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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Release To God's Ultimate



Sermon
By Derek Prince

I want to speak about an aspect of the conditions in the world in these last days and then how we as Christians need to face it and to respond to it. I'm going to start by reading in 2Timothy 3, and I am reading from the New International Version. I still love the King James, but I appreciate this version. If you're not familiar with it I would recommend it to you. It's not 100 percent as accurate as I could wish. There are points in which I differ from it, but it's excellent English and it really does get the message of God's word across in a very effective way. These are words of Paul to Timothy in probably the last letter he ever wrote to him.

> "But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days."

Now in what follows, Paul diagnoses the root cause of the terrible times. And the root cause lies in the degeneration of human nature, character and conduct. Not in atomic weapons, pollution or famine, but the root problem is always found in man. You trace any serious problem back to its source and its source is in people. And so Paul goes on and he lists eighteen serious moral defects that will characterize human character and conduct at the close of this age. As I read through them I invite you to consider how many of them are conspicuous in society today.

> "People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them."

There's a very straightforward exhortation at the end: have nothing to do with such people. It's been pointed out more than once before that though all these moral defects are found in these people, they're still very religious people.

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They have a form of godliness. Characteristically in former times I would always think about them as being the members of the other denominations. You know, if we're Protestants, then this is about Catholics. And I'm sure for Catholics if they read it at all, it was about Protestants. But I've come to understand that it's about all religious people. And bear in mind we here today are religious people otherwise we wouldn't be here. Probably there might be five percent exception.

I came to the Lord from a background of irreligion. I had given up on church a long while before and I just laughed at religious people. I didn't have any respect for them and I didn't expect anything from them. And I continued with this attitude and I was always making fun of religious people when I was preaching. When I was doing that one day the Lord spoke quietly to me and he said, Remember, you're a religious person yourself and you've been one a long while now. And that was a kind of shock. So remember, we are religious people and we are not exempt from these words that are spoken here.

Now, I believe one of the things about the scripture is it goes to the root. Its remedies are radical. The word radical meaning that which goes to the root. Radical surgery is surgery that goes to the root of the problem and removes the root. And I believe that in this passage Paul lays bare the root of all these moral defects. And it's in the first phrase. Lovers of themselves. Self love. I believe self love is the root of all our moral problems. There are certain phrases used about love. After lovers of themselves it says lovers of money. And right at the end it says lovers of pleasure. Take those three loves together; love of self, love of money and love of pleasure. Essentially I would say they're the three most characteristic marks of our contemporary culture today, would you agree with that? Love of self, love of money and love of pleasure. And in the middle in this translation, exactly in the middle—I counted—it says without love. The King James says without natural affection. It's without the kind of love that's natural, like primarily family love. Love of parents for children, children for parents, brothers for sisters and so on. I believe the lesson is this: That self love is a weed that chokes all the good kinds of love. That if we indulge in self love all that's good will be choked to death in our life. The root problem, I believe, is self love. And that's what I want to talk about and I want to propose God's remedy.

Self love is directly opposed to God's love. God's love is summed up in that familiar verse, John 3:16: God so loved that he gave. God's love, divine love, is a giving love. It's a self denying love. Self love and God's love cannot live side by side. If we are indulging self love, we are denying God's love. Jesus said in Matthew 16:24 [you don't need to turn there], that if any man will come after me, what's the first thing? Let him deny himself. It is impossible to follow Jesus if you do not deny yourself. If you yield to self love you cannot be the kind of Christian the Bible speaks about.

So, let me just give you a little portrait of self love. I've lived in self love, I grew up in it. Partly because of my family circumstances. I was born into a well to do family and I was the only child, I had no brothers or sisters. So everything revolved around me. I was successful at school all my school days, always top of the class, all sorts of distinctions. So you know, the whole family revolved around dear little Derek. And I never really was challenged to deny myself. I didn't have brothers or sisters to share my toys with or to let go to the bathroom before me. There was just no competition. And I'll tell you the marks of self love. One distinctive mark of self love is boredom. Life is never really interesting. And no matter how much you pursue what you want, you are never satisfied. Absolutely never. And you tend to blame somebody or something else. My parents weren't good enough to me, society doesn't treat me right, my boss isn't good to me. Oh, I recognize all those marks so clearly and I see them in so many people around me. And the root of that is self love.

Now, the remedy for self love has been stated. Let him deny himself. The word deny is not a complicated word. It means to say no. So when self says I want, you say no. That's very simple. You deny the demands of self. That's to deny yourself.

Now I believe the remedy comes in two stages. First of all it's an initial decision to deny yourself. Not to seek your own good, not to follow your own ambitions or pleasures. In most of our life God precipitated some kind of a crisis in which we had to make that decision. And often God didn't really tell us the nature of the decision. For instance, in my life the Lord saved me in a wonderful way when I was in the British Army. He called me to serve him in the land of Israel and in the City of Jerusalem. And the army delivered me where God had called me to serve him. That's the marvelous thing; when you're in the will of God everything serves God's purposes. Maybe not your purposes but God's purposes. I spent the last year of my military service on the Mount of Olives. If I had been given a choice of any site in the entire globe, that would have been my number one choice. But I went there for three years in the desert. And then God showed me clearly I was to be discharged from the British forces in Israel. I was not to go home.

Now I'd been away from home for four and a half years. The army owed me a passage home. My family was longing to see me, my grandfather whom I loved as dearly as any member of my family was dying of cancer. My prayers had kept him alive for three and a half years. And I was confronted with a choice. And God made this absolutely clear to me that if I didn't step into my calling then, the door would not be open later. God spoke to me in a very vivid picture I won't try to give you here. And I went through inner turmoil and agony but I made the decision. Jesus said if you come after me you've got to hate your father, your mother, everybody. And then he said and your own life. I don't believe that means we've got to have an attitude of hatred but wherever there's a choice between the claims of Jesus and any other claim, we hate that other claim. And by the grace of God I made that choice. And in a sense, God compelled me to deny myself. I didn't hear a sermon on self denial but the situation was arranged by God. That was perhaps one of the most critical decisions I made in my life. But after that, self denial has to be worked out on a day to day basis. Most of the things in the spiritual life are like that, there's an initial decision which is a crisis and then there's an ongoing outworking. The fact that I denied myself in l946 doesn't make me a self denying person in l979. It's got to go on day by day.

I believe there are three or four steps in the outworking of this process. The first step normally is in a family. I believe in a family, children should be trained to deny themselves. To respect and honor their parents and put their parents' wishes before their own. And to live in such a way with their brothers and sisters that they learn not to be selfish. And those of you young people who are in a family with brothers and sisters, I want to tell you from my own background, you should thank God. I never had that opportunity. I didn't know how to relate to brothers and sisters. I had to find it in the Body of Christ and it took me a long while. That I believe is the first step to denying ourselves in God's pattern. It's learning to live in a natural family.

The result of that is what the Greek calls ?storgos?. Where it says in this without love, it's without that kind of love, without natural affection. I don't believe natural affection is altogether natural. I believe the potential is there but it has to be developed by discipline and training in a family. And one of the disasters of our society is that there are many, many families where there's almost no cultivation of natural affection to family discipline.

Then I believe the next stage in God's pattern should be life in a committed fellowship. And I believe the key verse there is: By love serve one another. I believe the way to deal with this self love is to inculcate the principle of serving others in love. Serving others deals with self love. And when that is worked out it produces what the Bible calls brotherly love, Philadelphia, the love of the brethren. This is learning to take your place in God's family.

But the essence of what I have to say this morning is that's not the end. In a certain sense I believe that's only preparatory for what God has in mind. And I believe it's possible for a Christian fellowship that works on the principles that we acknowledge nevertheless to miss the fullness of God—which is to reach out beyond ourself. Actually, when you apply these principles of serving one another in love and discipline and loyalty, almost inevitably you're going to prosper. It may not come immediately but it will because it's the most sensible way to live. You'll do better than other people. You'll have better houses, better cars, better jobs. It's natural. It's just the outworking of natural principles.

Now, I believe the danger is to stop there. How many of you thank God for prosperity? Believe me, I do. I've tried both. And I have to say this: I know what it is to be so poor that I've bought my razor blades one at a time because I couldn't afford a packet. And I was ministering and preaching the full gospel. And I just thank God for that period of discipline. But looking back I can't say that I was any nearer to God or more holy when I was poor than when I'm prosperous. In fact, if I were to be able to measure myself I would say it's the other way around. So poverty doesn't produce holiness. I just mention that because I don't want anybody to think that I'm belittling what God does for a committed fellowship. I thank him for it.

But what I am trying to say today is it's not the ultimate. And I'm encouraged by the prophetic messages that came to speak what I believe God would have us to go on to from there. And I believe the key is to acknowledge our indebtedness. You see, we have spoken about cultivating natural family love, we've spoken about cultivating love of the brethren, but there's one more. All through the New Testament that's not the pinnacle. The pinnacle is agape love. God's love. Divine love, giving love. God so loved that he gave. If we don't have giving love that stretches beyond ourselves and sometimes stretches our patience and our faith to the breaking point we don't have divine love. So I want to speak about divine love as the absolute opposite of self love and that which God wants us to achieve. And I believe the key to it is acknowledging our indebtedness. And I'm going to read some familiar words of Paul in Romans 1:14:

> "I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish."

The King James says I'm a debtor. Now I don't believe those words apply only to the apostle Paul. The scripture says to whom much is given of him shall much also be required. And Paul goes on to say:

> "That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome."

The primary expression of his indebtedness was to bring the gospel to those who had not heard it. And one other scripture in Philippians 2:14–16:

> "Do everything without complaining or arguing."

Those are two conspicuous marks of self love: complaining and arguing. Do things without complaining or arguing:

> "so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life..."

I believe one application of that scripture is that if we are to shine as stars in the universe first of all we have to correct our personal behavior, putting away arguing and complaining. But we do not shine unless we hold out the word of God. We are obligated to extend the word of life, the gospel, to the rest of the world. So I reckon that the basic solution to self love is to realize our indebtedness. I am a debtor. I owe the gospel. And if I don't give the gospel, I'm not paying my debt.

Let me say now I am not trying to change immediately what anybody here does. But what I'd like to do is produce a certain attitude. Now I believe that as we reach out beyond ourselves, beyond our fellowships, there are two circles that we need to reach. The first and the closest circle is the whole Body of Christ. The wider circle is the whole world. And I believe that whatever truth God has given me I owe to the whole Body of Christ. I am not free to confine it to some little group. This is really, I think, the motivation that spurred me on to begin my radio broadcast. Actually, God really spoke to me on the terms of a scripture I'm going to quote in a little while. Be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth. God said you've been doing all right in Jerusalem and Judea, what about Samaria and the ends of the earth? And in my application, Samaria was the rest of the Christian world. And after that, the ends of the earth.

Now I want to say that I believe there's a key to approaching our fellow believers. Those who are not Charismatic, those who don't believe in quote, discipleship or whatever it may be. There's two ways to approach them. One is the wrong way, the other is the right way. And I know from experience. The wrong way is we've got more than you. And you know what happens? You put peoples' backs up, you stop their ears and they push you away. The right way, I believe, is an attitude. Can I serve you? Is there something I can do to help you?

You see, God has given new truth again and again and again to the Body of Christ, recovered truth. Just to take two examples. The Plymouth brethren. When the Plymouth brethren came forth they had precious truths that God gave them. Truths that in many cases we're just getting to today about the nature of the local church and so on. They had some things that I would not accept as being absolutely correct but they had a great measure of truth. But I think they came out with it in a rather proud way. And other people were offended, shut them off and so they became a denomination. And in essence I think they failed in their God given task which was to share with the whole Body of Christ what God had given them.

And then along came the Pentecostals and having been a Pentecostal for about forty years I'm free to say so many times the Pentecostal attitude is we have it, you don't. And what happened? We were rejected and we majored in rejection. Nobody loves us, everybody hates us. You know the rest of that? I'm going out into the garden to eat worms! Big fat squashy ones, little thin floppy ones, golly how they tickle when they squirm! So we went out and dug up our Pentecostal worms in the backyard. And we failed.

Now I know there are many, many other factors. I'm fully aware of that. I think particularly the Apostolic church to whom God gave great revelation and understanding of the five ministry gifts. I was talking in Australia a year and a half ago, two years ago to a senior brother who was a retired minister of the Apostolic Church. And he said to me in so many words, he said, Brother, we failed God. We failed the Body. We just let ourselves get shut up in a little circle with this truth which God intended the whole body to have. And I believe we're in a critical time right now. God has shared with us wonderful truth and he's continuing to share. I feel like I've got a fountain inside me. I feel like the apostle Paul. Not as though I had already apprehended. I'm far, there's

much more ahead. When that message came about change, I embraced it. I believe I can say one thing in my 63rd year, I'm still flexible. I know we haven't arrived, we don't have it all. There's much more ahead. So, let's not fail God. Let's ask God to give us a humble attitude toward the Body of Christ.

I want to say this and I hope I can say it in the right way. Just recently I was with a group of YWAMers in Europe, in Venice and in Germany. I love YWAMers. I've always loved them. Every time I meet them anywhere I love them. They're young people, Youth With A Mission, you know. They're just going out just to give the gospel to the world. The Lord has given them unusual favor in Germany and that's not an easy country in which to achieve favor. And Ruth and I shared close fellowship with the leaders, we spent several days together. Circumstances brought us together. And I almost envied the favor they had. And I asked myself what's the cause of this favor. And I really traced it to this: it's the brother's can-we-serve-you attitude. Now I'm not saying all YWAMers attitudes are like that. I'm not suggesting that. I don't know all YWAMs so I can't say. But I saw a little something there that spoke to me about how to approach our fellow Christians. So that's our first area of indebtedness.

Also I'll tell you frankly it's very frustrating after awhile to be shut up in a narrow circle with tremendous truth. I was like that as a Pentecostal. I had the truth that my fellow British people needed. But I let myself get shut up in a little, little box. It was basically doctrinal. I wanted to be sure that everybody's doctrine was absolutely right. The more sure I made, the fewer people there were. Until I came to the sort of attitude where I thought about fifteen and a half other people were going to heaven and I wasn't sure about the half. I look back on that as a time of tremendous activity and blessing from God but I would never go back to that again. Nothing could ever induce me to go back to that situation. I absolutely will never be put in that box again.

Beyond that, there's the greater circle, the whole world. I attach great significance to last words. Do you do that? I mean if I'm saying good-bye to somebody and I may never see them again in this world or I may not see them again for months or years. The last words they speak to me and I speak to them tend to linger in my mind. And I always want them to be something significant that sums up my real feelings. I think of a young man, a father and a husband who lay dying and died in this city. The last things he said to his wife were, I love you, go home and look after the kids. And that I think expressed the deepest attitude of his heart. And that night he died. That's what I'm trying to say. I believe that there's something tremendously significant in last words. And so I'm going to quote to you two last words from the New Testament. The first are the last words of Jesus on earth to his disciples. They're found in Acts 1:7–9. These words were spoken by Jesus apparently on the Mount of Olives immediately before his ascension into heaven. They were the last words that fell from his lips on earth.

> "He said to them, It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight."

I have never been able to get away from the fact that the last words that Jesus spoke to his disciples were to the ends of the earth. I believe that's what he wanted them to carry away in their hearts from the Mount of Olives. That's where his heart was, the ends of the earth. And I personally do not believe that Jesus will ever rest satisfied until this gospel has reached the ends of the earth. And it's taken a long while getting there. And it hasn't gotten there. And I believe we're never fully in line with the highest purposes of God if we are not in some way committed and involved in the task of getting the gospel to the ends of the earth. When I preach this I have terrible difficulties with myself. I feel like the man in a book by Lewis Carroll who dashed out of the hotel, jumped on his horse and rode off in four directions at once! I mean that's how I feel. I have to hold myself back. I come under condemnation. I say, there you are, living in a good home having a good life. You're telling people the ends of the earth is where it's at. I shared this with the people I was with in YWAM in Germany. And one of them said to me, Brother Prince, you probably do more by inspiring others than by trying to go yourself. However in a certain sense, God has renewed that call to go and we are going.

I was called to be a missionary and I never escaped that call. That was the initial call of God on my life. And it doesn't matter what I do, wake or sleep, somewhere deep inside me there's that pressure from God. I want to share it with you.

Now, I want to share with you the last words of the Bible. I wonder how many of you know what they are. Revelation 22:20– 21:

> "He who testifies to these things [that's the Lord Jesus] says, Yes, I am coming soon. Amen, Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's people, Amen."

The last verse of the Bible is the promise of the Lord's coming and the echo of the Lord's people. Amen, Lord Jesus, come. The Lord baptized me in the Holy Spirit in an Army barrack room. I spoke in tongues really not knowing what I was doing on Saturday night. Sunday morning I went to a little Assembly of God church which I visited once before and they were having the breaking of bread, the communion. It was a very small congregation, mostly women because most of the men had been called up into the forces. It was in the second year of World War II. And I was a total stranger to things Pentecostal and that sort of service. I had never been in a quote, breaking of bread service in my life. And I sat in a pew and in front of me was a girl of about twelve years old. And as we were worshipping and praying she began to speak very softly in a beautiful unknown tongue. And of course, for me this was extremely exciting that a child of twelve could speak in tongues. And I felt a deep longing in my heart to know what she was saying. And do you know what? The Lord broke all the rules and gave me the gift of interpretation less than 24 hours after I was baptized in the Spirit. And I began to say—and I knew I was saying what she was saying in the Spirit—Amen Lord Jesus, come quickly. Come quickly, come quickly Lord Jesus. And she lifted her eyes and looked at me and I looked at her and we each knew that was what she was saying. I don't believe we're fully in tune with God if we can't say Amen, Lord Jesus, come.

Now, one of the problems in the minds of many of you is your eschatology. Just give it a rest for a moment, would you? I taught in a Pentecostal Bible School once where everything had to end in "ology." That you know, made it a little higher intellectually. The doctrine of salvation was ? soteriology?. The doctrine of the church was ? ecclesiology?. Even the gifts of the Holy Spirit had gotten changed to pneumatology, would you believe that! And so something started in me there, I kind of shy away from words ending in ology. And here we have eschatology. One of the real problems of the church. Eschatology if you don't know any better means the study of what's going to happen at the end of the age. I think that's a sufficient interpretation. Well, I'll tell you something frankly. There's a lot of things that are going to happen at the end of the age I don't know about. My eschatology has got cracks in it. But that does not keep me from facing objective facts. What I'm talking about what I believe and I was trained to analyze the meaning of words and pull out of them what they really mean. That was my whole background. And I try to approach the Bible that way. No matter what my preconceptions may be, what is the Bible really saying. And it's usually saying something different than what we expect it to say.

And so I want to talk to you now about the attitude of the early Christians to the return of the Lord. And I want to say, I've written this down so I'll say it right. The New Testament church lived in excited anticipation of the Lord's return. I'm not sure I know what their eschatology was but I venture to suggest to you this is an objective fact. If we take words to mean what they say, the New Testament church lived in excited anticipation of the Lord's return. I'm going to read you a number of passages. I could double the number easily but I don't want to spend too much time on it. And I'm going to read from all the major writers of epistles in the New Testament. We'll start with Paul in 1Corinthians 1:7–8:

> "Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

That church was eagerly awaiting for the Lord Jesus to be revealed and Paul promised them that he would keep them strong until that day. There is no doubt in my mind that is what they were looking forward to. And then in 1Corinthians 11, the ordinance for the Lord's supper. Just one verse, verse 26:

> "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

So according to that ordinance which Paul claims was given him by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ, every time we take the Lord's supper, the communion, the Eucharist, we are looking forward to what? The coming of the Lord. I read a beautiful comment on that once. You show the Lord's death till he comes. When we take communion, everything of secondary importance drops out of sight. No past but the cross, no future but the coming. We show the Lord's death till he comes. I believe that's a

right perspective. I believe one of the benefits of communion should be that it always restores that perspective.

And then in 1Thessalonians 3:13:

> "May he [God] strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones."

They were looking forward, preparing themselves to be blameless and holy when the Lord Jesus comes. The same epistle, chapter 4, verse 15:

> "According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep."

Again, the great anticipated event is the coming of the Lord. And then in the same epistle, chapter 5, verse 23:

> "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

To me it seems there was a very direct connection between the need for personal holiness and the anticipation of the Lord's return. And then in 1Timothy 6:13–14:

> "In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep this commandment without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Again, the terminus, the point to which they were looking, the challenge to be faithful is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Timothy 4, a rather similar challenge and a very solemn one to those of us who are preachers. Verses 1–2:

> "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word..."

The same epistle, same chapter, verse 8:

> "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

See, to me that one necessary qualification for receiving the crown of righteousness is that we have longed for his appearance. And then in Titus 2:11–13:

> "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say no [that's to deny] ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior."

Again, there's a very close connection between holiness and waiting for the Lord's appearing. It seems to me, and I'm speaking simply objectively without any preconceptions, that that was the primary motivation for godly living. And then we look in James 5:7–8:

> "Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near."

It seems to me there is motivation for endurance and holding out. 1Peter 1:5–7, Peter speaks about us as Christians:

> "Who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all

> kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

The same chapter, the 13th verse:

> "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."

Again my impression is this was the primary motive for right living. And then in 1 John 2, just one verse, verse 28:

> "And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming."

Simply, as a student of language I have to say no matter what view I may have about eschatology, it is a fact attested to by all the major writers of New Testament epistles that the supreme anticipation of the New Testament Christian was the coming of the Lord. They lived with their eye toward that event.

Now I'll tell you something that the Lord did speak once. The Lord gave me an interpretation in a public meeting. And one of the things he said is this: The natural mind of man has no way to calculate how close the coming of the Lord may be. As far as I'm concerned, that's all right. I do not believe any of us has a way to calculate but I believe all of us should have the same anticipation that the New Testament church had.

See, sometimes our theories get in the way of the facts. I don't know whether you've ever had the experience of having a pain that no doctor can diagnose? I had one in the British Army for six weeks. I had a tremendous pain in my rib. And because I was with an infantry unit at the time and life was pretty hectic it was agony for me to do all the things I was required to do. So I went to the doctor and said I've got a pain. He put his stethoscope on and can't hear anything. They put me through every conceivable test at that time and they came up with the conclusion no reason for my pain. Implication: you don't have a pain. Well I knew better, I had had a pain and whether they could diagnose it or not, I had a pain. And using that as a little example, whether your eschatology makes room for it or not, the fact is the New Testament church lived in anticipation of the Lord's return. That's a fact as far as I'm concerned. Whether it suits me or not, it's a fact.

In closing my message I want to picture to you a certain lifestyle which I have glimpsed and at times have tasted. I cannot say I'm living in it but I feel it's where we ought to be. There are two aspects to this lifestyle. First of all its main motivation is to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. I'm so glad we had that message never to be satisfied. I do believe that I can say honestly that I will never be satisfied until that has been achieved. Whatever part God has given me in it is secondary. But that's the only legitimate motivation.

Secondly, there's a main expectation, the return of Christ. So there's a kind of people that live with one main motivation to reach the ends of the earth with the gospel with one expectation; the coming of the Lord. And their lifestyle is distinctive. They're a different kind of people. I've moved amongst them. In fact I think at times I've been on that level. And I'll say this: Once you've tasted it you're never going to be satisfied with less. This way of living doesn't make sense by worldly or religious standards. I've been really tremendously challenged as I've studied the background and the history of the emergence of the State of Israel. I felt I had to study it to some extent because of my special calling. I'm not suggesting everybody should study it. Ben Gurion was one of the early Zionists, and the first Prime Minister of Israel, way back in the days when Zionism was just a kind of silly fad that a few people entertained. When it was scoffed at and rejected even by the majority of Jewish people, and when the world dismissed it as both impossible and ridiculous, Ben Gurion said to be a Zionist, you have to be crazy. Well, I'm talking about a kind of lifestyle that to live it you have to be crazy. But when I look back at the State of Israel what I see is their craziness paid off. I mean, you have no idea unless you study the literature back in those days between World War I and World War II how many quote, experts contemptuously dismissed any possibility of the emergence of the State of Israel. In the l911 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannicawhich is one of the major learned works of our civilization, a certain learned German professor named ? Nildiker? was discussing the possibility of ever accurately recovering the pronunciation of ancient Hebrew. And he said that possibility is as remote as the possibility that a Jewish empire will ever be established again in the Middle East. That was published in l911 by the experts. Thirty-seven years later the experts were looking silly. If we are

going to live this way we're going to be the bottom target of the experts, both religious and worldly. When I consider the tasks that Zionists took on at that time, the British were the mandatory power governing Palestine which is now Israel. They were undoubtedly the largest and most powerful empire in the world and one of the most powerful in human history. And this little group of nobodies from so many diverse backgrounds in essence challenged the British empire. And won. To me this is a beautiful word of encouragement. I'm not even concerned about what your attitude toward the State of Israel is. What I'm saying is let's be a little bit crazy.

Now I think I can say that because most of you know I've got both feet on the ground. And I'm not some kind of weird fanatic, I'm not overemotional, I'm a balanced personality. And as Bob was so kind to say, I have fruit to prove it. But I'm not satisfied with myself, let me say it that way. I'm afraid sometimes I'm getting too respectable. I don't think Bob sees any danger of that! I want to live that way. I want to go out and challenge Goliath. Even though I've only got five stones in my sling, I'm prepared to take him on. And do you know what I believe? I believe we're going to win.

Oh, were you there when Bob was speaking in Kansas City in l977 and he said I've looked at the end of the book and we win? Praise God it's still the same with the end of the book, we win. God bless you.

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Sermon

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