

Life is Brief

By Paris Reidhead*

Endless life is the comfort and hope of the Christian, and the prophet Isaiah was instructed by God to comfort His people:

“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.” (Isa. 40:1,2)

Comfort is another word for glad tidings, another word for Gospel, another word for good news. And the good news that the prophet announces here, he perfects in the 53rd chapter. In the 9th chapter, *verse 6* we are told that, “Unto you a child is born; unto you a son is given; and the Government shall be upon His shoulder, and His Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.”

And, because a Son is given and a child is born, here we have comfort. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people,...” But, it is not just comfort; we are told, and probably wisely, that the prophet of God has two responsibilities: To comfort the afflicted, and to afflict the comfortable. And this is exactly what has happened in the 39th chapter. They were comfortable. Hezekiah was a good king, a king that God had honored, and a king that God had blessed; but a king that had failed somehow to understand the nature of his responsibility in effecting a complete and permanent repentance in the hearts of his people. And so, in the midst of prosperity, in midst of blessing, Hezekiah had proudly shown to the son of the king of Babylon the treasures in the Lord’s house. He had taken him on a tour. I suppose it was pride. I suppose that he rather felt that king should realize how rich and prosperous Israel, Judah, had become; and so Hezekiah very foolishly took the son of the king of Babylon down into his treasure house, showed him then the house of his precious things, the silver, the gold, the spices, precious ointments, the armor, everything that was there; there was not anything that he had that he had not shown, to the son of the king of Babylon.

I say, pride, complacency, resting in what he possessed, resting in prosperity. But you understand that strength cometh not from the abundance that a man possesses, nor his contentment, nor does happiness. And so prophet Isaiah came to Hezekiah and said, Behold the days are going to come when everything that is in your house, this that you have had, all the treasures that you have possessed, and everything that you have shown to the son of the king of Babylon is going to be carried away. It is going to be taken away. But, said he, it won’t be during your lifetime, because God has honored your obedience, and honored your faith. It is going to come after you are gone. Hezekiah bowed to this. He realized he could not fight against God. This is the background. This is the 39th chapter of Isaiah.

And so, in the light of the fact that the prophet had said, You will go into captivity, your good things will be spoiled, you are going to lose all then which you have counted, and everything that seemed to be valuable to you is going to be taken away, he then is instructed by the Lord to put into this, right into this stream — and remember the chapter divisions were affected by the King James translated and are not inspired. And in the text it would be a flow, a continuous stream of revelation, without any of the divisions so arbitrarily placed.

Here we find that He has said, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people...” Write hard upon the announcement that the walls of Jerusalem are going to be broken down, the Temple is going to be despoiled, the rich things taken away; everything upon which they have leaned and counted is going to be taken from them. Then He said, “Comfort.”

Because you see, this is exactly what the Spirit of God has to do. Until He has taken away from us all that upon which we would rest, and everything upon which we would lean, and everything from which we would find our confidence, we are not even candidates for comfort. The comfort of the Lord, the Gospel of His grace, is to a particular kind of people. The only kind of people that God was able to help through the Lord Jesus Christ were the helpless. The only kind of people that He endeavored to bless were the unworthy. The only ones for whom He could perfect any plan, or any provision that would deliver them were those that were utterly bankrupt in and of, and by themselves. This is one reason why the church is making such little real genuine spiritual progress in the 20th century, because we are finding it extremely difficult to convince people that they are

candidates for grace, and they need the kind of a Savior that is set forth in the Bible, and the kind of a salvation that He has provided.

Today we have the deification of man, ever since the advent of humanism as a religious system 150 years ago, and with its roots far earlier than that. Man has been looking into himself for resources, he has been looking at his own ability, and really when you consider the things that he has accomplished in terms of technology, scientific advancement and achievement, medicine and so on, it is an impressive list of things that have taken place, especially in my lifetime, and in yours. More progress in these fields in the last 60, 75 years, (not that I am putting myself in that period, I am simply bridging it) more has taken place in this period of time than in the previous 7 thousand years, a great acceleration in knowledge, technical knowledge. And the 20th century man is making definite plans to go to the moon. And there is no reason to suspicion that he won't get there and probably after a try or two get safely back. And it may be that my grandchildren will move there, and take up residence there, simply feel that this is a nice place to get away from it all. Look down on earth, it is easy to do from here, but not with quite the vantage point the moon could afford. So these are prospects that are before us.

To convince a man that is able to devise a space vehicle that will allow a man to circle the world 6 times, and as one did, for 4 days from Russia, we begin to realize that is very difficult to convince this man that he is bankrupt, and hopeless, and helpless, and that he needs a Savior's dying love, and that he must stand at the door of grace, a self-confessed criminal, desiring only mercy, pleading only for pardon. This is difficult, very hard. But you see, God has said to this people that had something in which they could trust, I am going to take it away from you.

So when we find the Spirit of God preparing a person for comfort, for grace, it is always the same process. And if there is some loved one of yours, that you long to see come to Christ, I do trust that you are praying in accord with Divine operation. You know, many times we say, O God, save. And God's desire is of saving. But He cannot save until He has slain. It seems a little heartless to pray, O God, slay my father, my mother, slay my children, let the arrow of your truth pierce them through the heart, divide soul and spirit, expose their bankruptcy, disclose their need, unveil their lostness, crush them to Thee, crowd them to Thyself, break down everything on which they lean, strip them from everything in which they find confidence, take the treasures from the house of their self-sufficiency, and cast them away. Break them, Lord. And when they hear us pray this way, if they do, they suspicion whether or not we do really love them. But we that understand Divine operation realize that the only kind of people God can help are lost people. And we have to see them lost. Oh, we know they are lost, but they must know it. And so this is the order. And on the basis of the fact that God is going to strip, and God is going to break, and He is going to crush, and bring — this might be viewed by some as cruelty, but it is not. It is the greatest of mercy; it is the highest of love. And we are grateful to the Lord for this.

But we do not stop here. This is but introduction. We find in verse 3 that the prophet's instructions begin. Here we find the preparation that God requires is set forth in detail. If one is to avail themselves of mercy, there is certain preparation that must be done.

A man by the name of Schenk, a Southern Baptist, has written a most challenging and disturbing book, one that is destined, so we are told, to be one of the most talked about books in the decade 60 to 70. This was the opinion of the theology instructor of Southern Baptist Seminary who wrote the introduction. In this volume, LIFE IN THE SUN, he has this intriguing title as the first chapter, THE HIGH COST OF A FREE GIFT. And if you will ponder that a little, you will discover that there is more to it than the cost that God paid in the giving of His Son. For there is a certain price that you must pay. And I believe we are only honest with sinners when we acquaint them with what He asks. Some say, "What can I do to be saved?" (Acts 2:37) And the answer that came so explicitly from the "Apostle Peter was, Repent." (Acts 2:38) Of course, there were some Bible Students who thought to escape from the implications of this high cost of a free gift by eliminating repentance from the teaching, and the parlance, and the theology of this period called the age of grace. But when you find the Apostle Paul at the close of his ministry 35 years after he has begun, or very nearly, standing before King Agrippa, and giving an account of what he has done, he says, "Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but I delivered to them of Damascus and Jerusalem, the Jews and the Gentiles, how that they must repent and turn to God, and bring forth works meet for repentance." (Acts 26:19,20) You will understand then that this is that which was set forth in these next two verses.

For here is preparation required, if one is to be comforted by the grace of God. It is the word prophetically uttered that was to be proclaimed by John the Baptist. "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain:" (Isa. 40:3,4)

We turn, and I believe profitably, to allow the Apostle John — John the Baptist, rather, to apply this to us, even as he did in his own generation. I think we should recognize that the Scriptures is probably the very best commentary on itself. And when John came, he was prepared to make it absolutely clear that there was expected a price to be paid on the part of those would come to know the free gift of God's grace.

"As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet," and I read from Luke 3: verse 4 and on: "saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fires. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shalt we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:4-14)

Here he is applying this that is set forth as the fulfillment and the application of the preparation that God requires. What is it? You notice, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert" — in this sense the desert is used as a place of death, a place where death reigns, and this is a picture of the human heart. We are described as being dead in trespasses and sins, alienated from the life of God, separated from Him, and thus we are instructed, because in this death it is not the abandonment of, or the disintegration of moral responsibility and faculty, but the absolute misuse and abuse of moral ability. And the desert is not one because somehow there has rusted and dissolved all the capacities for choice in the human spirit. The desert results from man having committed himself to the principle and the policy, and the practice of selfishness as the end of his being.

If you will analyze what he has said to the publicans, and what he has said to the people, what he has said to the soldiers, it will be in every case that he is putting his finger right on this root of selfishness, and he is equating selfishness with sin, self-love, self-pleasing, self-gratification, being the very essence of sin. I will, as against the will of God, is the epitome of it, and the essence of it is selfishness. And so, John is saying, recognize that you have governed your life by a principle of extreme and absolute selfishness, that wherein you have even proved by some action unselfish, this again has been reflective, in the sense in which you have done it for the credit you would receive, or the pleasure you would receive, some honor that would come. See yourself, said he. Understand that nature of God's conflict with you is that you have lived to please yourself and made your own pleasure and whim the rule of your being. Recognize this, realize this, come to grips with the fact of the essence of your problem, see it from these particulars, let your abuse, said he, let your selfishness be a window, into which you can look into your heart.

Some weeks ago, in Denver, Colorado, I had an unusual experience. Through the past years I have stayed in many hotels and many motels across the country. But I have never had the proprietor take any particular interest in me. But there at Denver, the proprietor of the Rocking R Motel out west of Denver, was very gracious. And one day, he said, "Would you like to go out to the mountains?" Now, every morning we could see the sunshine on the snow on the mountains west of Denver, and I had never been in the mountains, the Rocky Mountains, and so was intrigued by it. But there looked to be no prospect of going. There was some talk of the pastors going, but it didn't materialize in time for me to share, so I said, "O I would be so delighted to go." So one afternoon we started. We drove in his car, around through the foothills, and then up around Mt. Evans, got out

at 11 thousand feet, the highest that I had ever been on land, and felt the little wooziness that comes from the rarified oxygen. We went even higher, the view continuously gorgeous beyond words. But the roads were narrow, twisting, and turning. Oh, they had been improved, but they were still rather hazardous. But finally we came down to a fascinating thing. There, cut right through the mountains was a throughway, an Interstate Highway #80, the extension, or replacing 6 and 40, the two famous highways across the country. And at great expense, they have filled up the valleys, taken the machinery that is now available, the blasting power that they have, blowing the mountains into the valley, and filling them up, cutting down the hills, and putting the road across, so that it is said that within a very short time that is, maybe 18 months, 24 months, 3 years, something like that, it will be possible to go from Denver to the Pacific Coast at 65 miles an hour right through the mountains. But my friend, it is costly. Just a short piece there, but when I saw the number of millions of dollars that it required, they could have paved the road with dollar bills, you know, and had them about 2 inches thick and it would probably have been an approximate - approximated the cost. It is always costly to make a way through difficult terrain.

And you see what sin has done is this. It has raised great mountains, prestigious ranges in the human spirit. Mountains of enmity, mountains of rebellion, mountains of anger, mountains of disposition that rise up to estrange one and separate him from God. Then there are valleys of iniquity, and valleys of uncleanness, and valleys that are there. And so here when God would come to the sinner, God would meet him, there is this mountain of rebellion that rises, and there is this deep valley that cuts down of uncleanness and immorality of thought, and mind, and word, and deed. And since the mountain is of man's making, and the valley is of man's digging, God properly says, Take down the mountains.

You say, Is this going to be to atone for sin? Are you trying to say, We work for our salvation? No, I am not at all. "Salvation is by grace through faith. It is a gift of God. It is not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8,9) And this is not in conflict or contradiction with the Scripture. This is an attitude, for it is attitudes that make it impossible for the judge to offer pardon to the criminal. It is attitudes that make it impossible for God to offer salvation to the sinner, and it is a changed attitude. To take down the mountain is not to atone for the sin, but to cause the attitude of the heart toward God, an attitude of rebellion, an attitude of enmity, and an attitude of blaming God, of finding that He is at fault. These attitudes are changed. And as one discovers that the reason that he is a sinner is that he himself has been in love with himself, following the inclination of his nature in the spirit of his day and generation, and the axioms and principles of his culture, he has raised these mountains of attitude against God, and he has dug these chasms of sin, and it now necessary for him to recognize that he has got to first stop the digging on the one hand, and he has got to be prepared to change his attitude on the other. And so he said, "Bring forth works meet for repentance."

You see, since the man is consciously, volitionally, and deliberately committed himself to sin, he must consciously and deliberately recognize the enormity of the crime of sin, and he must be prepared to forsake it. And this, we are told by the Word of God, is preparing the way of the Lord, making a highway for our God. It is called repentance. It is a changed attitude.

Let us see for a moment: A changed attitude about who is properly boss and ruler in the life. Oh, the sinner has deified himself. This is the essence of it. Selfishness that leads one to self-worship. The sinner is an idolater who has discovered, seen and known his own whim; his own fancy, his own pleasure is the highest rule of life, and so there arises a range, step upon step, this high mountain that separates one from God. There on the top of the mountain he sits, demanding that all time and space bring its offering at his feet that he is going to do just what he wants to do.

Now, before God is ever going to have comfort, or blessing, or forgiveness, the sinner has got to see this mountain torn down. It has got to be taken down. And he has got to see that the only one that is qualified to rule in his life is God, Jesus Christ. You see, the Jewish people said, when Pilot offered them their King, They said, "We will not have this Man to rule over us." (Luke 19:14) This is the attitude of every sinner, toward God, and toward His Son, Jesus Christ: "We will not have this Man to rule over us."

It may be that you have a profession of faith. It may be that you have learned the Gospel, that you have been baptized, and are a church member, but all of this, as valuable as it can be, has little value to you, unless you have torn down the mountain, unless you have made a way for the Lord, unless there has been repentance. You see, one can intellectually grasp the fact that

Jesus Christ was God come in the flesh, that He lived a sinless life, that He died an atoning death, that He was bodily and miraculously raised from the dead. They can grasp this, and rest on it, and still sit on the very top of that mountain of their selfishness, and self-worship, and self-adoration. They have not made a way for the Lord. They have not prepared a highway in the desert. And so this mountain has got to be — what is done? Is it digging? Is it lifting it rock, by rock, and boulder by boulder? No indeed. It is simply that self, that I, that ego comes to that place of laying at the nail pierced feet, and kissing those feet, and saying to the One whose feet they were that were nailed to the cross, Thou and Thou only art worthy to rule in my life. And with that one capitulation, and that one surrender, that mountain, that mountain is down.

And then, if one has seen this as the great range that separates us, then he turns to the other side and there is the chasm, there is the chasm of lying, and next to it is the valley of immoral thoughts and actions, and beyond that is some other valley, but because he has dealt with this first mountain that separated from God, who is going to rule?, who is going to govern?, who is going to be in charge?, and he has seen that Jesus Christ and Him only is the One that is qualified to rule, and adequate to rule, prepared to rule, and this is down, then he is prepared to recognize that I shall no longer go on in immorality, I shall no longer go on in lying, I shall no longer go on in thievery. And so valley by valley is filled up, as mountain by mountain is taken down. These are attitudes. It isn't a matter of work. It isn't a matter of years. It isn't a matter of process. This is a matter of purpose, this is a matter of standing at a given place in history, at a given moment of self-revelation, and we discover that the attitudes that we have had toward God, and the attitudes we have had toward ourselves and toward others have created this impossible and impenetrable terrain, and so when the Word of God says, "Prepare a way for the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God," He is taking about an attitude.

Now when the person has dealt with the mountain, who is going to rule, and when he has said, I shall no longer continue in my lust, I shall no longer continue in my thievery, I shall no longer continue in my disobedience, and he has prepared thus; he has filled up the valleys; he is still standing at the same place. And all of the change of attitude has not atoned for one past sin. You understand? It has not taken care of one deed of evil. It has not removed one gram of guilt. But what it has done has made a way for God to come in grace and mercy. Here he is, and he is as it were by the change of his attitude, and the change of his purpose, now there is a way that God can meet him, now there is a highway there where God can come to him, and in this we find that John the Baptist was being philosophically and psychologically absolutely sound, that God has so much respect for the man that he has made, and the manner in which he has made that man, that until the man's attitude changes, until his desire changes in respect to God, God will not violate it. He has so much respect for you in the nature that you possess, for it came from Him, all but the sinful part of it, that He will not save you against your will, He will not do it. He provides every means in grace. He provides every power necessary, every requisite, but He will not take you by the scuff of your neck, and shake you, and bend you. The word that comes is this, "As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that wicked turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die." (Eze. 33:11) And it is a change of attitude. It is a change of disposition. It is a change of action. This is that which God has required.

But notice quickly. The promised revelation of Himself. He doesn't simply say this in order that there should come to you some new process of self-improvement. He is asking that the road be made, not that you can come to Him, but that He can come to you. And He comes to you, bringing everything you need. Since your attitude toward Him is changed, the barriers are removed, the hindrances are gone, and then God comes to you. He comes to you in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, He comes to you in the sinless Son, the Man who lived in a life similar to yours, tested in all points like as you are, yet without sin, that reached down through the years and took you to Himself and became what you were, and died in your place and stead, and died as you. This is the Gospel, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture, that He was buried, and that He was raised again the 3rd day, according to the Scripture. And because the Lord Jesus Christ has dealt with your sin, and died in your place, accepted the sword of God's wrath in His own heart for you, God can be mercy seated as far as you are concerned. The blood has been sprinkled. The fire has consumed that Blood that was put upon the altar. The Lord Jesus, on the altar of the cross, poured out His soul unto death, and you can be forgiven, not because you have in the sense that your attitude changing has atoned for your sin. No, no. This is on the basis of the sacrifice of His Son, this is on the basis of His poured out life. But the fact that your attitude has changed has made a way for God to come in grace, marvelous grace manifest at the Cross, when the

Lord Jesus died in your place and stead. And so He comes to you bringing pardon. He comes to you bringing forgiveness. He comes to you bringing eternal life in Him, and He then becomes your life.

And you notice that it is not just this. When John the Baptist spoke to his generation, he said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you. There is one coming after me who is preferred before Me. He it is that baptizeth you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt. 3:11) And this is exactly what we have here. In other words, but the same principle: "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Isa. 40:5)

Yes, He did say, "He is going to gather His grain into His garners, but He is going to burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. 3:12) Hell is here indeed, and the consequence of an unchanged attitude, an impenitent heart, uncleansed, unforgiven sin, is certainly eternal separation from God. But the consequence of repentance, and forgiveness, and pardon, is not simply that you will go to heaven when you die. Oh, it is this. But it is not restricted to this. Heaven comes to you in the Person of God, revealing Himself in you, and unto you, and through you. The glory of that which is to be revealed is not when He returns. We find that a little later. We find that on down in the latter portion. But the glory that is to be revealed is the glory that is to be revealed in us. And this is why we find that the Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Colosse, said, "Christ in you the hope of glory." (Col. 1:27) Not only glory to come, but glory now. He it is, said John, "that baptizeth you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." The end of repentance was not just pardon, an escape to hell and home in heaven. The end of repentance was to know God, to know Him experientially, to know Him as the human spirit demands that He be known, to know Him as the way God desires to be known.

And so this is the promise that is held out before us, that when we have met the preparation required, when we have been willing to meet Him on His terms, He gives Himself. He gave Himself to the Cross and death, that He might Himself come into us and live in us. Thus we have it set forth throughout the Scripture. "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20) And the glory of the Lord is revealed in us, in the Person of His Son. And thus we have it in this same order here: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,..." (Isa. 40:3-5) And this is the goal of His grace: The revelation of Himself, for His glory is in Himself; the revelation of Himself in you, filling you, possessing you, not simply taking you where He is, but coming where you are.

But oh, notice the warning, so solemnly given here. And I would want to press it on our hearts this morning: "The voice said, Cry. And Isaiah said, What shall I cry?" Cry, plead, beseech, and implore, any word you wish that carries strong desire. And it is God that is expressing this strong desire. What is He saying? "All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever." (Isa. 40:6-8)

What is He saying? He is saying your life is just as a man's hand, as a little vapor that appears and vanishes away, as a tale is told in the beginning and a few moments later at the end. The longest of our life is but a hand's breadth. And so, said He, there is a strong danger that you are going to postpone and put off, and be content to go on with the possessions that you have in your house, the gold that is in your treasure house, and the buildings, and what you have. He said, Oh, cry. Warn them, warn them, entreat them. And you know I hear that same entreaty in Romans 12:1. "I beseech you, I cry; I implore you, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice." Oh, don't just use them as the vehicle of your own ambition, the instrument of your own plan, the tool of your own purpose, these bodies made by Him, and redeemed by Him weren't simply to be clods of clay, to be clothed and fed as their end, they were but vehicles in which God could come and tabernacle with man, and reveal Himself to man, and then reveal Himself through man.

You are here such a little time. So many years are spent, helpless, in the arms of mother, dependent upon teachers. From the time you are of age where you can make choice, until you are past the time of choosing, and helpless again in the hands of friends. For we come into the world, dependent upon the care of others, and we go out of the world dependent upon the care of others. He said, There is just such a little time in between. Do not waste it. Do not waste it. Oh, when you feel God drawing,

when you feel the Spirit of God pulling, when you feel Him lifting you out of yourself, and out of your lethargy, don't ignore it, don't wait. "For all flesh is as grass." You may be gone soon. And He ought to have every day; He ought to have every moment. He ought to have all the time, and life, and strength there is in you at His disposal. Do not waste your life, for it is just so very short.

And this is His warning. Have you heard in the past about the fullness of God, have you heard that the Spirit of God wants to fill you? What did you do when you heard? How long has it been since you have heard? When were you filled with the Spirit? Have the years gone on, and the grass beginning to wither, and the flower beginning to fade? and you have still not known. He said, This ought to be of paramount value, this ought to be of greatest importance, this ought to be of the highest concern, because you are here just such a little time. And when you know that God wants to fill you, and reveal His glory in you, what else should have meaning, what else should have value, what else should be important.

Let us bow together in prayer. The preparation, our Father, is always the same. There is the preparation that the sinner friends among us today must make. And seeing that the cause of their guilt before Thee is that they have loved themselves and rule their lives. And oh, if they will but take down the mountains, and fill up the valleys, change their attitude toward Thee, Thou wilt come in pardon and cleansing, and deliverance, and forgiveness, eternal life. But, Father, the same principle is extended into the lives of Thy children, Pardoned of past sins, now to discover that there is only one way that they can allow Him, the Spirit of God, to fill them, and that is to let the cross pierce all the self-confidence until all the treasures of talent, and ability, and strife have been taken away, and the cross has gone right through in the Christian's heart. We hear the Apostle saying, "I am crucified with Christ." "The things I counted gain to me, I count loss to Christ," "that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death." (Php. 3:7, 10) Grant this morning, Father, that those who have heard and learned and know that there is a life of the fullness of God, the normal life, filled unto Thy fullness, will realize that they are just as grass and we are passing so quickly from this scene. We are going so rapidly, time is so short. This ought to be of major concern, of primary interest, of deepest intensity of feeling and longing that Thou shouldst have in us and from us all that Thou dost desire. And since we can know Thy fullness, not one of us here ought to be content or rest with less than Thy fullness. And so, Lord, let us view ourselves today as the grass Thou hast said we are, just such a few days in time; time is so short, eternity is so long. Bring us to a renewed commitment, a renewed seeking, a renewed waiting, a renewed abandonment, renewed expectancy and anticipation, that the months of this winter to come shall not find us going as we have in the past, but allowing Him who died that He might live in us His life the freedom to live that life in us in the fullness of His Spirit. Bind the truth upon our eyes and forehead like phylacteries that we may think about it. Help us to meditate upon it until it becomes a triumphant, glorious reality in our lives. "Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people." Oh, we know the frailty, futility, and weakness of ourselves, but oh the marvelous grace, and power of our Lord Jesus, and to think that He is willing to live His life in us. O Father, so may it be, in each of our lives. For His glory.

Let us stand for the benediction. "Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." (Eph. 3:20,21)

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Morning, October 21, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.