

God's Work to be Done God's Way

By Paris Reidhead*

Doing God's work in God's way and I'll read beginning with first verse of the sixth chapter of second Samuel.

"Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims. And they set the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals. And when they came to Nachon's threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God. And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me? So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months: and the Lord blessed Obededom, and all his household." (II Sam. 6:1-11)

Now this is part of a story that I've read for you and you are living in part of a story here in this last third of the 20th century. And there's an analogy that I'm trusting you'll make and to help you make it, I'll make suggestions along the way. But let's just bear in mind that the modern mission era, which we are a part, can be said to have begun about the year 1800. And tonight there are more unevangelized in the world than there ever been before. We have tremendous improvements in communication and transportation, all of the tools and techniques, methods that are at our hands. And yet strangely enough on the basis of what we have done in the last 50 years projected into the next 50 years, you can have average increase we'll find that in 50 years hence we'll find be many times further behind in our task than we are today. And I think we owe it to ourselves in the midst of this victorious life, this Deeper Life Conference to ask ourselves how God wants to do His work and ask Him to bring us to that place that we are prepared and ready, because, after all, that's the purpose.

We said this morning that every Christian is either a missionary or a mission field. The same One Who said, "Come and rest." Said, "Go and preach" and He breathed on them and said, "As the Father sent Me." (John 20:21) And that word 'sent' is 'missio' 'missionary', "As the Father missionaryed Me, So I missionary you, I send you."

And thus it is that we're brought face to face with the fact that every Christian is involved in this task. The provision that was made in the Person of the Holy Spirit, Peter said, "The promise is to you and to your children, and to them that are afar off, even to as many as our Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39) Every believer has a birth right in Christ to know the victory through His death and power through His resurrection and the out pouring of His Spirit. We're all in this together. And one day we are going to stand and give an account when we meet Him at the Bema at the judgement seat of Christ.

Now David loved the Lord. He had been chosen of God to serve Him. He was a man after God's own heart and yet here we find that something is going quite right. The background of the story goes clear back to Eli and a time when Samuel was a little boy. You'll recall that Eli was orthodox, but his sons were extremely liberal both in practice and in attitude and in heart and in habit. And the consequence was there came a general degeneration in Israel. The Philistines came upon Israel and someone got the bright idea of bringing the Ark down to the battle field, so by there insure victory for Israel over the Philistines.

What actually happened was the Philistines trembled as they did, yet united and came in and destroyed some thirty thousand of the Israelites and went home rejoicing in the fact that they captured the Ark of God. The only problem was when they got it home they didn't know what to do with it. They put it in the house of Dagon, the god of the Philistines. The next morning when they came out and Dagon had fallen flat on his face. They stood him up and left the Ark there. And the next day they came in and he had fallen again on his face and his head had fallen off and his two hands had fallen off. So then they began to shift the Ark around from city to city among the Philistines and every place it went, trouble came. People were slain, sicknesses,

scourge, mice over ran the place. One area they were afflicted with general throughout the entire place a plaque of hemorrhoids. A terrible visitation from God, from one end of the country of the Philistines to the other, because they had committed sacrilege against the Ark of God.

Now, what is this Ark of which I speak? We find reference in the instructions that God gave to Moses. There in the holies of all, the inner room of the Holy place there was to be but one piece of furniture, it was the Ark of the Covenant made of acacia wood, covered with gold. The lid of which is a bar of solid gold. Upon this bar were the Cherubim with their out stretched wings, angelic forms and they hovered thus resting upon the edges of the mercy seat and their wings over spreading. And the presence of God is said to have dwelt between the wings of Cherubim.

Now this Ark is the picture of Christ. For in the wood and the gold you have the perfect illustration of His deity in the gold and His humanity in the wood. The wood over laid by the gold shows that integral union between the human and divine in the Person of the Son of God. God who become flesh and dwelt among us. God with us, Emmanuel. And here He is pictured in the Ark in the Holy place. Then that bar of gold picturing God in His great grace and mercy resting upon the Lord Jesus Christ. But it was God the Son, the infinitely Holy One by the vehicle of His humanity, His body, His human personality able to enter into death. For the mercy seat was the place where Moses once a year came with blood, sprinkling the blood on the mercy seat. This is what the publican in the temple cried literally, "God be mercy seated to me, a sinner." And it was a picture of God between the wings of the Cherubim looking at the blood that was sprinkled upon the plate of gold, resting upon the Ark of wood covered with gold. In this was the law which our Lord had perfectly kept. He gave it and He is the only One who kept it. The law giver became the Law keeper that He might die for the lawbreaker. There also was the pot of manna. Speaking again of this that came down from heaven of the One who was to say, "I am the bread of life, if any man eat not of Me has no life. But if you'll eat my flesh and drink my blood then you'll have My life in you." (John 6:56) And so the mercy seat speaks of Christ, Christ in the midst of His people. Our wonderful, wonderful Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God. God Who invaded time and history and by His coming by His life and His ministry, His death, His burial, His resurrection opening for us this new, this living way.

How marvelous it is that when He died this enormous curtain in Herod's temple was rend from the top to the bottom. The curtain separating the holy place from the Holiest of all, indicating that a new and a living way had been opened through the Person of Christ to a union with Christ.

Now this is the Ark, a picture of Christ in the midst of His people. Our ministry is to preach Christ. This is the good news that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture and that He was buried and that He was raised again the third day according to the Scripture. We send out missionaries and they carry this Ark, if you please, this testimony of God invading time in the Person of His dear Son. This is the message that we carry. This is testimony that we bring and the ministry at home is again whether it be in church or home or school or office. Wherever you go in that senses, you are a bearer of the good tidings.

Now we are to understand what happened. Here the Ark has been captured by the Philistines, possessed by them to the point where they are desperately eager to get rid of it. Have you ever had that happen? God's given you the desire of your heart and said lean this to your soul. Well, this is what happened to the Philistines. My, how they wanted that Ark. It reminds me of the man out mountain lion hunting. And he climbed a tree after the wounded mountain lion and he yelled down to his friend, "Harry, come on up and help me hold him." And then there was a scuffle and a scream and a few moments later, he said, "No, no come up and help me let go of him." And this is what the Philistines were concerned about. They wanted help in letting go of the Ark, because they had more than they bargained for.

Well, they went ahead and called a priest, the Dagon and said, "Well, how will we move this?" And the priest said, "Well be careful of one thing don't send it back without an offering." So they made little golden mice and then they made little forms of an ulcer and made that out of gold, because there had been this affection though out the coast of the Philistines and they put these in a coffer. Then they made a new cart that'd never carried a load. They thought we're going to make this really hard. We'll not only make a new cart that's never carried a load, but to see whether this is God that's judged us, we'll take two milk cows that have never been taught to pull a cart. And not only that we'll get two cows that have calves and won't want to leave

them. And we'll take these wild milk cows and put them in the yoke. And we'll shut their calves up and lead their calves off and tie them up. And then we'll just stand back and see what this God can do.

There are two roads to Beth Shemesh. There's a short cut a highway and then there's the other road. And if they take the road that's smooth and a little bit longer, but it's the highway, it's the road that goes without some much danger then we'll know that God did it. Well, that's sort of affixing the thing isn't it and this is exactly what they did. Wild milk cows that've never been taught to pull, calves lead blacken and bleeding away, tied to a tree or locked up. And then they just stand back and say let's see what's going to happen. And what happen was that the cows went on as though they had been trained for years. Didn't hesitate a moment, took the road that would lead them to Beth Shemesh with least danger to the cargo, to the Ark. The five lords of the Philistines went along in the brush at the side and watched these oxen without any direction carry the cart with the Ark gently and carefully picking out the place so that it wouldn't be spilled and bring it. And then seeing it, the people of Beth Shemesh look at it and come and take it. And the lord of the Philistines went home said, "We're well rid of that," because that was certainly God. The Ark stopped by a large rock, so they cued the cart for fuel and slaughtered the two oxen as an offering and there the Ark stayed for some time.

David has come as king. Now he's in Jerusalem. He is reigning, but it is very lonely there without the presence of Christ, without the glory of Christ manifest illustrated in the Ark. And so David's desire is to bring the Ark back, because this is, after all, the whole heart and center of Israel's worship, it is the place where God dwells. Now David knew the Lord. He had already written the 23rd Psalm. He had already great dealings with God. He had walked a good way with Him. He had gone all these years of persecution by Saul. Many of the Psalms are already been written and he's there. He should be taught in the things of the Lord. He is the one that says, "Thy law is my meditate day and night." (Psa. 1:2) He ought to know the Word. But he went down to bring back the Ark. Can you see him when he comes into the house of the man who is caring for it and says, "How did it get here?" "Oh," they said, "the Philistines made a new cart." "Well, that sounds very good. Anybody have a new cart around here? We'll do the same thing." This is the thing, David thought that he could do the thing the way the Philistines had done it.

Now the Philistines speak of the world, always speak of the world in the types of Scriptures. The world preformed a serves, in respect to God, that He honored, because of their ignorance and because they weren't in covenant relationship with Him. But here's what happen, when David was in covenant relationship with Him, was in blood covenant with Him, who had the Word tried to do the work of God the way that the Philistines had done it, God wouldn't honor it. And this I say is the tragedy of the 20th century, I am afraid we've been trying to do so much of the work of God in the way of Philistines. Instead of coming back and finding out how it's done.

Well, the Ark was placed on the new cart, oxen were brought. They didn't go as far as the Philistines did. They got well trained oxen and they started to take the Ark back to Jerusalem. But it says, "In the oxen shook it. And Uzzah reached out his hand to steady the cart." Isn't amazing when God was working even with the ignorant Philistines He got the Ark safely there without anyone touching it. But here because God's people were doing a good thing in the wrong way, wasn't possible. And the consequence? Well, the consequence was that Uzzah died. And it says that, "David was displeased with the Lord. And David feared the Lord that day." And so they just put the Ark in a house nearby and shut it off. And David went back to Jerusalem.

But he didn't go back in joy; he didn't go back in pleasure. He went back in grief, because this met that He was going to have a lonely job as the king of Israel without the presence of God and the glory of God and blessing of God. Oh the consequence apparently, we have no record of it, but apparently David did the thing then that he should have done earlier. He called for the Word. He called for the Scripture. He went to the book to find out the matter, the way God wanted to move the Ark.

It was in Exodus the 25th chapter that he discovered that Kohath of the children of Levi had been assigned. The sons of Kohath had been assigned to the task of carrying the Ark. Now we can trace down Kohath and discover why they were given this particular high honor, but Kohath was chosen. He's named there, his sons were the ones that were to carry the Ark. Moses would go in and veil the Ark and put over it fine twine linen and the scarlet and the purple and then the badger skin so that it was all covered. Then the sons of Kohath would come in and here's the wonder of it, on the Ark there were two rings, rings of gold, covered with gold in which two staves went. And these staves would be put through the rings and then the Ark would be

lifted and carried on the shoulders of the sons of Kohath. But an interesting and strange and wonderful thing, it said that these sons “should be 30 and not yet 50.” (Num. 4:3)

Isn't it strange that there should come a time when One would be standing before the Sanhedrin and they should look at Him and say, He's not yet 50 and we know that He was over 30. Isn't it interesting that the One Who is pictured in the Ark should Himself should take two staves and those two staves be laid one across the other to form a cross. And He then should carry that cross and drag it through the streets of Jerusalem up the hill of Calvary, Golgotha. And isn't marvelous that those two staves should suspend and uplift and present the One whose pictured by the Ark, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so it is there hanging upon a tree this One Who is God come in the flesh, the acacia wood of His humanity, the gold of His deity, perfected gloriously joined, inseparably united. And the acacia, the humanity gives Him the vehicle by which He can get under the law and then under the sentence of the law and then into death, that He could break the power of death. And leave captive him who had the power of death and paid the full penalty of sin.

Now do you see why God couldn't allow David to break the type? He couldn't allow David to spoil the picture. Philistines they don't understand. They have no part in these things. Let them make a new cart. It's alright for the Philistines, but it will never do for the people of God, because God's told them how to do it.

I come to Minneapolis my heart is always filled with joy and grief. I lived here. I was thinking today that it was down at South St. Paul, Red Rock Camp Meeting south side of the packing company. There were a group of people that gathered, gathered for nearly 100 years. Great preachers were there that year that God in sweet mysterious grace saved a boy. John L. Brasher¹, Brother Logan told me he is 100 years this week and shortly. Joseph Owens, Paul Rees² my, the glory of God was there. But they moved. Red Rock for all impact purposes disappeared. I think of Medicine Lake Bible Conference how the throngs came from all over the state and I'm told nothing is there.

Oh, how easy it is for yester year the way it was done and then somehow have it disappear. They tried to do the work other than God's proscribed way, other than the way He's planned. How quickly the candlestick is removed. How soon the Ark seems to vanish. God is so sensitive. He is so concerned. He is so determined that your life and your ministry and your work should be the way He's established, the way He's planned.

Here we see David back in Jerusalem searching the Scripture and there he finds that God said through Moses that the Ark is to be bore on the sons of Levi on their shoulders, “men 30 and not yet 50.” And that began, he returns now this time to do God's work in God's way. Can you understand now why he danced before the presence of the Lord? For it wasn't just that the Ark was coming back. It wasn't just that the presence of God would now be there in the seat of His reign and His authority as King. It wasn't just that, it was that the pressure and the power and the influence of those years when he'd been hiding among the Philistines, when he'd been influenced by them, when he'd been under the pressure of them had been broken, and he'd been released from all of these things. He had been brought into the tender loving tyranny of Word of God, where God could bless.

Oh how important it is for us to understand this. How significant it is that you should realize in your ministry, for you have a ministry, you're part of this, that God exceedingly jealous of the glory of His Son. He is determined that if you are to bear the vessel of the Lord, first that you should be clean, “be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” (Isa. 52:11)

He specified Kohath, because Kohath had not been involved in the rebellion. He'd been clean from all of that, which had transpired, never lifted his voice against God, and had not been among the number bowed down before the golden calf. So He says to us, “Be clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” How important it is therefore that we should deal with anything and everything the Spirit of God shows us, because this is holy work, this work of witnessing for Christ and interceding for the lost and exercising the weapons of our warfare spiritual not carnal for the releasing of men from the snares of sin. And so He says,

¹ Rev. John L. Brasher (1868-1971)

² Dr. Paul S. Rees (1900-1991)

“Be clean.” That’s the reason why He’s so jealous, because your task is the task of up lifting His Son. This one Who came by way of the incarnation, joined Himself perfectly to humanity became the Ark, the mercy seat. When you come to this task, you come clean, clean through His precious blood, clean through a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men, clean through the mirror of the Word as you gazed upon it and invited the Spirit of God, clean through a heart that has been cleansed of all-purpose save to glorify Him. But it’s not only a heart that’s been cleansed through the blood. But we find that these two staves are there. These two rods of wood that form a cross and He’s determined that all the choir and ministry exalting His Son should know the cross.

The Apostle speaks of this in Romans 6:6 you hear him say, “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ.” This is thematic, this is part of the testimony, this is the association that was made. The Gospel was preached in this light in Paul’s day to everyone. “Jesus Christ died for you.” (I Cor. 15:3) But since He died for you, He died as you and since He died as you, you died with Him. There were two people on that cross. Christ was on the front of it dying for you and you in God’s eyes, as it were, were on back of it dying with Him. Understand this, “Knowing this reckon yourself therefore” from this day on as long as you live to “be crucified with Christ.” (Rom. 6:11) See yourself there with all ambition and personal pride and hope and everything that could come in that would in any wise intervene in His lovely purpose.

You bear the Ark on two cross staves, two rods of wood and therefore you only are ready to come to this work of witness that have first come to the cross. But how simple that would be if all that was needed knowing. He also said, “Reckon yourselves to be died.” (Rom. 6:11) And speaking of himself, “I am always being delivered unto death.” (II Cor. 4:11) Oh you can take that as meaning he was constantly being threatened with persecution and martyrdom. It’s true. But I think something else was happening. I think, the Apostle is using this expression in this way day after day experiences, circumstances, events transpire, which are to me like God’s little wheel borrow.

Oh in this case, think of the Judaizers that followed him wherever he went and he would go into a place to preach they’d open a meeting right across. And theirs was, “Paul isn’t an Apostle.” I don’t know what the thorn in the flesh was. Some people think it was a sickness. Personality from the use of thorn in the Old Testament, I would assume the thorn were people that followed him wherever he went, made life miserable for him. Whether that was the case or not, at any rate, it was his experience. And I think he is saying, “He’s always been delivered unto death.” In other words, there is always somebody right over there, right here, right behind him that’s determine to keep him in place. And so he goes somewhere to minister and there they are. They came in on the next plane, if you please, or in the same plane right in the tourist section there they were. As soon as he got out... “that’s Paul don’t believe him. He’s no Apostle. He doesn’t have credentials.” Paul says, “He’s always been delivered unto death.” Always a little wheel burrow behind him and someone is pushing it. Well, he has one of two things to do, he can get up there and fight or else he can say, well, thank you Lord must be a push permitted of You and the wheel burrow was arranged by You. So okay, and they just sort of wheel him right back to the cross. He’s “always been delivered unto death.” These experiences which might have caused resentment and antagonism and vindication and all the rest, no, Paul says, “I die daily.” (I Cor. 15:31)

So the cross was a grand tenet of theology. It was a truth that he used in a moment of temptation. It was his way of meeting the frustrations and pressures that he couldn’t control. You’d certainly think that this man who was so marvelously filled with the Spirit and had the gifts of the Spirit in such abundance that all of them could be said to be exercised by him, would’ve come to a place where he would have out grown this truth, wouldn’t you?

Now writing to the church at Galatia he said, “I am crucified with Christ.” (Gal. 2:20) I’m still bearing the Ark, I’m still witnessing for Christ and I’m still seeking to exalt Him, God Who became flesh Who dwelt among us. There’s only one way, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” The only way to bear the Ark is on two staves the way God’s ordained and so he said, “I am” that present perfect passive verb, “I have been” in the past, but the effect of it continues in the present. Well, that’s about midway in his ministry, but Paul, aren’t you ever going to get out of this cross?

Life, certainly there’ll come a time when it’ll be a mystery, won’t it? You’ll go onto another level, another plane but writing that prison Epistle to the church of Philippi he said, “That I may know him.” (Php. 3:10) Oh, Paul you’ve known Him since the

Damascus road event. Oh, Paul you've known Him all these years, why you use such terms as this? "That I may know him." And then we hear him say, "Either were already prefect, nor that I had already attained," but "I press toward the mark of the prize." (Php. 3:12; 3:14) What is it? "The mark of the prize" is to be found it that day hearing Him say, You finished the course. You fought a good fight. You kept the faith. There's a crown of righteousness. You carried the Ark the way God intended. But if you do that then go back, "That I may know Him, and in the fellowship of His sufferings, in the power of His resurrection, being made conformable unto His death." (Php. 3:10)

In just the time you feel, why this death life, I know that, now what's new? God's going to show you new areas in your personalities, in your experience, your relationship where the cross hasn't reached yet and you're going to be as Paul was aged venerable bowed with the care of years, face lined and back seamed with scars where he's been beaten with rods. We listen to this man as he dictates. It's written for him because his hands are shackled and chained to soldiers at his side. "That I may know him" "being made conformable unto his death." (Php. 3:10)

Pastor Hegre³ in that most valuable book, Three Aspects of the Cross dwells upon the continuing aspect. Oh, how wisely we see that and how well that comes to clarify this that it is to be viewed by you that as long as this Ark of testimony of the incarnate Christ, God come in the flesh to live, to die, to raise again to save sinners. The only way this message can be carried is on the crossed staves. This is how it was intended. There comes a time when we feel, well, I've passed that point. Now where's my new cart? And sometimes God lets us take our new cart, but it isn't long until we find that touching it to steady it, on our hearts bowed low before Him. Oh to see, to understand, to recognize that God will never let His people do His work the way the world does it.

And you'll find that when denominations and groups that once had a testimony and once had a ministry and once had life, begin to look around and say, "Well, this the Philistines here are doing it. The Philistines there are and it seems to work and it gets the job done." And the first thing you know you can hear the hammering in the offices as they're making a new carts. And as they're bringing the oxen to pull it, dear friend, you just look a little while you'll search in vain for the candlestick. It'll be removed, it'll be removed.

God is so jealous of His Son. He said the only way the Ark can be carried is staves on the shoulders of "men 30 not yet 50." Those that've come to, in a sense, maturity, but the maturity is not that maturity of age of years alone, but the maturity of insight and understanding. As we saw, "I write unto you little children your sins are forgiven. I write unto you young men overcome the wicked one. I write unto you fathers that you know Him Who is from the beginning." (I John 2:12,13)

I'm sure many of you tonight will look back and see the new carts that you've devised. You'll see the times when you set to steady the Ark imitate the Philistines in one way or another. Oh, tonight the Spirit of God is calling us right back to that place that He brought David. Where we sit with the Word and say, "Lord, how do You want to do your work?" And we hear this one brilliant that he was, oh so brilliant as a logician, spell binding orator, eloquent philosopher and he said, "I came among you determined not to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2) "I did not come to you in excellently of men's speech least your faith and stand in the wisdom of man." (I Cor. 2:4,5)

Here is a man that's learned that there's only one way to carry the Ark of God. Have you learned it? Have you learned that the only way up is down? The only way to live is to die? The only way that we can bring forth is to fall into the ground and die. You say, yes, I've learned that, but you know we have to learn it so often. David knew it. David knew better. David had read the Scripture. David had just been caught up with the activity and with his association from the Philistines when he lived among them for so many months. And the things that were important to God had seemly lost their importance to him. And because nothing had happened, he didn't think God cared, but God does care. He's so jealous of this Ark, this testimony of His Son. And if you're going to have a witness for Him, then you'll have to hear Him say, "Abide in Me." (John 15:4) "Abide in Me," crucified with Me to have victory over yourself. "Abide in Me," buried with Me to have victory over the world. "Abide in Me," seated

³ Pastor Ted Hegre with his wife Lucile were one of five couples in 1935 that began "Bethany Fellowship" in Bloomington, MN.

with Me to have victory over principalities and powers and I will abide in you. Ah, here is the two crossed sticks you abide in Me and I'll abide in you and you'll bring forth much fruit.

But, oh, this is so costly. Lord, you mean to say as long as I live I've got to stay here on the back of the cross and I can never initiate and I can never develop and I can never plan and I just got to stay here. Yes. I won't be able to say anything's my own my time, my life, my talent. Yes. Lord, you really mean that I've got to abide, live, dwell in You crucified. That's what I mean. Lord, why can't we get this dying business over with? This isn't so nice this abiding here. Let's get this thing through. Oh, I know how you feel about it dear child. But you see the only way the Ark can be carried is on two staves, you abide in Me, crucified with Me, and I'll abide in you. And you'll bring forth much fruit. My Father will be glorified. There isn't any other way. This is the way God wants to do His work.

Shall we bow together in prayer.

* Reference such as: Delivered at Bethany Fellowship Bloomington, MN in the evening during a Deeper Life Conference, 1968 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

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