I would suggest that you lie down. David said that he communed with the Lord on his bed. That Scripture verse in the Psalms says, "Be still and know that I am God," (Psa. 46:10). Literally, in the Hebrew it is, "be relaxed and know that He is God." Mothers with children, fathers coming home at night, and all of us who want our lives to have some fragrance and radiance for Christ, we've got to understand that it isn't only the crisis of being filled with the Spirit, but it's that process that is prescribed, 'be ye being filled with the Spirit'. . "In worship, in adoration, in dwelling in His presence, in drinking of His fullness, in breathing," said Simpson, "of the life of the Lord."

How many of us have breathed out twice when we've breathed in only once? And that breathing out in service and activity is so empty, if you please, wasted.

How imperative it is, therefore, for us to take this verse in its larger dimension, and its wider implications. This world out here that waits to see Christ in us, this world that says, "I don't believe what you say, I only believe what they see. And what I see doesn't impress me!" It was for such as these our Lord prayed when He said, "Father, they all may be in union as Thou art in union with Me, and I in union with Thee, they may be in union with us in order that the world may be able to believe." (John 17:21) And for our minds to be taught truth, our hearts committed to His service, our spirits laying hold of victory, assured that if we died our past sins are under the blood and we're forgiven. And yet, not to have taken time to worship Him, to inbreathe of His life, to drink of His fullness means that we go out, if you please, with good words given in human energy. It's thus so terribly important that this verse should sweep down even to us and say God so loved that world out there that He gave His only begotten Son, that if you'd believe on Him, you'd not be wasted in any sense of waste. Everything that He redeemed with His poured out blood would be effectively utilized to His honor and His glory and His praise.

If you've been born of God, you want to be like Christ, you want to fulfill it, and you want to grow up into Christ. That's the purpose of this convention--not only to lead those who haven't entered in to a crisis experience, but those of you that have entered in to a crisis relationship on into a maturing, developing relationship with the Lord. I say, if you've been born of God, you've partaken of the divine Nature, and something within you is crying even while I speak, "Oh, to be like Him! Oh, to be like

⁴ Frederick Brotherton Meyer (1847-1929) A Baptist Pastor

⁵ George Müller (Born Johann Georg Ferdinand Müller) (1805-1898) Christian Evangelist and Director of the Ashley Down Orphanage

⁶ Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

⁷ "Take Time to be Holy" By William D. Longstaff 1882; Music by George C. Stebbins 1890

Him! Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art. Come in thy fullness, come in Thy pureness. Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.⁸

We were down in Orlando, Florida, in our home. My daughter, now fifteen, was then a little over three. I'd come home from a speaking tour, and she was there, sitting in the breezeway, my wife was in the kitchen, and Sara, three, I had seen in there standing on a stool, helping her mother. Mothers, you understand about that. It only takes twice as long when three year old daughter helps.

Doesn't it? She came out, so proud so smug, and she smoothed out her pretty little dress, and I said, "What have you been doing, honey?"

"Oh Daddy," she said as her face all lit up, "I've been helping Mommy!"

I said, "Did you enjoy it?"

"Oh yes, I like to help Mommy!" Then she said, "Daddy, do you know something?"

I said, "No, what, Honey?"

"Daddy, I can hardly wait to be big like Mommy, cause she does everything so good!" And she turned and skipped away, and I turned and put my head down on the back of the settee. Tears came to my eyes. And I said, "Father, when You made a little girl, You put into her heart a desire to be like Mommy, to do things like Mommy. When You made your children, and brought them out of death into life, out of darkness into light, didn't You put into their hearts a desire to be like Jesus? Why are they so indifferent? They seem just if they're saved from Hell, it is all they want! But it isn't all they want. Maybe that's all they know about."

But if you've been born of God, it isn't all you want. You want to be like Him. You want to honor Him. You want to glorify Him. You want your life to count; you don't want it to be wasted in sin, in failure, in defeat, in groping, in powerlessness. But you want to live every moment of every day in such a way that in that hour when you see Him, your life will have been to the praise and the glory of His grace.

Listen, He loved the world. He gave His Son, that if you'd believe on Him; you wouldn't have to be wasted. But you could begin to live now in the full meaning of life, and then you could go on living forever in this a glorious salvation!

* Reference such as: Delivered in 1967 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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⁸ "O To Be Like Thee" By Thomas O. Chisholm, pub. 1897; Music by William J. Kirkpatrick, 1897.