

# "FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS"

*or*  
*Facing the Challenges*  
*of Our Time*

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*Facing the challenges of our time in***Our Homes**

*For such a time as this* what message do we find in the Bible concerning our homes? First of all, the Bible tells us it is not good for man to be alone. This comment was made about man in the early chapters of the Bible in the second chapter of Genesis, and there you have God's own estimate of the nature of man. God made man and then He made this comment about him: "It is not good that the man should be alone." This would indicate that man was designed in such a way that he will be at his best only when he is related to others. In other words, man left to himself can never achieve his potential. He can never be what he should be. And this applies to us all. It means so far as you and are concerned that we will never enter into the true fullness of living and achievement by ourselves. In the early chapters of Genesis, you will find that God arranged for one woman and one man to be together. These two were to be equal with each other, and they were to belong to each other and have things in a certain sort of mutual, or communal relationship. In Genesis, chapter two, verse twenty-four, you read, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife. And they shall be one flesh."

I remember some years ago reading a comment that when the woman was made she was taken from Adam's side. And this particular comment continued that she was not taken from his foot as though Adam could walk over her, or lord it over her, and not taken from his head, as though she should lord it over him, or boss him. But she was taken from his side that she should be his equal. Now I realize that any interpretation such as that would be rather artificial. But it has the truth in it, for the Scriptures say that man was to have a helper equal to him. You will find in your King James version of the Bible that it says man should have a help-meet . . . equal to him. And this is the original fellowship so far as man is concerned. He is to have fellowship with others. And one man is to find companionship with one woman and they together will make one home.

This is the situation into which children are born. In God's arrangement of things, when children are born they are not started out in this world by themselves. God intended that a mother should naturally and normally give loving attention to the child, and the father should naturally feel his personal relationship and his responsibility and his interest in this son or daughter. In this family fellowship the children learn about the world around them. They see through their parents' eyes as they look and they refer to things in their parents' language when they talk. This is the framework within which they will make their judgment of things, gain their thoughts about things, their basic sense of values and their ideals. All of that will come out of the home in which the child is born. Now this was intended to be. It is apparently the plan of God, and throughout Scripture we find it referred to again and again. For instance, when the covenant was made with Abraham, God told Abraham that "I will bless thee . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." And then again, He repeated this promise, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. . . ."

The promise of the land was to Abraham *and to his seed*, showing that when God was considering Abraham, He was thinking also of Abraham's children. In Genesis 18:19 we read that God said this about Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. . . ." God is saying, "I know Abraham will bring up his family, will bring up his children, will guide his family into the ways of the Lord." Children learn by experience and they can profit by being taught the results of the experiences of their parents. Parents are actually to serve in the place of God in teaching the truth to their children. And children are to obey their

parents as if they were obeying God; they are to honor their parents, "which is the first commandment with promise."

Now we find throughout the Old Testament that the responsibility of the parents was a serious matter. In Deuteronomy Moses instructs the children of Israel as to how they shall provide for the training of their children in the things concerning God. And in talking with the people about their feasts and about their fasts, and their special celebrations and the special evidences that they had, and their memorials, Moses points out that when the children come along asking questions about these things, they are to be told what the facts were that these symbols represent.

Later on in the Old Testament you come across the instance of Eli, who is the classic illustration of failure as a parent, because his sons did not walk in his way. And when you read closely you find that he never asked them what they were doing. In other words, he didn't check up on them as you and I would do, and in the case of those children there was a lack of supervision. The result was that those sons turned out in a way that was not agreeable, unworthy of their father, Eli. Now Eli was a good man, but somehow in dealing with his sons he had evidently not trained up his children in the way they should go, so that when they grew older they would not depart from it.

In the book of Ephesians Paul describes the spiritual exercises and activities of Christian people. In chapter six, the first four verses give definite instructions to children. They are told to obey their parents, for this is good and right in the sight of the Lord. And fathers are told not to provoke their children to wrath; they should conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate and proper under God. All of this points up the fact that the home as such was in God's mind from the beginning, and is designed to have a very definite spiritual significance. But despite this reasonable design, many failures occurred in Old Testament times. The situation is described in various parts of the Old Testament.

The situation today among the people of God, if anything, appears to be even worse than it was in days gone by, largely because of the cultural challenge that we face in our day and time. This whole idea of husband and wife living together in one home and bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is seriously questioned and challenged in the society in which we live. Let me just draw your attention to a number of these things.

For instance, take marriage which is the very foundation of the home; I think you would probably agree with me that the significance of marriage is really much in question today. There seems to be doubt about the fact that a man and woman entering into marriage are involved in something that is to be eternal and permanent in its relationship. Not that we Christian people necessarily question it, but the people as a whole do. Consider the prevalence of divorce for example: we are among the highest nations in the world in our divorce rate. And when we think about this prevalence of divorce, and consider how many, many people experience this unhappy and sad separation of families and the breaking up of homes, we should be aware of the fact that many different churches have tried in different ways to deal with it. Some churches have tried by making rules. If you're divorced you can no longer be a member of the church. Or if you're divorced you cannot marry in the church, and so on. But despite these attempts on the part of the church, marriage has become less and less permanent in the minds of the people among whom we live. There is a distortion of the former concept that husbands and wife came together in service for the Lord, until today the matter of a young couple getting married is pretty much as to whether either he or she is going to get what he or she wants out of the situation. And we are inclined to think that if they do get out of it what they want, it is a good marriage. And if they don't get out of it what they thought they should have, it is a poor marriage. There is, commonly speaking, a popular refusal on the part of people as a whole to accept the Biblical concept.

And now I want to raise the question that I raised in the very beginning. In such a time as this, when the marriage relationship in the home is questioned as much as it is, what could we do about it? What is there to be done so far as the church is concerned? Not only is marriage in question, but family

life as a whole. The traditional image of family life is largely gone. It has disintegrated. And that's not because of any change in views.

If you were to ask me what the traditional picture is, it would be that of husband and wife living together in the home, with the husband being responsible for the leadership and for the executive management of the things. You properly would call him the head of the house. And the wife would be concerned about helping the husband live his life, helping him face and cope with his responsibilities. In a proper marriage relationship children would be accepted as a gift from the Lord. The understanding in a Christian home would be that children would be dedicated to God. They would be brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Parents would be praying *for* their children and *with* their children. Parents would teach the children to pray and they would teach the elements of the Christian gospel and of our faith. This is the normal thing in the Christian view, but I am going to propose to you that it is by no means commonly accepted today. And actually this traditional image is largely fading out. We can still talk about it, but how many times would you find it?

Take the fact that the parents are so much away from home. It's almost a case of what one could call parent absenteeism. They are so often gone so much. And while they are gone who takes care of things? Who is it that actually tends to things? If there are children who administers control of the children? This is not to say that these parents are necessarily bad people. I don't doubt that so far as the family is concerned they may secure the best maid that they can, or the best governess that they can, or the best helper that they possibly can. But will that ever really take the place of the parent? When you come to think about this, you begin to realize that in our day and time, many, many parents don't feel any personal obligation to be with their children. And look at the problem this creates! When authority in the home or in the school or anywhere else is a public matter and involves non-family people it becomes impersonal. And because it is impersonal it is very hard for us to take when, it disciplines us or goes against us. When children are expected to keep the rules and regulations of the home just because it is in the book, so to speak, and they have a governess or a maid there to see to it that these things are done, the children develop what I am going to call a self-contained attitude. The children reach the point where they think only of themselves, because no one else actually seems to care. Everything else is so formal, everything else is so routine. And so, the child is concerned for himself.

Why are the parents out of the home? The father goes off on a business trip on Monday and doesn't get back until Saturday. The mother has things to do and she is out of the home. She may work, and my sympathies would go with her when she has to do that. But even so, whether she has to do it or not, whether her reason for being away is valid and good, or whether it isn't, the fact remains she is out of the house. Often, when the children come home from school, there is no one of the immediate family at home to greet them. It may be there's a maid there to take care of them, or someone else to take care of them until the evening hour. Now this kind of thing works against the normal family relationship; it is hard for these people who are almost strangers to each other to enter into close personal fellowship.

Now another thing that really hinders normal family relationship is the lack of responsible activity. Children do not have specific things that need to be done. They are not trained in personal responsibility. There was a time so far as ordinary family life is concerned that the child would be given something to do. The child would be given an errand to run and would be expected to come back with the thing that he was sent for. The child would be given some responsibility to take care of and would be dealt with accordingly if he hadn't done it. In other words, the normal expectation of a home is that the parents will watch over the children, will tell them what to do and will expect to know from the children how things turned out. You and I know that in our day and time the average home has very little of this. And a boy or girl can grow up into their teens and get into high school without ever really being given an actual task that required faithfulness on their part, or precision on their part, or punctuality on their part. All they needed to do was to live in the home and just keep out of too much trouble. By contrast, in the traditional home to

which I have referred, the children would be out working. Whether they're working in the fields, whether they work in the yard, or whether they work in the kitchen, the children would be taking part in the normal life activities of the family.

Then there is the diminishing role of the parent. Who the father is and who the mother is seems to mean less and less in the average home. And why would this be so? Because almost every facet of human interest in the home is served by some professional, some specialist. For instance, how will little children stay healthy and well? We take them to a doctor and he advises us; we give them the formula he prescribes. And we do all kind of things in that way. As a matter of fact, so far as the children are concerned, we probably have pretty definite rules and regulations given to us by somebody else as to how to deal with them. So they get a little bit bigger and we have the matter of living with them, finding something for them to do, training them in obedience. And, so we send them to day school, and that will take me of them during that time. Or when they get a little bit bigger we have them join the Boy Scouts or the Girl Guides or the Brownies or the Cub Scouts, and in that way they will learn. It's true they'll learn. They will learn well. Later they will join the larger organizations, the newer organizations, joining in with a certain group of people. Even when it comes to learning things, they go to school and that's where they learn to read and write. Now the normal picture of a family anywhere in the world is that the children are to learn from the parents; they should start learning from the mother. But in the day and time in which we live we take these children, send them away from home, send them away from their parents and send them into groups in schools where they are being handled by somebody else. This is causing family life as a whole to diminish. It's getting shakier and shakier, with the result that the individual is left without the guidance that he really does need.

Now let's look at contemporary emphasis so far as culture itself is concerned. We know that if you train up a child the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it. Some people have gone on and from that have presumed that you can train a child to be a Christian. It is a popular note in Christian education theories today, implying that if you just bring up a child in a Christian home that child won't have to have a definite experience of conversion; he will just naturally grow up as a Christian. This can be a very dangerous line of thought, because you see the other side is true, too. If the parents were real Christians, and lived as Christians, the child would, early come to know the gospel and could be expected to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. All of that is true. But it is equally true that as the child grows up in a home that does not honor God, does not refer to God, does not pray to God, and is not actually studying His word, that child won't either. The very same principle that would help the Christian home to produce children that are ready to be Christians, helps the non-Christian home to produce children that are ready to be non-Christians.

The family as a whole should be involved in a program of worshipping God. They should take part in the public worship of God. That's why a young couple should immediately get into a church. Of course there is much more to worshipping than just going to church, but it will do for a start, because this matter of going to church is a very definite challenge.

Next in that young family there could be Bible reading. In this day and time, with so many confusing ideas around in the world, it's very important for a person to know what the Bible actually says, getting this kind of thing into one's heart and, soul, because it is solid and won't give way. And then there's the matter of prayer. I know there can be various levels of this. We can pray, as a gesture toward God, and we often pray as some kind of a rubber stamp on what we are doing. But I mean the kind of praying when we are going to praise God . . . and thank Him . . . and wait on Him. Finally, there's the matter of witnessing which can be taught in the home.

Yes, *for such a time as this*, with the home in a perilous situation and with so little influence and effect, God has a message to help us counteract the problem. The message is simple: give Him His rightful place as the head of every home, and through His word and in prayer, seek His will.

*Facing the challenges of our time in***Our Schools**

The school is basically a projection of the parents. It is a development of a sophisticated society, one which has had time to develop various degrees of learning and education. Now there are societies not like our own where the school is seen as a function of the state, and the government uses the school to prepare the children to be good citizens of the state. This of course lends itself to much abuse. But in our society the school is actually a projection of the parents, something that the parents have organized to continue their own function so far as the children are concerned.

Some years ago, while I was studying education in this country, I was very much interested in the fact that the great first American president, George Washington, refused to include a minister of education in the federal cabinet. He did not think that education was a function of the federal government. He said he felt that control of the schools should be as near as possible to the parents. He didn't even think that the state government should, control the schools. And, so our school system is based upon the idea that the actual control of the school is in a school board made up of people in the local community and elected by the parents themselves. The school board controls the school in its major policies. The state is an accrediting agency and they accredit the teachers, but in line with George Washington's own understanding about this we have had until now no officially designated federal interest in education. Thus, it is a sound notion to think that the schools are actually a projection of the home. In this way teachers are fundamentally and functionally deputy parents. Actually a teacher is doing well when acting as the parent would act and should act.

I am sure we all appreciate our schools and nothing that I am going to say is intended to be contrary to that. At the same time we know that our schools are the product of human beings and human ideas, and because we are interested in parents bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, I am going to draw your attention to some of the things about the school which create a problem and a challenge. I wonder if you realize that it is, after all, an artificial device. It is something that has been put together to set up learning situations. And, despite every effort to make the school as intelligent as possible, it is almost impossible for a school to achieve the purpose for which it was designed, or to meet the need it was intended to supply. I would call some of the problems almost insoluble, problems that are actually chronic in this whole idea of school.

First of all, you have the concentration of large numbers of the same age children in one limited room. Remember, the school is supposed to be a projection of the family. But you never yet saw a family in which there were thirty children, all six years of age. That's ridiculous. You don't have a family like that, one mother with thirty six-year-old children. And you wouldn't have thirty that were eight, nor twelve, nor fifteen, and so on. You would have various ages together. I am not saying this should be done in a school. All I am drawing to your attention is that the school room is artificial.

And then think of the teacher who is acting in the place of the parent. Would you agree with me that often times the teacher doesn't have any children of his or her own? Many times young people start teaching before they are married. And, even if they are married, there is no direct personal relation between the teacher and the pupil. You see, there is an absence here of the parent-child biological and psychological factors. That's not a home. That's not a family.

Now let's look a little bit more closely. In our system of public education we mix together all the children in the community that are within that school district – thirty of them in that one school room.

Perhaps there are thirty different families represented in this one school room. There's no chance of normal selection. The only selection is according to the neighborhood, so that if you have a school that's among the rich people, it will be one type of children, and if you have a school that's down in the mill village, it will be another type of children. I recognize that. Nevertheless, even the families in any one neighborhood are different from each other. And that means that the children get into a situation that's not like home at all. Among other things, they learn all kinds of un-homelike things from each other.

The curriculum is affected by this mixture of families. There are restrictions upon what we teach because of the claims of certain minority elements. You're not supposed to teach this because it will offend somebody. You're not supposed to teach that because it will offend somebody else. You're not supposed to teach the other thing because it will offend still another, with the result that the children spend most of the day in a situation that is carefully edited and controlled, and the whole of what is to be learned cannot be presented to the children in that place. Now this has some inevitable effects.

Take, for instance, the matter of morals. Now, of course, there won't be anything crude or vulgar permitted. It may go on, but it won't be permitted. We understand that. But my point is that so far as the school is concerned the customs of the whole community must be tolerated. That means that you cannot object to certain ways in which the boys and girls act. The teacher may exercise some control but, generally speaking, there will be a certain type of looseness there that wouldn't happen in the home. Couple this with the fact that social contact with all manner of persons is unavoidable.

I do not know how much grief is caused when boys and girls that come from one type of family are actually thrown in day after day and week after week and month after month and year after year with people who come from different family situations altogether. And don't tell me this thing doesn't make a difference. It will make a difference, despite the fact that some people will say, "Well, if the good, people are really strong it won't make any difference." But goodness doesn't work that way, as you probably know. That's a good deal like saying that you could have a garden in a certain situation and all around it you can have weeds and you wouldn't have any weeds in your garden. How ridiculous! If the weeds are in the community and they are in all the other gardens around yours, they'll be in your garden, because the seeds will fall there. This social contact is unavoidable – and, after an, our boys and girls can't be trained. to be snobbish. They are going to have to be in with those people, but let's face it, they cannot do everything everybody else does and come out where Christians want them to come out.

Now let me go further. There is the matter of corruption, and the lowering of ideals, the infection of strange notions, that will follow. The Christian parent faces a serious threat to his children, even at the level of unavoidable conditions, even when you have good teachers, and you have faithful teachers trying to do right. I don't see how you can possibly avoid this threat.

The group life is too artificial for it to be actually valid and it's too congested to be good. And the curriculum in our schools is definitely secular. You can't bring anything into the public school that has any kind of religious flavor to it at all. So you say, "Well, you can train them at home." How realistic is that? Do you have a family and do you have children going to school? How much time do you have with them at home? If the children are small, generally speaking, when they come home from school they are pretty well tired out and if they are older when they come home from school they have a lot of homework to do. And they have school activities to participate in, and they have young people's activities of various kinds. In the school room itself, where they are going through with their regular education, they can learn all kinds of things but they are to learn nothing about God, and nothing about the Bible. And this, I am going to tell you, is definitely stifling to Christian hearts. And yet that's the situation in our public schools today.

Then take the atmosphere of the schools, just the way in which the school itself is conducted. It cannot be a Christian atmosphere. Once in awhile you have a real Christian teacher, one who is able to do a great deal and we should thank God for him. And wherever there is a real Christian who is teaching in the school, we just should encourage and help such a man or woman in whatever way we possibly can.

But they themselves will tell you that they can't act out their Christian principles. They cannot follow through with their Christian ideas, because there will be people in that schoolroom that are not Christians. Some of them belong to religions other than Christian and, a good many of them are not religious at all. In our country they have the law on their side and can actually claim that they shouldn't be taught anything Christian.

Now ostensibly the pattern of the atmosphere is supposed to be American, and yet you know it's not true to Americans. What does the word *American* mean? Do you mean the old time Americans? Well, I'll tell you, the old time Americans were the kind of people that put on their coins "In God, we trust." Consider our pledge of allegiance as we salute the flag; it originated with people who believed in God. And that is the real American. But you can't be that way in the school today. On the other hand, there is one thing you can reveal yourself to be in the schools today and that is an agnostic, one who says he just doesn't know. Maybe this isn't so bad in the grammar schools. It is perhaps not so bad, in the little grade school, because there the children are still pretty close to home. But when you get into junior high school and you move, on up into senior high school and you get into College (and that's school too) you will find that agnosticism rules. In fact, people are frowned upon if they claim that they really know anything.

Now let's consider the teachers that we have, and we will allow for the fact that some of them are real good people – earnest, sincere people. But remember this: just because a person is going to be a teacher in a school doesn't mean that he suddenly becomes an angel. Just because you get a job teaching you don't have angel wings. You're still just exactly the kind of young man or young woman that you were before you started teaching in that school. A teacher may have high ideals and may accept the responsibilities of the situation, but if you take our teachers you will find they went to teachers' colleges. Have you ever been to a teachers' college? Do you know what they teach there? I'll tell you, because I studied there. I took my degrees there. So I'll tell you what it is. Teachers are trained in a secular tradition. Everything is based on the human nature aspect and training is in an agnostic mood. They are not supposed to make up their minds definitely about anything that has to do with cultural nature. They are to be fluid. They are supposed to be ready to be improved and they are supposed to come out better than they were. The new is supposed, to be better than the old. I'll tell you another thing. They are trained in what we call the liberal view of human nature. They are supposed to think everybody can be improved and one cannot help but feel sympathy for that. Certainly when you have a teacher you'd like to think that the teacher is going to try and help the boy or girl to be the best they can. But we Christian people know that it is impossible to change or improve the human nature except by being born again. Don't we know that? Don't we know that no human being can of himself or herself become acceptable and righteous in the sight of God? Now mind you, as people get older, they learn things. They become skillful. They become technically trained and they can become academically trained and they can become intellectually trained and equipped in various ways. But so far as their natures are concerned, who in the world is going to say that just because people get to go to college they are therefore going to be good? And who would say that because you are in high school four years that each year you got better. And that when you entered college each year you were in college you were a better person. Who is going to say that? You know that wouldn't be sensible. And yet the whole theory is along the line that you can improve these human beings by giving them a chance to go ahead. and. learn what there is in the world, and they'll just naturally be better. True, they probably improve culturally, but culture and basic nature are two different things.

I haven't dwelt on specific subjects that are taught and on the philosophy – and I am not going to, because many people will misunderstand my emphasis along this line. But I can tell you right now that you will very seldom ever find the Bible referred to as having any authority and you'll very seldom find it referred to as having come from God. It will be presented as a human book; and if you do have it and read it, it will be like literature.

Referring again to the matter of morals in our total overall school program (and I don't mean our

grammar school, but high school and college), you know perfectly well that the mode of conduct must be general. It must be acceptable to the great mass of people. If you have three thousand, five thousand, eight thousand, students on a university campus, what do you think is going to be done so far as their individual personal lives are concerned? Do you think anybody is going to care? You know better than that. They won't care, except that there is going to be a general tendency and a real stubborn effort to make sure that nobody insists on being good and nobody insists on being righteous. Everything must be left loose and open and free so that each can do as he sees fit. Now our young people don't have to be like that but they've got a problem in trying to go against this situation day after day.

Now we parents may just as well accept these facts. This is part of the conditions that we have to face in the world, but that doesn't mean we don't have to be aware of it. Just because it's in the world doesn't mean we shouldn't think of it. Suppose that you and I should happen to live near a lake and we should occasionally go out boating on the lake. You and I will learn very early that that water in the lake will drown the child. Wouldn't we learn that? And if we lived in the mountains, wouldn't we understand that falling off a cliff would break bones? Certainly we would. And, if we lived, in the woods, wouldn't we understand that a person could get lost in those woods? If we should live away up in the north in the cold country, don't you think we would understand that a person could freeze to death? Or perhaps we live in a real hot climate, or perhaps where there are tornadoes and so on. In each situation don't you think that we would take steps to guard against those things? Certainly we would.

And so, in the school situation, which is real and which we must face, what can we do? What can the Christian home do? I have several definite suggestions, but Christian families must be alert. Christian parents have got to work at it. The sooner you start, the better. Start before your children even know where they're going.

First off, see to it that your children in your home worship God. I tell you one thing a Christian parent should do is to see to it that his child is brought into the public worship of God. See to it that they go to a Sunday School that teaches them the Bible. See to it that they go to a church where the minister believes the Bible. And see to it that they are in young people's work where there is a real interest in personal relationship with God. Worship God in sincerity and truth. And in your home, have Bible reading. Have prayer. Let me say to any one who is a father that it is a dangerous world these young people are going into; but I can tell you one thing . . . a boy would have a marvelous equipment for the world if he had a father who prayed. Just you think that over.

Now, the second thing I would say is *study* the Bible. I mean actually *read* the Bible. If your children are already growing up, get them to help you if you can. But if you're just starting a family and you have little children, let them see you reading the Bible. Make it a point to read it. Not only let them see it, but let them hear it so that they can get used to the idea and let the children grow up with this knowledge – that teachers may not be able to do it in school, other people may not be able to do it elsewhere, but in my home, my father and my mother believe the Bible is the Word of God.

Next, make prayer a regular practice in your house. Not only because you pray for the children, not only because they would be helped if you prayed for them, but they should see you pray. They should share in prayer. Let the reality of God come into your family because you have family worship.

And finally, witness for God. Somehow let your light shine. Ask people to come to church. Ask people to come to Sunday School. Ask people to come to Young People's. Take part in this business.

I tell you, we're up against it. It's not easy. But, it's especially hard for the children, and if they don't have any kind of Christian home life, they're just as good as gone. You and I and the home must keep the fire burning brightly because of the very situation our children have to face. We're thankful to God for the many blessings we have in our country, thankful to God for many favors that are amongst us, but let us not be foolish enough to ignore the perils and the dangers that there are amongst us now. We need the Lord, and we can find His guidance in this way . . . if we worship Him, read His word, pray and witness to

His grace and mercy.

*Facing the challenges of our time in***Our Churches**

Christians would ordinarily expect the fellowship of other Christians to be a real help to them, and this is what we would look for in our churches. When a Christian person comes into a congregation of Christian people he expects that being with these people would be a real help to him . . . and we all need help. Living by faith in this world today is not a simple matter. To make decisions and to make choices here and now in this world, on the basis of that which is unseen and that which is future demands an inner strength of conviction. We need faith to be able to live that way. And our faith needs to grow and be strong.

In matters of faith it is true, as it is in other patterns of living, that it is not good for a man to be alone. We need to be in fellowship with other believing people. This was especially true in the early church. We can open up the book of Acts to the second chapter and there we can find out what a blessing it was in the early church for them to be together. Look at Acts 2:41 and notice the things that happened in this early church. Just think to yourself, if you had been there, what a blessing this would have been to you.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized." That means to say that the preaching was of the Word of God and that listening to it you could receive the Word of God. and become one of God's own people. "And the same day there were added, unto them about three thousand souls." What an inspiring, thrilling thing it must have been to have hundreds upon hundreds of people come forward to confess their faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ! And what a blessing to be in a congregation where people step out and indicate that now they believe in Jesus Christ. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. . . ."

I can see that these people got together and listened to the teaching and they shared in the fellowship with the apostles, with the leading preachers. And they shared in breaking of bread and in prayers. This they continued steadfastly, and all the people kept coming – large numbers of the people coming together. What a thrill it must have been to be in with a company of people like that, "And fear came upon every soul." And then I remember that this word *fear* is not that they were frightened in any slavish sense, as if they were afraid something bad was going to happen to them, but they stood in awe and reverence. Their hearts were humbled before God. And every soul was deeply affected. Fear came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. Their preachers led them on to real victories of faith that were remarkable to be seen. What that would do to people! "And all that believed were together and had all things common." What a fellowship there was among those Christian people. They "sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men as every man had need." To be in a congregation where all the members thought about each other and the people who had means shared with the people who didn't have, so that they altogether could be like brethren. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house . . ." meant that they went every day to the temple in public worship. And every day they visited with each other in cottage meetings, in prayer meetings from house to house, and they "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." There was a joy and sincerity throughout the whole congregation, "Praising God and having favor with all the people." You know, the whole community would appreciate a church like that, and this is what happened here. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as were being saved." New people being added to it over and over and over again. That's the way it was to be, and can you think what a thrill it

would be to belong to a congregation like that? Oftentimes today I think what a sad experience it is for so many people to live in a community where none of these things happen in the church. Most of us have a church and they do meet on Sunday morning perhaps for a preaching service and there is preaching going on, but scarcely anybody is any different now than they were before. All the people that belonged still belong. Nobody else joins. All the people that used to go to church now go to church. No new person comes. It's so different from the early church. This ought not to be.

When you go to church today and a man steps up in the pulpit who is a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ, would you not expect that the preaching should present Christ Jesus with power? Shouldn't that man up there really talk about the Lord Jesus Christ as if he knew Him? And should he not be able to so preach about the Lord Jesus Christ that you would know it's true and you would be inclined to put more faith in Him than you ever did. before? Should it not be like that? And when you go to Sunday School or to the Men's Bible Class or the Women's Bible Class, or to the young people's meeting, shouldn't the teaching establish you in your faith in Christ, and shouldn't it enrich you in your faith in Christ? And shouldn't it develop you so that you know more and more about your faith in Christ? Am I not right in thinking that if you went to a Christian church, or if a young person coming out of a college classroom and having attended college classes all week long, should go to a Christian church on Sunday, should that not be a place where doubts would be dispelled and where faith would be nurtured? Wouldn't it be that when you walk into that church building you will find yourself strengthened in the things of the Lord? And then again, in that church, should you not hear testimony of blessing received from the living Lord? Ought one not to hear people get up and testify to the effect that "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and delivered him out of all his trouble"? Doesn't the Scripture say to Christians, "Ye shall be witnesses unto me"?

Consider how many of us have to live – day in and day out – downtown in an office, or in some way mingled in with other people. We know that over half the people in our community do not go to church. More than half the people make no profession of faith, and commonly speaking, when you're in your daily round of duty, you're with people who are indifferent to the things of the gospel. They're unsympathetic about the things of the soul. Isn't it true that there are questions raised about the Bible and about God and about the gospel and about being born again and about the Holy Spirit? There are questions about heaven, questions about hell, questions about the truth of the authority of the Scripture. These can disturb a Christian and unsettle a Christian. Should a Christian in the church find, comfort about these things? Shouldn't it be that inside that church there will be encouragement to believe? And shouldn't you there find strength? Now I have raised these questions with you because this is what our churches are about. This is what they ought to do. This is what we have a right to expect, and if you have a brother or a sister, or a son or a daughter that is not interested in church, not active in church, or somehow is wayward, about the things of the gospel, and if you could get them to go to a Christian church, wouldn't you want them to find something along the line that I have just described?

But now what is the actual situation in our churches today? And I am not going to refer particularly to my denomination or to your denomination, but to churches as a whole as you know them. What does the bewildered soul find when that person – man or woman – goes and sits in a church auditorium? What does the heart find when it comes to church? What about the burdened soul that comes to church? What does he actually find?

Of course there would be no church service at all if it were not for the pulpit. You must look at the preacher. After all, he is the center of the whole thing. I have no pleasure in pointing my finger at the preacher, and I'm not going to indict him, because I do not want to condemn him, but because of the people I must ask some questions. So let me ask you to consider his attitude toward the Bible. How does he use the Bible? What does he look into the Bible for? Does he actually step up there and open the book and show you what God had written in there for you.

What about the subject matter of his sermons? How many times when you go into that church and you sit down and listen do you hear about Jesus Christ – about what He has done for you – about what He is doing for you now – about what He is going to do for you? You know we call it the gospel of Jesus Christ. What do you hear about the Lord, Jesus Christ in that church? We are not going to condemn the preacher, we are just going to understand the situation. That's where your children go to church. That's where your friends go to church. That's where your family goes to church.

How many times do you hear about sin? The reality of sin? The forgiveness of sin? The confession of sin? Do you hear these things? How often do you hear about heaven? What does that preacher have to say about heaven? Do you think that preacher really believes in heaven? Don't you think it will make a difference to the people sitting in the pews? What about grace? Is that just another word? Or do you know the meaning of that word? What is the meaning of grace? What is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do you hear about it from the preacher? Does he give you to understand that God will do something for you that you don't deserve?

Now, what about prayer? How often does that preacher talk about prayer? How does he actually help you in the matter of prayer? Does he explain it? Does he show you how to do it? Does he talk about the importance of it? Would you get the impression that if you were in real trouble you could come to pray and have something actually happen? What about the Holy Spirit? Does the preacher talk about the reality of the Holy Spirit? The person of the Holy Spirit? The work of the Holy Spirit? What about the resurrection from the dead? What about going to heaven? What about the judgment before God? What influence does the pulpit have on your heart and mind and soul?

Let us look at the congregation. What about the significance of uniting with that church? What does it mean to newcomers to unite with your congregation? How many people know what it means to belong to the congregation? And incidentally how can they know? Who ever talks about it? Are they just getting their name on the church roll so they can have material sent to them by mail? And so they can be asked to help promote the church? What about the interest in spiritual things? In your congregation what would you say about whether anybody cares for your soul? Is there someone in that congregation who actually cares about your spiritual condition? How long has it been since anyone has come to you and looking at you straightforward as a friend, face to face and eye to eye, has asked you how it is with your soul? Or have you talked with someone else about their soul? Or have you talked about the Lord Jesus Christ?

Now let's think about the Bible and the use of the Bible in the congregation. What about growing in faith and knowing more about the Word of God? Who in your congregation makes plans about that and tries to help you in it? What is being done in your congregation to insure that people will grow in the Word of God? So far as your Sunday School is concerned, what's going on in the Sunday School classes, in your own class or in any other class that will help you understand what the Bible really means? Do you talk about those things? In the young people's work, how much are the young people of your church being taught about belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ? Do the people who lead your young people's work believe in being born again? Do they believe in young people actually having a new life in Christ Jesus? Do they believe in receiving the Holy Spirit? Are your young people taught about how to pray and how to draw nigh unto God in prayer?

How about the women of the church, so far as your women's meetings are concerned, how much time do they spend actually getting nearer to God? I am so thankful we have so many churches where much is being done. Maybe it's being done in your church. You give thanks to God for it. But if you have a congregation that has in it fifty women, or a hundred women, or twenty-five women, or two hundred women, how many of them come to the women's meetings? Forty? Fifty? Sixty? What about the other hundred or more? Whoever does anything about them? Does anybody ever care about them? As far as your men's meetings are concerned, what do they talk about? What is the program of these men's

meetings? Now mind you, there are some wonderful exceptions along this line. There are places where things are being done in a marvelous way, but is this the case in your church? And are these things being done ordinarily?

Now again, let's go into the congregation as a whole. So far as praying is concerned, is there a prayer meeting? How many of the congregation come to the prayer meeting? Is prayer actually being employed as a way of getting things done? Who thinks about this? Now mind you what I am talking about is the churches – the churches that you and I live in. These churches are people who come together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are talking about faith. We are talking about growing in faith and in knowledge. I am thinking about your living by faith, and I am raising the question with you. What are the conditions in your local church meetings? How do they help you? Whatever the situation might be, it affects you. You have to live in there. Now suppose you live in a congregation where there's no praying going on. (I mean they don't call upon anyone really to meet for prayer.) They have problems come up. They discuss them in various ways, but they just do not actually believe in getting anything done by way of prayer. If that should be the case, do you realize what a terrific situation that creates for you and that the tendency is that you won't think about prayer either?

We have some churches where men gather from time to time for prayer and they actually pray. We have places where women have special prayer meetings. We have places where young people meet in prayer meetings. We have Sunday Schools where teachers meet periodically for prayer meetings, and the teachers pray with each other for their classes. That kind of thing. But is it common to have this happen?

Let's take the actual matter of the worship of God in your congregation. I don't know what it's like in your congregation. Would you know that so far as our country as a whole is concerned that a congregation considers itself to be a very strong congregation if about forty percent of the members come to church? That means two out of five. But if a congregation has two hundred members, and they get forty or fifty out to a church service, they still think they are doing pretty well. If they have two thousand members and they get five hundred people out to a church meeting, they feel they are doing pretty well. That's about twenty-five percent of the people. If you had a thousand members and you have four hundred, or five hundred people out, you'd have half the people out – and you would have a really strong church, the way people go. Now that has an effect upon you.

Consider the Lord's Supper. How is it dealt with? Do people really think about meeting with the Lord there? And how does your church keep Sunday? What do they think about on the Sabbath Day? Is it the Lord's Day? And so far as supporting the church is concerned, do they think that everybody should share with a tithe or something like that? And again, so far as witnessing for the church is concerned, so far as your congregation is concerned, how many people actually plan to bring anyone with them next Sunday, bring some new member to the church next Sunday?

As I have raised these questions I haven't felt any happiness about it. Perhaps you have reason to be happy to think that you've got a congregation that would measure up very well. But here's my point that I want to share with you. Suppose that you were in a situation and you belonged to a congregation that did not measure up on these things? Then what would you do? Would you just quit? Let me suggest some things to you that a Christian could do for himself, and a Christian could do for his family, regardless of what anybody else in your congregation does.

You could lay it down as a rule that so far as you are concerned you are going to worship God. "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." I mean that on Sunday if there is a Sunday School you get up and go to it. Go to it on time. Take part in that Sunday School service. Take your children to it. Go there yourself and try to learn something about the things of the Lord. In the church service, every time that church is open for public worship, you be there. You take your family there. If they have a prayer meeting, you go to it. If they have two services on Sunday, you go to both of them. You just make it a rule to publicly worship Almighty God. And every time your church gathers around for any kind of meeting

you be present at it. So that's the first thing I would say: worship God. Make the whole day of Sunday a spiritual tribute to God. You can actually conduct yourself in such a way on Sunday that it is all a portion of your worship of God. And do it with your money. Make sure that you set some of it aside and you give some definitely to the Lord. Let it be a clearly understood thing that so far as you are concerned you believe in God. You want to honor Him. You want to worship Him.

The second thing you can do is read, your Bible. Read and study your Bible. Get in with other people who are reading and studying the Bible. Join a Bible class. Perhaps you can have cottage Bible study class. Maybe you can go in with some of the neighbors and have Bible study from time to time. Maybe you can get yourselves together to actually do this in Bible study, or maybe if some one of your friends have a tape recorder you can get some tape recordings on Bible study. We have such recordings available. If you write to me we can share them with you. You can have a regular series of meetings where you meet in people's homes and listen to Bible studies.

A third thing I am going to suggest to you is that you pray. Make it a matter to pray regularly. Pray in your home. Pray with your family. Pray privately and personally. Pray for the church. Pray for the mission work. Pray and pray and pray. The people who honor God, God will honor.

And finally, be a witness, even if it only means taking someone to church with you. Bring somebody to the Sunday School with you. Bring somebody to the prayer meeting with you. Join in with other people in the worship service of God. Regardless of what anybody else does, as for you and your house, you make it a point to walk with the Lord, and He will bless you.

*Facing the challenges of our time in*

## **Our Colleges**

In John 15:18-21, this is what the Lord has to say to His disciples: "If the world hate you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." In these words, the Lord Jesus prepared His disciples to expect that so far as their reception and their general treatment in the world was concerned they would be treated with a certain amount of hostility.

This comes to our mind concerning Christians who are on college campuses. But remember this – that just because it's a college doesn't change the fact that the people there are all human beings. That was what was the matter in the home. Homes are primarily human fellowship, and therefore subject to all manner of evil influences. The same is true with reference to our schools. Our schools are what they are because they are human institutions and they are carried on at the human level. The same is true with reference to our churches. Actually far more than we want to admit, much of what goes on in the churches is on a human level and has all the human characteristics. And now we come to the matter of college.

If there is any one place where you would find human nature rampant and where everything would be done on a human level, I can tell you it would be on a college campus. Here Christians live among these people as Christians live in this world. Now we remember that Christians are to be in this world. The Lord Jesus came to this world, and the Lord Jesus said to His disciples that they were to be the salt of the earth. They were to be the light of the world. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself lived in the world. He witnessed to the world, and the world killed Him. Christians live in this world. They are not understood by the world. Often they are persecuted by the world. go often the church itself, right in our own congregation, does not recognize the distressing experience which believers have because they are Christians, who have no other blemish than this one thing that they are interested in and they regard the things of the Lord.

Perhaps there is no situation that shows this clash between human nature and the things of the gospel as clearly as is seen in our colleges. And in that connection we do well to just reflect that the very nature of college work emphasizes things along this line. You know perfectly well that when anyone thinks about going to college they think about improving themselves. Now notice what we said: it is *themselves* that they are going to improve. The young person going to college is going to make something out of himself or herself. Not only that, but some people go to college in order to rise in people's esteem. They want to be thought of more highly than they would be otherwise, and they will be more highly regarded if they go to college. So, of course, going to college has to do with personal stature, with personal standing. It has to do with the things that pertain to one's self and you can become very sensitive to make real sure that everybody thinks you're just all right.

Now that's one reason why in college the tendency to go with the crowd and the tendency to do what other people do is so strong. After all, the young fellow went to college to make something of himself and one of the ways he can make something of himself is to be one of the fellows, to be one of the gang. The young girl went to college to make something of herself, and if she is going to make something of herself she is going to have to be well thought of. People are going to need to be attracted to

her. They will need to want to have her around, and she would count it a good week if during that week she had been invited to various functions and to various associations with different people. That would show that people were noticing her and wanted her, and this is very normal. When you put all that together you will find that college life is an experience that just stresses personal human interest of one sort and another.

Then, also, college work promotes self confidence. People go to college in order that they may be more sure of themselves. Did you notice how the word self comes in over and over and over again. Very normal. Very ordinary. And it happens in every college you can think of, but especially in colleges that are not carefully and thoughtfully committed to the Christian approach. And most colleges are not.

College life and college thought dwells on and particularly approves what we call the liberal view of man, and what we mean by the liberal view of man is something like the generous view of man. For instance, the kind of person who thinks that human beings can be improved; that human beings can be improved more and more and more. There's no limit to how good a man can be if he just puts his mind to it, and that makes you feel sort of kindly toward people, because no matter where they are on the scale you say to yourself, "He could be better. He could improve himself." And this is the idea that the college life is given over to, despite the fact that among college students you have sin and you have failures. You have personality problems just as much as you have anywhere. In spite of that fact, there's a widespread common acceptance of the idea that anybody there can make out of himself something better than he is now if he just puts his mind to it. This process of thinking goes hand in hand with a critical view of the Bible. The Bible is not taken literally. The Scriptures are not accepted as they read, and there is a feeling that there is something more to be known, something which would prove that less is true than the Scriptures themselves would have you believe. And that's common again to college campuses.

Then also there is the natural view of life. The biological view and the physiological view and the sociological view and the psychological view are the kind of things that are brought out, the kind of things that human nature could do. And you can tell it's that way because in many of our colleges anybody can get along in a given college that puts his mind to it according to their pattern, regardless of his religious convictions. You don't need to be a Christian. It doesn't make any difference if you are not a Christian; if you will do the things they want you to do (which you could do if you wanted to), why then you would be counted just fine with them. It's a natural view of life.

Let's look at the very nature of college work. It is such that it emphasizes popular approval of everything modern. It is always looking for something new because that, of course, is a tribute to the inventiveness of mankind. Man's originality and ingenuity is revealed in having something new and modern, so any college would like to stress that its students can look forward to those things.

Self improvement, self esteem, self confidence, the liberal view of man, the critical view of the Scriptures, the natural view of life, the popular approval of everything modern. . . . take all those things together and they predominate in the thinking on the college campus. Secular values are esteemed. For every one of us, let me tell you what I mean by secular. It would be considered to be very important that a person should have money, because money would make a person rich, and if you were rich you would have many of your problems solved. It would also be very important that you should marry into a good family. There are many other things along the same line. The secular values are the values that you could recognize in this world; they are not particularly related to your obedience to God. They have to do with your seeking your own welfare and the welfare of your family.

Another thing that's very common in college life is that personal matters are discounted. Ordinarily, if you go in with a crowd of young people in college life and work, it's almost a shock to find any who show that they have any personal feelings. And if occasionally you find one of them in tears, you wonder what strange thing this is. Or if you find one of them suffering from heartbreak, you wonder about that. When one of the boys gets all tangled up in a confusion because he doesn't know for sure what he

ought to be doing, we say he's just a misfit . . . he just didn't count . . . because we discount personal problems.

There are several natural aspects about college life that could serve as a warning. College life is not nearly as promising as it sounds on the surface. Parents save their money and make all their plans and, deny themselves things to get up the money necessary to send a boy or girl to college. For the most part I'm sure they don't realize what they might be sending the young people into. I'm not real sure but what they have to go, but it is not going to be nearly the way the parents think it is.

Remember, when you think of an average college where you have hundreds and thousands of students, the great majority of those students are young and inexperienced in responsibility, hundreds and hundreds of these students are together in a great big crowd scene and probably not one of them has to pay the rent. Probably not one of them has to actually provide his or her own clothing. There may be a few here and there that work, but the great majority of the crowd, even, if they work on scholarship awards and things like that, actually are there because other people have made it possible . . . not because they have had any experience in responsibility. I can tell you right now that the students who have experience in responsibility won't be in the crowd. They will likely be in their room studying, or they'll be occupied in some other way; because they can't afford to take time out to hang around with the bunch. But consider the boys and girls who are there because the parents pay their way . . . in their youth and in their inexperience they have all kinds of ideas that prevail amongst them – even though they may be sincere and earnest and honest.

Another thing you want to remember about these college students is, normally speaking, you could take them all round the world and they still would have a tendency to be irresponsible. Why? Because they are not related to the reality of life's affairs. And even in the colleges themselves we must constantly remind the students to be very careful about rules and regulations. But outside, so far as the student's relation to his family is concerned (or to his neighbors at home, or to the younger people in his community, who remember that this older person went off to college), it is ignored in college life. In fact, the whole idea of the individual's relation to society is largely bypassed so far as college life is concerned. So now you have this great mass of people who are young and inexperienced, and they really are not responsible to anybody in their personal daily conduct.

Another thing to keep in mind about college students is that most of them are away from home, whatever that may mean to them. If they have parents and have previously lived at home, they are no longer at home that way. If they have been on their own and if they have had their own personal group relationships elsewhere, they leave those to come to college; thus, they are away from home in that sense. And that means that in their thinking and in their consciousness, they are without the balance that comes when you have a consensus of opinion of the family as a whole. The boy or girl of college age who has lived at home probably has uncles and aunts and cousins and friends and neighbors – all of whom have ideas of how to live – older people and younger people who surround him or her and help give some guidance and some balance to the individual's judgment. But in the college student body there are no old people. Boys are in with five hundred other boys, but you don't have five hundred fathers. And you don't have five hundred mothers around. You don't have a thousand uncles or aunts around. You don't have five hundred younger brothers or sisters, or a thousand younger brothers or sisters. You don't have a thousand neighbors or ten thousand neighbors around. You don't have the normal situation that helps these college young people keep oriented in, life. You have them off by themselves under circumstances that are artificial. They can get ideas that are one sided. They can get ideas that don't have any balance, don't have any bottom to them, and they do get these ideas as history very well proves.

It is normal for us to say that college students are idealistic. This doesn't mean necessarily that they do things that are good, and that they're ideal. All I'm saying is that they develop their own notions and their own standards and their own patterns apart from realistic consequences: their ideas don't have to pay

off. The young people are still in school and as such they can think what they want to; and they develop their ideas along this line. Now all of this would be true of college life anyway. Mind you it would be true any time, any place you have a group of people together who are living in college the way we live here in America. But in our day and time there are some additional things, some unique things we need to recognize.

First of all, the number of people going to college is not going to be less. The percentage of the people in the community who go to college is not going to decrease. It is going to increase. More and more young people must go to college. I sometimes think that going to college today is about the same as going to high school was in my boyhood days. In my boyhood days it was a rare boy who went to high school and today it's not even, a rare boy that goes to college. In fact it's pretty ordinary. Most boys and girls going through high school expect to go on to college. It is almost necessary if they want to find work. It is likely that most of the young people in your church will go and most of the young people that your young people grow up with will go. College life is unavoidable for many American young people.

The second thing I want to comment on is that in any college anywhere there is a common intellectual atmosphere. All aspects of life are treated in an impersonal way. They are understood as viewed from a human point of view. Things of home, of parents, of family, are largely ignored. Those are personal and the group doesn't talk about it. Personal standards and values are ignored. They are your own peculiarities. And the group doesn't go into those. When matters of faith and spiritual experience are brought up this is submitted to the opinion of authorities. The students are referred to books on the subject or they listen to people on the subject, and it affects them. Here is a college student who in his teens has had a very personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. So he goes to college where all of this is discussed. His faith is analyzed. His attitude toward the Lord is analyzed. His motivation in serving Him is analyzed. And by the time all these things are analyzed in an impersonal way, the general result is that the boy or girl doesn't have it any more. That happens over and over and over again, and it's one of the dangers of an intellectual approach.

Another common condition that is closely allied with the intellectual approach is the agnostic frame of mind. It becomes popular to say, "I don't know." Or to say, "We do not really know." Or to think of someone else, "You do not really know." Everything that we're supposed to know is suspect. We're encouraged to think that our ideas may not be true . . . probably aren't true. That's the way we're made to feel. It is considered naive to hold definite ideas. And what makes this so bad is that so often the ideas which the young people bring to college with them are basically the ideas of their parents. They accept them from their parents. That doesn't make the ideas wrong. But the young people have not personally tested them out. Then, in college they meet the challenge that they should examine themselves, and honest self-examination oftentimes reveals so little personal conviction. And so you have this young person saying, "Well I don't really know what I believe." Yet, just three or four weeks before they would, have felt fairly sure of what they believed because it was what their parents believed.

I can hear someone saying, "Isn't it good for young people to find things out for themselves? They shouldn't take anything for granted just because their parents believe it." Shouldn't they? Isn't that the way in which you learn about food? Isn't that the way in which you learn about conduct? What in the world gives a boy the idea he ought to wear a tie? And why should young people ever wear shoes? And why should we observe all the procedures and principles of etiquette and courtesy and decency and politeness? Do you think children work those things out? They certainly don't. They receive these ideas from their parents.

This whole notion that something isn't true for you until you have experienced it, is just as foolish as to say that, although your parents said strychnine was poison, you don't really know because you have never tasted it. So you should, taste strychnine in order for you to find out for sure that it is poison. Now I can tell you one thing. You'll sure enough find out that the poison is poison. But it will be the last thing

you'll ever find out. In other words, it's far too expensive an experience. It would make far more sense and be far more intelligent for a person to learn from the findings of other people. Our young people can do that too, and they could be encouraged to do that in college.

Closely connected with the doubting attitude is a popular critical tone and emphasis. There is a tremendous strategic advantage in the intellectual attitude of the skeptic. It enables a questioning mood or suspicious mood to prevail on the campus. And that is combined with a natural tendency and temptation in human beings toward what we call exhibitionism. In plain words, people like to show off. Even faculty members do. And so you find a faculty member who doesn't believe, and usually he has a rationale, an argument figured out as to why he is not a believer. And there's a big temptation for him to show off. So he shows off his unbelief in some sarcastic or what he thinks is a brilliant way. This kind of thing has a terrific impact upon the students because they have no way of balancing it. There may be a few private colleges that are definite exceptions to this rule, where the professors actually accept responsibility to show their faith and indicate it to the students, but these few colleges are derided by colleges as a whole.

Now these schools of intellectualism train our doctors, lawyers, bankers, business men, preachers and others who boast of a college education. And remember that our teachers are college trained – the people who teach our young people, trained in this very atmosphere that I have been describing. As a matter of fact, the general run of public thinking anyway is affected by college men, whether they are teachers or not, so that the next generation is actually going to be affected by those who are in college now. These intelligentia pitch the key for public thought and, people as a whole follow them in their opinion.

No doubt you wonder what can be done. Well, the answer is the same as in every other situation where men rebel against God. We ought to encourage each other faithfully to worship God. Make the matter of church affiliation, attention, attendance, participation and all elements of your church life open and real. Worship God. Read the Bible. Study the Bible. Get to know what is in the Bible. Pray. Really believe in God. Exercise your faith. And witness. Openly confess that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and do this as never before. There is no other way I know that we can help the young people who are actually on the college campus than to encourage them to follow in this way.

*Facing the challenges of our time in***Public Opinion**

*For such a time as this* in the face of public opinion, what should a Christian do? I wonder if we ordinarily realize how much we are affected in our thinking by what other people say they think . . . by public opinion. We may not accept their conclusions. We may not even join them nor agree with them in their line of thinking, but what they say about things affects our own attitude. What they say about people and what they say about events affects us. It does not necessarily affect us in the sense that we agree with them. It may distract us or may make us stronger than ever in our determination to hold to the view that we have.

When you're reading in the book of Acts in the seventeenth chapter, the twenty-first verse, you will read there this record with reference to the people at Athens: "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Doesn't that sound like our day and age? It just seems to me that what it takes to get attention is to have some new thing. As I read the newspapers and the magazines, watch the billboards, just see things in general, it seems that as a whole our society of people favors any change from what was established before. Any change from the past seems to be good. Novelty is the order of the day. Let's be different. We've got to have a new model. And this goes all the way through. It pertains to everything – from cars to dresses, and from personal conduct to home life. It's the difference in the way in which you work and the difference in the way in which you spend your money the difference in the way in which you spend your vacations . . . everything. We are always looking for some new way of doing things. It's almost pathetic at times to see how often the new, if it's untried and unproved, is preferred before the tested and known. And we reject that which we know about and which we know is true, because it's old. We always want something new. And I'm not going to take time to try to account for this. I think there are various ways of understanding it. Doubtless, changing circumstances and new inventions have definitely opened our thinking along these lines. It is enough at this point just to say that we are living among people and in a public, where, if anything is new, and if it is different, we are inclined to favor it. It is almost as if we had lost confidence in anything that is past and anything that has been done before.

Now, there's a second general condition and circumstance that I find, and I wonder if you will agree with me about this: we are living among a people and in a public that will resist any kind of supervision or control. We just don't want to be restrained. Some years ago we used to sing a song, "Don't fence me in." And that seemed to be such an expression of the average person's feeling. One of the problems we have today in the public school is that the society people who are parents do not want to give teachers the right to discipline the children; we just don't want it done. And in our homes it would appear we just don't want to exercise discipline. With children we just want to exercise direction. For instance, how far do you think you would get in an ordinary community if there was to be instituted such a thing as curfew? At eleven o'clock at night all young people are to be off of the streets. How far do you think you would get with it? Or when young people go out, what if we made them go back to the idea of taking a chaperone along? What do you think about that? Don't you think that it would be a good idea? Do you think really and truly it would do any harm? But what do you think would happen in our day and time if you were to suggest it? You can see that we are in a day when we just couldn't stand such a thing . . . nor any other restrictions. Young people don't want to be told where they can go or where they can't go. They don't want to hear that.

Consider the idea of exercising control over our colleges. I wonder what the general public attitude would be if you heard, that the Board of Directors was going to specify what the faculty could teach or couldn't teach. Can you imagine the furor that would go up? Some of us have seen this upheaval in instances where the state owned certain institutions and would undertake to say that professors in that institution could not teach certain things or could not use certain textbooks. Why there was a furor that went to the very top of our whole society! And all kinds of pressure was brought to bear on those universities and on those colleges, to the extent of discrediting them, because there was an attempt at control by the government that owned, them and supported them. Whether the control would have been good or bad is beside the point at this moment. Instead I want to tell you that any number of people resisted that control without any idea what it was all about except one thing – they did, not want to be restricted from doing anything that they wanted to do.

Or, take our movies for instance. What do you think about censorship? Haven't you heard some of the most eloquent talks against anything like censorship? These people make money out of the moving pictures and they make money out of their theatres and things like that. They make money out of the books that are sold on the book stands and the magazines sold on the book stands. They print them for money. They publish them for money. They sell them for money. And when anybody would, suggest that a city should pay some attention to the material displayed, on the bookstands, and to the movies that are shown in the theatres, can you recognize and understand right away that in almost any part of our country there would be an uproar? It seems that nobody dares exercise control over what should be exhibited and should, be emphasized and publicized in an attractive way before the eyes of the young people. We just don't want it.

Now, look at the matter of what people will believe. You belong to a church. Am I not right in thinking that ordinarily people would resist the idea that anybody could control what was taught in Sunday School, or control what was preached in the church? In other words, religious *dogma* is a bad word. And as for a *creed* . . . why, many people just have an idea that's something awful, without realizing that those were devices and instruments that helped the church maintain a consistent testimony. And yet today, we're just strictly against that kind of thing.

Do you remember when the government of this country actually decided that they would prohibit the manufacture and sale of alcohol? It was called "prohibition." You remember how people went on about that? And how finally it was set aside? As someone said, they didn't solve the liquor problem with prohibition. It certainly didn't stop people from getting drunk. It didn't stop people from dissipating themselves and ruining their lives by that kind of thing. No, but moneywise and freedomwise, the people wanted to have liberty. If they wanted, to get drunk, they didn't want anyone stopping them. The same thing is true in every direction so far as prohibition is concerned.

Have you ever heard recently of the way in which the public feels about a Presbytery or any church government that would resist and not receive a man because he wasn't right in doctrine? You know what the feeling is so far as the public is concerned? And how the public feels about the elders or the officers of a church that would tell a preacher that he cannot use the pulpit for the promotion of certain things? Oh, we just can't stand it.

And what about exercising control in education itself? Have you noticed the way in which it has been publicized recently that a teacher of English, for example, wanted to require the students to read certain modern novels which actually have much in them that is indecent and vulgar. And when parents objected and when the school board objected, the teacher refused to heed their advice and so they finally acted to release the teacher. Then came the furor. People wouldn't have that kind of thing.

All of what I have said, taken together, amounts to this. There is a deliberate and massive resistance to any kind of supervision or control in the public in which we live. At the same time, here is another idea. We accept that which is slightly off color. The off beat in music. The syncopated pattern in

music is something that's very popular. We like the sensational, and this is found in all kinds of things. I wonder if any of you could by any chance close your eyes and think yourself back to a few years ago; then open them today and look at the style of the dresses as they are now. I can remember when it was considered that it would be very immodest for a girl to wear a dress so short that her knees would show. Why, today they are making dresses that are so many inches above the knees. Anything at all that is sensational. I suppose I should almost hesitate to mention the hairdo's, but I can hardly pass by without some comment about that. Or some of the cosmetics that I see! Once in a while I am afraid I am almost impolite when some girl comes along whose eyes are painted a deep green. Now, what on earth? How foolish can we be? And, yet this is in the day and time in which we live.

So far as music is concerned, I don't want to give any advertising to it, but have you noticed the things that are the rage in music these days? Look at the people who make fortunes out of acting different . . . acting sensational. And really I want to assure you, they are neither cultured or refined. Even in architecture – have you seen the new buildings that go up? And I suppose of all those that do, maybe the churches are the worst of all. They call them modern, and if they're modern, they have to be completely different and altogether ridiculous in many cases. People do not want any kind of control, and that affects us profoundly in the matter of public opinion.

Now we'll move over into the matter of our Christian faith. We're interested from the standpoint of how will a Christian act in these things. You see, a Christian has some things he believes. A Christian believes in Almighty God who is the same yesterday, today and forever. A Christian believes in a God who changes not, who is eternally the same. How will the Christian stand up in the presence of public opinion that wants everything new, always new, always different? Because this attitude on the part of public opinion has a profound influence in matters of faith, I'm going to run over a few of these just so that you can feel them.

I can remember some years ago when I became conscious of the fact that it was popular in our day and time to debunk the heroes. Somehow the general idea was that if history represented someone as a good person, a virtuous person, it must somehow be untrue. I refer to some of the greatest men and women in the pages of history. We have seen their characters criticized and their names stripped of any kind of appreciation of them as persons. Their human weaknesses have been brought out. Actually, I have always felt that there was something adolescent about that kind of thing, but I want to tell you right now it is being done by grown people.

Another thing that you want to notice in this day and time is how we tolerate false doctrine. Now, mind you, we won't tolerate any false doctrine about our government. We won't tolerate any false doctrine about our political economy, but we will tolerate false doctrine in matters of religion, in matters of faith. And there is a toleration of error. The public as a whole will approve the church that tolerates everything, one that allows all kinds of liberty and license to its thinkers, especially to its preachers. And we have a real sharp criticism of any church that won't let a preacher preach just anything. They say that the church isn't allowing them to be free. Well, he can go and be free out in a vacant lot any time he wants to. But that pulpit is something that was dedicated. That pulpit is something committed to something. This creates the problem.

We are finding in our day and time, very commonly, a widespread, unsound philosophy in education. There is a certain scientific skepticism that lingers in the hearts and minds of anybody who has been to school. It has come to the point where you just sort of think that if you're an educated person and a wise person, you'll just doubt naturally because you've got good sense. This, of course, is unsound. But there it is. And together with that there is the widespread acceptance of the principle of evolution, as if the natural processes will produce anything and everything that happens. And if you do bring God into the picture, there is rebellion against the idea of meeting God face to face. There is plain disbelief that God could make you a proposition in the way of a promise; and that God could work something in you that's

not a result of natural process. This calls for a power on the part of God that is greater than nature . . . such as you saw in the life of the Lord Jesus while He was here on earth. For instance, think of the leper to whom the Lord Jesus said, "I will, be thou clean." And, immediately the man's leprosy was cleansed. Nothing other than just the word of God and it had power over the natural process. Now that power belongs to the Christian, even to the raising of the dead. And yet in our day and time, you will find right among us, right inside the Christian church, this tendency to explain everything on the basis of a continuing process of natural development or improvement. Unsound – but it's there.

Also, one of the things you will find today is that public opinion definitely sponsors criticism of the Bible. There is criticism of every sort so that the average non-Christian person would think that if you had good sense then you were not hide bound with prejudice; you would know, of course, that you couldn't believe the Bible the way it reads.

Then there is the actual ignoring of what the Bible teaches. Even in Christian thought, you'll have Christians getting together to discuss things as if they were serving the Lord and they'll never turn to Scripture to get guidance for their ideas. They may turn to Scripture to find some phrase that will express what they want to say, but they won't read the context and they'll not give the phrase to you with the meaning intended by the writers. They'll say that the literal meaning was for that other time, but we're living in a new time and we should take it the way it is today.

There is also the matter of secularization of education. So far as our schools are concerned, all we are doing is preparing people to live in this world and training them to live in this world. When you bring in the things of the gospel but talk about the benefits of Christianity, you would be surprised how, so far as the public is concerned, they want the benefits of Christianity to be seen right here in this world. The benefits they look for have to do with psychological adjustments, and sociological rearrangements. They want everything settled, down here in this world so that the full scope of all that they are looking for could be found right in your neighborhood and seen right out there on the streets in your neighborhood. And when you die it will stay right here behind you. This is what they count as the gospel. You wonder how a person could do that to the great truth of the Christian gospel, which is something that you can cherish in your heart: if you were to die tonight, you'd be rich. You'd have something that would, be far beyond anything you could ever have had in this world. The Apostle Paul said that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord which is far better. This is the true essence of Christian thinking but not as far as popular opinion is concerned.

Now I want you to notice how this public opinion seriously affects our Christian witness. The result has been that our churches have become weak in their testimony concerning the things of the Lord Jesus Christ. We seldom talk about Him. We use His name. We put His name over us. We even put the cross up on the church. But if you go in and listen to what is being said, you'll find it is about the things that have to do with this world and the things that we want to have solved as far as this world is concerned,. Also, there is a weakening of conviction and a weakening of the commission, so far as the church itself is concerned. People are not nearly as sure about being saved, and they are not nearly as sure about going to the mission field as they once were.

Then again, in this connection, there is the weakened position of the Bible in our thinking. I come back to this again and again because it is so central and we are especially interested in it. We're especially concerned about it. And we realize that the Bible today is held, in question by a great many people. You might wonder, "Well, what in the world do you think you could do about it?" I'll tell you one thing we could do about it: explain its meaning. Set out its meaning so that people listening can hear it. Have this in mind that the hungry heart, the willing heart will believe it, and anybody who receives it and believes it will know. Believe me, God will make it real, and that person will know it's true. The other day, a business woman came to me and asked. me to help her. She wanted to have faith, and so I told her, "We're going to have to find some way in which you can stick your finger into the 'water' to find out if it's hot. If

you will actually participate and actually share in the things that the Bible says, you'll know. So we'll just have to find something that the Bible says to you and then get you to do it . . . in faith. Then you'll know what it is."

Such a time as this in our homes puts a special challenge to the Christian. Such a time as this in our schools puts a special challenge to the Christian. Such a time as this in our churches presents a real challenge to a Christian family. Such a time as this in our colleges puts a real challenge to Christian young people. And such a time as this in public opinion presents a real challenge to any Christian anywhere. We asked ourselves the question . . . for such a time as this what would *we* do? In the next chapter I will try and show you why we have THE BIBLE FOR YOU radio program and what we're seeking to do. We really want to get people acquainted, with the Word of God because the Word of God alone will be the source of the blessing that they want and that they need.

## **"For Such A Time As This"**

Look up Paul's second letter to Timothy. Open to chapters three and four. Ordinarily I use the King James version as being the most familiar, but right now it will suit my purpose to refer you to a modern translation. This is the translation by J. B. Phillips. My reason for doing this is deliberate. I want you to see the modern language so that you can experience its contemporary feeling and its relevance. This was written to warn and to admonish Timothy, something like nineteen hundred years ago. It was the Word of God then, and it is the Word of God for us today. And I feel that as you see this now in modern English you may possibly feel how pertinent it is, how it applies to us right today.

I know that it is customary to belittle the warnings of older men as belonging perhaps to their age, as if somehow they had lost their zest and had lost their courage. I think sometimes when we do that we may very easily overlook that these older men, may be speaking from their wisdom. They may have seen things, and they may know things, and may speak from that angle. In any case we will do well to take up this scripture as it is with its immediate significance to us now. Compare this modern translation with your own and it will be enriching to you to notice the difference in the expression.

Paul writes: "But you must realize that in the last days the times will be full of danger. Men will become utterly self-centered, greedy for money, full of big words. They will be proud, and contemptuous, without any regard for what their parents taught them. They will be utterly lacking in gratitude, purity and normal human affections. They will be men of unscrupulous speech and have no control of themselves. They will be passionate and unprincipled, treacherous, self-willed, and conceited, loving all the time what gives them pleasure instead of loving God. They will maintain a facade [a front] of 'religion,' but their conduct will deny its validity. You must keep clear of people like this.

"From their number come those creatures who worm their way into people's houses and, find easy prey in silly women with an exaggerated, sense of sin and morbid cravings – who are always learning and, yet never able to grasp the truth. These men are as much enemies to the truth as Jannes and Jambres were to Moses. Their minds are distorted, and, they are traitors to the faith. But in the long run they won't get very far. Their folly will become as obvious to everybody as did that of Moses' opponents.

"But you, Timothy, have known intimately both what I have taught and how I have lived. My purpose and my faith are no secrets to you. You saw my endurance and love and patience as I met all those persecutions and difficulties at Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. And you know how the Lord brought me safely through them all. Persecution is inevitable for those who are determined to live really Christian lives, while wicked and deceitful men will go from bad to worse, deluding others and, deluding themselves.

"Yet you must go on steadily in those things that you have learned and which you know are true. Remember from what sort of people your knowledge has come, and how from early childhood your mind has been familiar with the Holy Scriptures, which can open the mind to the salvation which comes through believing in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and, is useful for teaching the faith and correcting error, for resetting the direction of a man's life and training him in good living. The Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work."

And then look at the first few verses from the next chapter because this gives you the admonition which Paul gave to Timothy. In view of conditions that Timothy was going to have to face, Paul went on to say this, "I urge you, Timothy, as we live in the sight of God and of Christ Jesus (whose coming in power will judge the living and the dead), to preach the Word of God. Never lose your sense of urgency, in season or out of season. Prove, correct, and encourage, using the utmost patience in your teaching. For

the time is coming when men will not tolerate wholesome teaching. They will want something to tickle their own fancies, and, they will collect teachers who will pander to their own desires. They will no longer listen to the truth, but will wander off after man-made fictions.

"For yourself, stand fast in all that you are doing, meeting whatever suffering this may involve. Go on steadily preaching the gospel and carry out to the full the commission that God gave you."

This is the way Paul wrote Timothy those many years ago. There need be no doubt that Paul felt the times in which they were living were critical times, urgent times. And perhaps in a sense this is always true. Maybe one can say that any age is critical and in a certain sense has an emergency about it; and, certainly it has, for that generation. But this does not lessen the urgency of our own crisis now.

In the earlier chapters in this little book, I have discussed with you the situation which I think is to be found today in our homes, in our schools, in our churches, in our colleges, and in our society as reflected in public opinion. You probably felt that I was presenting the view that our times are critical. In that case you would have been right. This is exactly what I think. Now, there may be some of you who will have the feeling that all is being done that is needed. I would humbly suggest to you that the facts show differently. But I'll tell you right now that whether all is being done or not, the way the situation is right now, it's bad and it's serious. Times of crises do come and go. Not every day is alike, and a good case could be made that from time to time these crises appear like seasons of the year. And perhaps most advances begin in such times of crises. Years ago, I picked up a rather strange line that somehow has in it a certain kind of optimism I like to think about: "when winter comes spring is not far behind."

There was a classic crisis in the time of Esther. It is recorded in the book of Esther. She was a young Jewish girl who had been taken to be queen, in the palace of the king of the day. And you will remember that because of personal animosities that had been developed by other people (not by Esther at all, but chiefly by her uncle, Mordecai, and other men), a certain advisor had secured the permission of the king to agree to an action in which all the Jews would be killed. The plan actually was to massacre the Jews. And Esther's uncle, Mordecai, found out about this. Now that was a crisis. That was a time of real peril.

There was danger for every Jew in the whole country. And Mordecai knew that Esther had a chance. She might possibly get the attention of the king and draw his attention to what was going on. So Mordecai made it a point to get in touch with Esther. He told her what the situation was and put it upon her that she should go in and talk to the king. And you will remember that Esther sent word out to Mordecai and, reminded him – you can't go into the king's presence unless you are invited. And, if you're not invited you take your life in your hands when you go to him. She said, "It will be a dangerous thing for me to go in. there and ask the king for attention about this matter." And Mordecai sent word back to her something like this, "Think not with thyself that thou shalt altogether escape because thou art in the king's house." In other words, "Esther, you may not know it but you're in danger right where you stand, and if this thing goes through you'll be destroyed even though you are in the king's house. You don't really have any choice in the matter. This peril is real and it's coming down upon you." Then he uses this phrase. "And who knoweth but thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this. [This may be your opportunity.]"

And you will remember what happened. Esther sent out word and said, "Gather the people together to pray. I'll gather my handmaidens together to pray, and after we have prayed for a length of time I'll go in. And if I perish I perish, but I'll risk the whole thing."

Now that situation which I have described to you precisely sets forth the reason why we are promoting this program which we call "THE BIBLE FOR YOU." It is deliberately designed to spread Bible teaching throughout the country. The only one thing we have in mind to do is to take the Scriptures and open up their meaning to the people who will read and who will listen. I truly believe that the Word of God is actually what will engender faith in the soul. I think that faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. I truly believe that the more you understand about the Bible the more you will believe

God, and the more you will believe God, the more God will bless you, and the more God will bless you the more joy you will have and the more praise you will give to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am just as sure of that as anything I can think of under the whole sun.

I wish all the people in our country knew what was in the Bible. I wish the people in our churches knew what was in the Bible. It would be wonderful if from church to church and from Sunday School to Sunday School and from class to class you had teachers that knew what was in the Bible, and you had laymen, men and women, who knew what was in the Bible. What a wonderful thing if our high school students knew what was in the Bible. And wouldn't it seem a normal thing to expect that people in college would, know what was in the Bible. Now will you believe me that they do not know? You can look up in almost any magazine and some time or other you will find the results of some survey that was to find out what college students know about the contents of the Bible – not its meaning, not its doctrine, but actually just exactly what's written there.

It is astonishing, absolutely astonishing, how people who are well read and really informed, on much of the ordinary round of human knowledge do not have an idea in the world what you'd find within the covers of the Bible. If you asked them questions about the history of Israel, they would just think you were talking a foreign language. Now the history of Israel is not complicated. There are not many books in the Old Testament that deal with it, and an ordinary, intelligent, educated person could read it in just a matter of hours. And so far as the New Testament is concerned, the four gospels of the Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John would be very easy for a person to read. The book of Acts could be read in the matter of a couple of hours, and you would have what the Bible actually records about the work of the early church. And I want to tell you that you can go up and down in the whole of our society and you'll find any number of people, many of whom are actually going to church themselves who have never read this material.

I have no desire to condemn them. What I am concerned about is that they don't know. And if they don't know they can't believe. And if they can't believe they can't be blessed. I want to tell you that so far as our country is concerned there are any number of people absolutely unable to believe because they don't have an idea in the world what it is that they are supposed to believe. It makes me think of somebody trying to light a fire without any wood in the stove. Now what would that be like? I can imagine somebody saying, "Well, I think we'll have to have a fire." So he strikes a match and puts the match in the stove, but there's no wood. Well if there's no wood there, how in the world are you going to get a fire? And so it is with reference to any number of our people. You say they should believe in God. What are they going to believe? And so far as God is concerned, who or what god? Do they know the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Do they know the God of Moses? Do they know the God of Elijah? Do they know the God of Daniel? Do they even know the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Do they know the God whom Paul served and in whom Paul believed? Do they know these incidents? And you'll say. "Not everybody knows these things." What I want to tell you is that if you don't know these things you certainly can't believe them and if you can't believe them you can't have them. And if you can't have them it's a sorry day for you. That's the thing that I am talking about.

Now we are hoping in the course of THE BIBLE FOR YOU that we can make intelligible and understandable, to anybody that will listen, things that are in the Bible. We have this confidence, that the more you know about the Bible, the more you could believe. If you wanted to, you could believe it. And if you once could believe it, then you could turn to God and, actually be blessed.

Now mind you, even though we think that these days are unusual – and we frankly do believe that the times in which we live are critical – we are very much aware that there's been no change in God. God is just the same as He's always been. Nor is there any change so far as His law is concerned. The law of God is just as real today as it always was, and even if you find all the people in the country paying no attention to the Ten Commandments, they're still true. If all the young people in high school would pay absolutely no

attention to the Ten Commandments, the Ten Commandments would be still true. They belong to the eternal law of God.

And there has been no change in human nature. People aren't any better nor any worse than they have been. So far as sinfulness is concerned, you can look into any crib you want and you'll find a baby that is selfish. You'll find that baby wants things for itself and it will reach to grab, and everything it grabs it holds. Everything it holds it tries to eat. That's just the way it goes with a baby. And they're all the same all over the world. There's really no difference in human nature. Yes, there is some difference in culture here, there, or elsewhere, but in view of what we know now of the various cultures of mankind, I think you'd all agree with me that they are selfish and self-centered and proud. We call that sinful.

And mind you, there's no change in the gospel. The gospel isn't any different now than it has ever been, and I'm thinking chiefly about the grace of God. God will still act for sinners out of His own good will, far more than they deserve. He will do it. And it's in the gospel that anybody who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. There's no change in, the plan of salvation. Men are being saved today just the same as they've always been. There's one Lord Jesus Christ, and this one Lord Jesus Christ lived one time in this world. And living one time in this world, He died one time on Calvary's Cross, and His death on Calvary's Cross that one time was for eternity. That will always be that way. And Whosoever believeth in Him shall never perish but have everlasting life.

And there is no change in the nature of faith. Believing in God is the same now as it has always been. But let me just say now in passing, faith doesn't make anything true. Just because you believe something is milk, that doesn't make it milk. You could believe it was milk and, it would turn out to be strychnine. You could drink it and it would kill you. You could say when you were dying, "Well, I thought it was milk." That won't make a bit of difference in the world. Actually believing in something doesn't change the thing. Believing in something commits you to it, and if it has any power it will change you. If I open my mouth and swallow medicine, that's believing in it. What happens after that is according to the medicine. If I believe in God I will be blessed. If I believe in error I will be lost, just as sure as anything. The believing is just like swallowing. No, there's no change in the nature of faith.

Saving faith is taking God at His word. If you don't know the Word of God you won't be saved. This is the truth even to this day. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. That's always been true. And the question has always been, "But how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear except for a preacher? And how shall anyone preach except he be sent?" Right here is the tragic danger of this hour in which we live: the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures is not being proclaimed. We have noticed that it is not ordinarily being proclaimed in preaching. We have a great deal of talk going over the pulpit which doesn't try to explain the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have a lot being discussed in Sunday School – all kinds of discussion going on – and in a great many cases entirely apart from the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our young people's program will consider all kinds of things for the attention of the young people and very seldom do we actually take up the matter of belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ.

So far as our seminaries are concerned, a man can go to the seminary to prepare for the ministry, and he can be preoccupied with all manner of things. He'll talk about history. He'll talk about philosophy. He'll study language. He'll study psychology. He'll study all manner of things – the techniques of preaching, and so – and you would be astonished, when it is all done, how very little any of them actually know of a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. We have already talked about our colleges. That is a scandal the way it is there.

And so, we actually have today a whole generation of Americans who are largely ignorant of what the Bible says. Now some of them don't want to know. That's their problem, and they will deal with God about that. But we are concerned about people who would know if they could and would like to know. And so, several years ago this particular program was organized, and we have now this organization

which we call THE BIBLE FOR YOU. This is a non-profit trust that was organized to spread the teaching of the Bible. We do it by radio. We also do it by tape recordings and we have hundreds of hours of material on tape recording which is available. And if people will get in touch with us we have a catalog on it. We encourage listening in groups. We have groups of people in churches in various parts of the country who gather together at started times to just listen to a tape recording in which there is discussion of some part of the Bible.

We encourage and we promote home Bible study courses and then, also as far as we can we conduct Bible study by public presentation. I go to various towns and cities. preaching and teaching the word of God, seeking to explain what's in it. You see, we believe that God *can* save and that God *will* save just as surely as anything is true. God will save to the uttermost all those that come unto Him through the Lord Jesus Christ. This is our confidence and we believe that anybody who believes will have the blessing of God. But they have to know what to believe. And they will know what to believe if they know what is in the Scriptures.

And so, for such a time as this, just as Paul said to Timothy, preach the word. Speaking for myself and for my colleagues, we have heard the word, and a number of us are working together on this thing. Over the whole country we look for people to join, us in this Bible study program – in your churches, in your Sunday Schools, in your homes. Let's find out what is in the Bible, so we can believe it and be blessed with salvation and the abundant life in Christ.