

=====

==

THE YARDSTICK FOR MEASURING YOUR LIFE
by Paris Reidhead

=====

==

Summary: The sermon emphasizes the importance of using the word of God to bring conviction of sin and to measure spiritual growth, and highlights the significance of the cross and the labor of the Christian life.

Duration: 52:02 Topics: "Christian Life"
Scripture References: Genesis 1:1, Exodus 25:30, Exodus 30:1-10, Exodus 30:18-21, Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 3:23

--

DESCRIPTION

--

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing our sins before approaching God. He compares the labor in the tabernacle, which was used for washing, to the process of self-examination and confession of sins. The speaker highlights the need to judge ourselves and confess our sins in order to receive forgiveness from God. He also emphasizes the significance of praising God and having a genuine heart of gratitude rather than approaching Him with a selfish mindset. The sermon concludes with the reminder that Jesus came to save sinners and that everyone, regardless of their background, is in need of His mercy and grace.

--

CONTENT

--

God has very graciously provided us a yardstick by which we can measure our spiritual growth and development. He has given to us a pattern by which we can see wherein we may have come short and how much further

there is for us to go. He gave us this yardstick.

He gave us this pattern in the tabernacle in the wilderness. Now should your Bible have, as some do, mine does not, but as some do, a picture of the tabernacle in the wilderness, you would do well to turn to it. If you can't, however, would you be so cooperative as to try and visualize it as I describe it? A court, rectangular, facing the east, that had in the center, or should I say in the center toward the western end, a building covered with badger skin, dark brown and drab looking.

In the yard, in the court, between the building and the gate, were two pieces of furniture. If I had chairs on the platform that were available, I could set them out in such a way that you could see it better. The first would be here to my right, representing the altar of burnt offering.

The second would be about where I stand, representing the laver. In the holy place, the first room, there would be, in my illustration on the platform, three chairs, one representing the altar of incense, the golden altar of incense. The second, the table of show bread.

And the third, the light, the light stand. It's hard to know just how to describe it. It's not an altar of light, but the light stand, the lamp stand.

Then in the inner room, the holiest of all, the Ark of the Covenant. Now, we will recognize as we read Exodus, that God begins with the Ark of the Covenant, for this is a revelation from the heart of God out toward man. But of course, as we approach God, we do it from the other way.

We have to begin with the gate and then come to the altar of burnt offering. Now, I desire that you should view these pieces of furniture and the rooms or area in which they're found as steps and phases in the Christian life. We first go to the gate, off to the east, and on it we find the four curtains, the scarlet and the blue and the white and the fine twine linen.

Speaking of Christ and the fine twine linen of his preexistent glory, the white of his human purity is spotless, perfect purity. The blue of his regal splendor as King and the scarlet as the sacrifice, the one whose blood washed away our sin. So at the very gate of the tabernacle,

you see Christ presented.

Now, the day as we saw last Lord's Day evening, the day that, or the time that God gave to Moses the 10 commandments, he gave also the pattern, the description, the blueprints, if you please, of this tabernacle and all that in it is and all that pertains to it. It has been said by some erroneously and unthinkingly, I'm sure, that in the Old Testament people were saved by keeping the law. Well, such is not the case and must never be viewed by you as being the case.

There's only been one salvation through the ages, and that is salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of the lamb that was slain. The purpose of the law in the Old Testament was identically the same as the purpose of the law in the New Testament. By the law is the knowledge of sin.

The law is another vertical yardstick by which we can see that we have come short of the glory of God. The law was given that men might have a schoolmaster to check off their report card and show them that they'd failed. What thing soever the law saith it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped and all the world discover its guiltiness before God.

Now the Israelite had the law. Thou shalt have no other gods. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day. Thou shalt not steal or bear false witness. All of this revelation was given to Israel and written on the tablets of stone and on their memories by frequent repetition.

And the Israelite that desired to please God would use by means of the law discover that he had sinned. Now that was the purpose of the law. That was the function of it.

Then as now, the purpose of the law was to crowd men to Christ, to destroy their confidence. Sure, if you do these things, you live in them, but live by them. But who could do them? And who has done them? And who would do them? Didn't God know what was in man? The law wasn't a 10 rung ladder by which men would come to a knowledge of themselves.

The law was a yardstick that showed them that they'd come short of the

glory of God. And then they were crowded to grace. They were forced to come as self confessed, self admitted sinners.

And you see the Israelite go to the flock and take the lamb of the first year without spot and blemish and put it under his arm and come to the gate of the tabernacle and hello and call until the priest would come out. And then he would, he would stand in the presence of the priest with his hands upon the head of the lamb and he would confess his sin. I lied.

I bore false witness. He might say, I have stolen that which belong not to me. Whatever it was, he stood there, a self admitted, self confessed criminal against the tribunal of God.

There he is at the gate of the tabernacle, taking sides with God against himself. Now my friend, mercy and grace always begins there. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

That's the only kind of people he can save. There isn't any other kind that are candidates for mercy or can possibly expect mercy at the hand of God except sinners. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

Now we know that in the community around us, this great metropolitan area where we live, most of the people, safely 95% of the people are sinners. They hang now suspended by the providence of God and the mercy of God over the open mouth of a devil's hell. And the only thing that keeps them from eternal separation in place of suffering and anguish is the mercy of God whom they blaspheme and scorn and against whom they live in constant rebellion.

Now we know this, but there is no possibility of any one of this company or a number of the company being saved until first they discover their lostness. Now the reason I see no reason to look for a great in gathering of the lost is because there is not a great sowing of the law of God, of the truth of God. If it were possible, I should insist that 1960 be the year in which preachers become preachers of righteousness, exalting the majesty and the holiness and the justice of God and bringing to bear upon the consciences of men, the 10 commandments.

I say, if it were possible, this would become the rule and order. I haven't that authority and know that it shan't be done by my desire, but nonetheless, until such a time as we have a hearing again of the law of God, the truth that reveals the righteousness and holiness of God, we have no reason to expect God to work in bringing people to a saving knowledge of Christ. You see, dear friend, we want our loved ones to be saved, but are we willing for them to be lost? By that I mean, until they have discovered their lostness, they're not interested in salvation.

Now, we're responsible, therefore, to learn how to use the word of God in such a way as to enable the Holy Ghost to work conviction of sin in the hearts and lives of people. It's interesting to note that the last time on the American continent, when areas, districts in our land were moved upon by a great surge of conviction of sin was during the ministry of Charles Finney. I've been studying this matter of revival and the moving of God for 20 years and more now, and the last time on the American continent of any significant degree, when areas of a community were brought under a great sense of conviction was when Finney was preaching the righteousness of God and the law of God and was maintaining that sin is a horrendous crime against God, and sin was set forth as a volitional crime in which the sinner consented to his warfare against God.

And the preaching produced tremendous conviction. This historic testimony from Rochester, New York, where Finney, coming from a meeting in Buffalo, was stopped on the train by friends from Rochester who asked him to come and supply the pulpit there at the Third Presbyterian Church. He came, and on the condition that they would have meetings twice on Sunday and Tuesday through Friday.

For over four months, he preached to great congregations, urging them to stay away one night that another group might come. For four months, he preached. What did he preach? He didn't tell people to be saved.

He didn't give invitations to be saved. He preached that sin is a crime and sinners are criminals, and the law of God holds them before the tribunal of justice as condemned for four months. And then he gave an invitation for those that were awakened to their sin to come to the

anxious section.

A section of the church was roped off and guarded by the ushers, and it was called the anxious section. Two seats and three and four, and as more came, then it was enlarged until sometimes it would be a whole section of the church in which sat the anxious. Now they were awakened to the fact that something was wrong.

They had a beginning measure of conviction, and he would stop in the middle of his message to describe to these in the anxious section what they must do in order to be born again. Now this was the only invitation. When he was in Oneida, New York in a meeting, some years later from the one to which I'm describing there in Rochester, in the course of the message, the chief justice of the Supreme Court of the state of New York stood up in the balcony and raised his hand, recognizing him.

Mr. Finney stopped and addressed him by name, and the gentleman said, Mr. Finney, you have carried your case. You have convinced me. Sir, if you're prepared to give an invitation to the anxious section, I am prepared to come.

And in that meeting, over a period of nine months, every member of the state Supreme Court professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But it was through the preaching of the holiness of God and the righteousness of God, the law of God, laid firmly upon the consciences of men that the Holy Ghost brought them under conviction. Now some of you have unsaved loved ones, and you're concerned about them.

My dear, you've been praying for years that they'd be saved, and they're no nearer to salvation than they were. Why don't you move in on the side of God and start praying they'll be lost? That is, that they'll discover their lostness. Now to do that, you must work wisely with the Holy Ghost and bring them face to face with the moral requirements, the revelation of the holiness of God, which you find in the teachings, not just in the Ten Commandments, but Torah means teachings.

And it's the teachings that reveal this. Now the Israelite would come to the door and he would bring the lamb and he stood there, a self-confessed sinner, knowing that he deserved wrath and anger and judgment,

yes, and death. He would stand there and confess his sin over the head of the lamb.

And then the priest would take the lamb, slay it, catch the blood in the basin and bring the lamb and the blood in and put the blood on the coals. And then the lamb's body and flesh would be laid upon the coals and the coals burning, glowing red with fierce flame would lick up and consume the blood and consume the flesh. And the Israelites standing outside the gate would see the smoke ascend from his offering.

And he knew that there wasn't forgiveness in the blood of a lamb. Surely he did. He knew that the death of an innocent lamb could not atone for the moral contamination and crime of a responsible being.

But he knew that there was one coming that was pictured hereby. And this one that was to come was the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom John the Baptist said, behold, here is the lamb that fulfilled all the long-awaited hopes of the guilty of Israel. And these of Israel back in the wilderness that died in faith, having brought the lamb and seen beyond its smoke, the one that should come from heaven to which the smoke ascended and by himself make atonement for sin.

These, I say, that died in faith in the Old Testament went into Abraham's bosom and waited. And when the Lord Jesus died, it says he went and he preached deliverance to those that were captive. I believe he went to these that waited in Abraham's bosom and he said, your faith has now had its fulfillment.

The lamb has died. The lamb toward which you looked, the lamb for which you waited has died. God the Son has died to satisfy the holiness of God and vindicate the faith of sinners that trusted in the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty.

In Abraham's bosom, this company of those that had died in faith were moved from that place that they were held in this happy part of Sheol, moved until now they and all the redeemed that died to go immediately into the presence of the Lord. For to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. But all of this redemption from the penalty of sin, all of this redemption from the sword of the law that hangs suspended over the sinner, all of this, I say, is because the Lord

Jesus

Christ went to that place pictured by the altar of burnt offering.

God is holy. God had said the soul that sinneth it shall die. And God who cannot lie had determined that every sinner should die.

And you were a sinner and you had to die. God was angry with you. He had bent his bow and drawn the arrow to the very shaft itself.

God had wet his sword. It hung suspended over you. But God himself became flesh, the Lord Jesus.

And he stepped in the front of that bow and the bow was released. The arrow was released from the string and it pierced the heart of the Son of God and the sword of justice fell and cleaved him. And the Lord Jesus Christ died for you.

The just one died for the unjust that he might bring you to God. And there, the altar of the burnt offering that you see in the tabernacle was there at Calvary. And we saw, of course, that the glory of it was that this was the place to which Abraham had brought Isaac.

And that wonderful picture of the innocent son of promise dying, that he might go back alive. And so the Lord Jesus died. And the altar of burnt offering is the cross, is the cross.

And this is where the Christian life begins. When you come to the gate and stand in the presence of this one who is God, who became flesh in spotless purity, regal in his splendor and his power, and he's there now to become the one whose blood washes away sin. Oh, the wonder of it, the marvel of it, the point of beginning.

Have you been to the cross? Have you come to the altar of burnt offering? This is the first step in the Christian life. You can't bypass it. It was directly in front of the gate.

You'll never go further. You'll never go beyond the altar until you first stop there and seen that it was your sin that nailed him to the tree and your death that he died. You were the condemned culprit in Christ was made to be sin for you.

Oh, have you come there? Have you stood at the foot of the cross and confessed your sin and your guilt? Have you? Then if you have, you

know
that a life, there's life in a look at the crucified one and you see
him
dying for you. This is the point of beginning, the point of pardon,
the
point of regeneration. Have you been born again? Does your spirit bear
witness with your spirit that you're a child of God? There we are
right
at the gate.

Now we come to the next thing, the labor, the labor. The priest and
everyone that's in Christ, everyone that's come to the altar of burnt
offering and offered there in simple faith is a believer priest. In
the
New Testament, you have a glorious, glorious truth.

In Israel, in the Old Testament, only the children of Aaron and of the
Levites could come into the tabernacle, into the rather, into the
court.
But everyone that's born again is now made a believer priest and has
the
privileges that are afforded to believer priests. Now we're priests,
but
not after the order of Levi.

We're priests after the order of Melchizedek. Now I haven't time to
talk
much with you about that except to say that we're priests. And so if
you've come to the cross, then you have the privilege of fellowship
with
God.

But between you and the place where he dwells is the labor. What was
it?
A gold basin lined with mirrors, filled with water. And its purpose?
Ah,
my dear, its purpose was that you, as a believer priest, might have
the
means by which you could be cleansed.

After that, you had been pardoned. You remember when the Lord Jesus
girded himself and took a towel and began to wash the disciples' feet?
And Peter said to him, I'll never let you wash my feet. The Lord said,
well, if you don't let me wash your feet, you can't have fellowship
with
me.

You've got to do it. Well, then he said, all right, Lord, wash me all
over. Just everywhere.

He said, no, you don't need that. You don't need that. If you haven't been washed, you have no part in it.

You see, so many times people fail to realize that when they come to the cross, all of their past sins are forgiven and forgotten. That's the wonderful word. Removed as far as the east is from the west.

And they'll be remembered against us no more forever. Some of you will have trouble. Tonight you're in trouble because you're remembering the things you did before you came to Christ.

And you're wondering how you could ever, anybody could ever be a Christian and done such things as that. My friend, there's nothing you ever did that the rest of us didn't do or couldn't have done. And if we didn't do it, it's simply because we lacked opportunity or incentive.

The capacity was there. And that which was before you came to the cross is gone and forgotten and removed and remembered against you no more forever. Don't let the devil dig it up from under the blood and wave it in front of you and torment you with it.

It's there. It's under the blood, but from the day you're saved, you still are walking in the world and you're still subject to being soiled. In thought, yes.

In word, even indeed. You're subject to being contaminated. And so the labor was there in order that those that have come by the cross might have the means of removing that which would grieve God whose name is Holy.

Our Lord Jesus identified the labor for us. He said in John 15 three, now ye are clean through the word. In other words, the labor is a picture to us in one of its lovely aspects of the word.

And it has a twofold fact, a ministry. The priest would come to the labor and gaze over it. And in it, because of the mirrored bottom, he would see his face reflected and he could also look at his hands and his feet, but he could see wherein he may have been soiled.

And so the word, God's word, becomes the mirror to our hearts. And thus, in your pilgrimage as a Christian, it's first to stand before God, a confessed sinner, then to come to the cross, and then to come to the word, to open your heart to the revealing rays of love. Oh, isn't the

mirror a loving instrument? You say, well, if you saw what I see when I look at it, you wouldn't be in love with it.

Well, I'm just as bad condition as you are in that regard and get no consolation out of it in any terms of flattery. But isn't it wonderful to realize how perfectly honest it is. And you know, it takes great love to be honest, great love to be honest.

It's a pity that our friends think too well of us and our enemies think too badly of us. And you can't trust what your friends say. And you can't trust what your enemies say.

Where are you going to find anybody that's honest? Well, bless your heart. Do not despair. You have God's word.

And God's word is honest, not brutally honest, just honest, just fair, just right, just the way it ought to be, just what you need and no more.

And if you look at the word and meditate upon the word and gaze upon the word, the Spirit of God will show you that in your life which grieves God. And has a remarkable capacity of being able to x-ray.

Ah, yes, because so many of the problems that you face aren't seen from the outside. You know, we Christians are just a trifle a bit inclined to be superficial. Perhaps that's an understatement, but I'll let it stand.

If a person does something, if they smoke or drink or gamble or do a half a dozen other things, we might add to it. We say, well, he isn't separated. And the impression is that if you are separated, you're separated if you don't do these things.

And if you don't do these things and you're separated, you please God. But there's only one thing the matter with that. It just isn't so.

Now, I don't believe you should do these things, but I certainly don't think that because you don't do them, you should console yourself and say, well, I please God. Many people in insane asylums don't do any of those things, but they don't please God by it. The absence of those things aren't that which God looks for primarily.

Now, the presence of those things, of course, indicates that there's something wrong in the life, but the absence of them isn't proof that you please God. You see, a person might abstain from dancing and yet

have, shall we say, a dancing tongue of gossip and backbiting and whispering and malignity. Oh yes.

They might have a bitter spirit. They might have a vain heart and an ambitious life. And God looks on the heart, not just on that.

That's why your criticisms that are leveled at somebody are generally so wrong. You know, you don't need to take the work of the Holy Ghost, dear friend. Did you know that? You don't need to do the work of the Holy Ghost.

You just let God do in you what he wants to do, and I promise you he'll be faithful to the other people. Sometimes we get an idea that the Holy Ghost just isn't working. The Holy Spirit isn't ministering anymore, and we've got to take his work for him.

It's strange, you know. The devil used to be called the accuser, but he doesn't do that anymore. The accuser of the brethren.

The brethren are so busy accusing one another now that he can give himself to other tasks. He doesn't need to work at that. Oh, hear me.

God looks on the heart, and God is interested in the Spirit, and it's the labor. And if you're steadfastly coming to the labor, oh, you're going to be so concerned about what God shows you that you just won't have any time to worry about what's in somebody else's life. You won't.

Whenever I find anyone that is overly concerned about the lives of others, I find someone that is underly concerned about his own heart, his own life. Because if you just stay by the labor, the Holy Ghost is going to show you that with which he's concerned. It's like a ladder, you know.

A thousand rungs, and some eager man goes up to the hundredth rung, and he looks around, and he says, well, look at all those people down there around rung 10, and rung 20, and rung 30. He forgets that he came that way himself. And then, of course, the only reason he gets any consolation out of being at rung 100 is because he hasn't stopped to look at the other 900 that are ahead of him.

And you should understand that the Spirit of God is bringing you to

the
labor. That's he's bringing you there to gaze upon it, and to meditate
upon it, and to look at it until the Holy Ghost can illuminate the
dark
chamber of your mind, in your motives, in your spirit. And what you
see
there by the light the Holy Ghost gives is that which God insists must
be dealt with if you are to ever go into the holy place.

The labor does two things. It shows you what's wrong, and then it
tells
you how to take care of it. For the water was there, and the spigot at
the bottom, and the basin to catch the water, to wash the hands, the
feet, the face.

And this book tells us how to deal with that that God shows us. If we
judge ourselves, we shall not be judged. That's the first thing.

If we confess our sin, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sin.
How
are you clean? You're clean through the Word by revealing to you that
which isn't right, and you're clean through the Word by the Holy
Ghost,
drawing you back to the place of self-judging and confession. You'll
never outgrow it.

Every time the priest went into the holy place, he had to go past the
labor. He didn't have to make new sacrifice. He had to go past the
labor.

There he had to deal with daily, just as daily you see yourself in the
mirror and prepare yourself for company. So daily you are to come to
the
labor. Do you do that? Is this stage of your Christian life reached?
How
many there are that sit at the cross? They've never been in the
tabernacle and yet they look around and they say, well she's dirty and
he's dirty and she's wrong and he's wrong, but they've never come
themselves to the labor.

You come to the labor and you'll become so concerned about that which
God shows you that you'll be amazed at how much improved the others
are
and how quickly they become improved when God shows you the things
he's
dealing with. It's wonderful you know to come to the labor, to stay
there, to linger there, linger there. But you know he didn't want us
just to stay there or even to linger there.

That isn't the place. Confession isn't the end of the Christian life.

Brokenness, important as it is, isn't the goal of grace.

It's important, but it's not the end. There's something else. For we as believer priests, having come to the cross and having come to the word, are to go in to the holy place.

Into the holy place. And what do we find there? Ah, we find a table of shal bread. A table of bread.

The bread speaking to us of the living word to feed upon it. He said, I am the bread of life. Why do you read the Bible? To find out about the Hittites and the Jebusites.

My friend, you'll starve to death over their dry bones. There's no nourishment in the valley of dry bones of the Hittites and Jebusites. There's no reason for that.

You say, well I'm interested in prophecy. You'll starve to death in prophecy. What do you come to the word of God for? Christ said, they testify of me.

They testify of me. I enjoy the series by Dr. Simpson. Some, you know, it's amazing the different titles that men write have put on their book on the expositions of the Bible.

A dear friend of mine wrote the Bible of the expositor of the evangelist and another one writes the expositor's Bible and this Bible student's Bible and the researcher's Bible. But he'd gotten a glimpse of Christ and so he said, Christ in the Bible. Well that's why I come to the word, to feed on him, to be nourished by him.

The Bible is just a picture book of the Lord Jesus and you read it to see him in his perfections and his loveliness and his beauty. They testify of me and we preach Christ from Genesis right through and you come into the place to feed on the word. There, he cut you off from the world.

Do you have a quiet time? Well I didn't say did you have from 6 30 till 7 every morning and you get cross with people that don't interrupt you. That wasn't what I meant. I didn't say did you worship a certain half hour, hour of the day.

I say, do you have a quiet time? Do you have a time alone with the Lord?

Do you have some time when you can go into the holy place and the world's behind you and you can sit there with the word and you can just

look up and say, Lord feed me on the living bread. Nourish my heart in things eternal. The froth, the chaff, the noise, the meringue of this culture in this generation is so much with us.

My mother used to have a saying. She said, you'll never get fat on wind

pudding. Well, there's a great many people that have nothing but wind pudding.

That's all. Do you have nourishment on the living bread? Do you feed upon it? Do you go into the holy place not to get sermons or outlines or

for your Sunday school class, just to go in and let the living Christ become flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone into the holy place there to worship him by the unfolding and the revelation and the partaking of him. And you come to the table of showbread.

You know, there are people in this congregation tonight and this morning

that are going to have great victory in the year to come. And I know who

they are. They're the people that are taking time to meditate, taking time to read, taking time to think, taking time in the tabernacle, in the holy place.

You can listen to sermons. And if the Lord Jesus were to stand here, 52,

51 Sundays of 1960 and preach to you morning and evening and Wednesday as I'm doing, you would make no more progress from what he said than you

will from what I say, unless you meditate, unless you read, unless you think. It's imperative.

Now have you, so many people sit out there around the base of the altar

of bird offering. I'm saved. My sins are forgiven.

I'm pardoned. They don't come to the labor to be clean and they don't go

in to meditate on the word, to read it, to think about it, to find Christ and to feed upon Christ himself. Do you, do you, have you come that far? Have you come that far? Well, now you see, this is the place you're to go.

The altar to the labor, to the holy place, to the table of showbread. Then there's the altar of incense. And this is the prayers of the saints ascending into the presence of God.

It's going from here up. It's going from earth up. It's the worship and the adoration and the love of your heart.

You know, the most frequently given commandment in the Bible is the most frequently disobeyed. If I were to ask you tonight, other than those of you that have heard this in the past, what is the most frequently repeated commandment in the Bible? What would you say? Search for it now. Put it up on the ledge of your thinking.

What is it? Well, perhaps you're right, but the most frequently given commandment in the Bible is praise ye the Lord. Over and over and over again. How much praise is there in your life? So many times when people come to the Lord at all, it isn't to praise him.

They have a little perfunctory, thank you for past blessing, Lord, and then they go for about a half an hour with a celestial shopping list, a gimme list, you know. Just like the grocery list on the telephone. And they read off the things they want God to do for them.

I'm convinced that the reason so few prayers are answered is because of our impoliteness, if you please. Impoliteness. Disobedience is another word for it.

Our failure to praise. How much time do you spend praising the Lord? I talked with someone just the other day. They said, you know, I'm so desperately hungry to be filled with the Spirit.

I've been crying to the Lord and groaning before the Lord. And I've just been agonizing before God for at least three months. I said, and of course, nothing can happen.

My friend, God couldn't do anything with you. I pointed out, I said, you are so constricted with your agony. What you're trying to do is flagellate yourself so that God will take pity on you and give you what you're asking for.

I said, he won't meet you that way. I said, if I were you, I'd stop doing that. And I'd start to praise the Lord for the wonderful promises in his word.

After all, this was his idea in the first place, to save you from the penalty of your sin and take you to the cross with him and then move him to fill you with himself. This was his idea. Why don't you start praising the Lord for such a wonderful, wonderful purpose in grace? Then why don't you start praising him for his promises? And why don't you begin to praise him for what he's going to do in your life? Because he has more at stake in this than you do.

And the dear man looked at me and said, you know, it's never occurred to me before, but I'll start doing it. I'm interested to see what the outcome will be. It's the possibility of so groaning before God, you know, and so agonizing that the apertures by which he would bless us are so constricted with our own tension that he just can't meet us.

He can't touch us. But when there comes praise, when the incense begins to ascend, if you've ever seen incense burning, you know that as it burns, it breaks down. And when praise starts coming out, you break down.

Your prejudices, your misconceptions, your unbelief break down. And there rises up praise and adoration and love. Have you learned that? Have you come to the altar of incense? Is there praise in your life? Why do you think God went to such great length to repeat this commandment throughout the Psalms? Why do you think he did? Just because the psalmist couldn't think of anything else to say.

Every time he'd run out of something important, he'd say, praise the Lord. Is that why it's there? Never. It's there because it's the secret of every blessing.

Everything you ever get from God, you will get out of the altar of incense out of praise and adoration and worship. You must learn to praise him. You won't praise him if you come into that place without having gone to the labor.

Do you see why brokenness and confession is so important? But you see what a terrible thing it is just to stop there and not go on to praise,

which releases God to work. Then of course, there's something else. There's the witness.

There's the lampstand. The lampstand. Now this is twofold.

Of course, we know that after that, the Holy Ghost has come upon you, ye shall be witnesses. But I believe that the purpose of the lampstand is not primarily that you should go out and witness, but when you come into the holy place and you eat the bread and you praise him, then he shows you the way. He'll lead you into the very presence of God.

He'll lead you. For after all, we're going out from where we were in the world of death and sin into the presence of God. And there is the lampstand of beaten gold, no wood in this at all.

This is beaten gold, filled with oil, a picture of the Holy Ghost, who is the oil, illuminating our way and guiding us and directing us and drawing us, strengthened with might by his spirit, deep in the inner man, in order that our Christ may take up his lasting dwelling place in our hearts through faith. And you come by way of the cross for pardon, by way of the labor for purging and cleansing, to feed upon the word, and to praise him and to trust him and to believe him, to lay your heart out in desire. And he opens the way and reveals the way into the holiest of all.

And my friend, a normal Christian is a Christian who lives in the holiest of all. That's where he lives. Now, you must come to the cross, but you don't live there, finally.

And you must come to the labor of brokenness, but you don't live there.

Bible reading and study isn't an end in itself. And prayer and praise isn't actually an end in itself.

But there's the holiest of all. And this is that which Richard Baxter called the saint's everlasting rest. When you're drawn by him into this place, oh, you have it in these wonderful words that I've begun to quote from Ephesians 3. For this cause, I bow my knees under the father of our Lord Jesus, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that

he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit, deep in the inner man, in order that our Christ may take up his lasting dwelling place in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and foundationed in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and then to experience the love of Christ, which passes intelligence, in order that you might be filled unto all of the fullness of God.

Oh, the wonder of it. Drawn into the holiest of all. To adore him, to see him, to love him, to worship him, that he should lay hold of us, and we lay hold of him until he becomes precious beyond all else and all other design.

And it's to go out from the holiest of all to the world. F. B. Meyer went to George Mueller. He said, Father, for they call the dear man Father.

Father, why is it sometimes I preach with power and sometimes it's so flat and empty? And George Mueller looked at him and said, Son, it's because you breathe out twice when you've only breathed in once. Ah, it's to go into the holiest of all in the presence of him and breathe in him, and then to go out from the presence of the king and your garments smell of myrrh and aloes and acacia, and they take note you've been with Jesus. This is where we're to live.

It all leads to the holy place, the holiest of all. Intimate union, fellowship with the risen Christ. Where are you? How far have you come? You're somewhere.

Some of you have never come to the cross. Tonight's the night. Some of you have come to the cross, but you haven't come by the labor, and you haven't been able to get into Bible study and get into praise, but you didn't because you didn't stop at the labor of confession and judging.

Some of you have just gone in and you've made Bible study an end. Ah, it's not that. Everything leads to the revelation to your spirit of the risen Christ.

Where are you? How much further do you have to go? Don't despair. Just do what's there to be done and move on. He has much more to gain in this in a sense than you do, but you have everything.

Do you find yourself? Do you locate yourself? Do you see where you are?

You say, well, I'm terribly discouraged. You mustn't be. Just to find out the facts isn't discouraging because if you find out you haven't even come by the burnt altar or burnt offering, it's there for you.

Come tonight. If you haven't come by the labor, come tonight. Tonight, now, and on into the very presence of God.

Well, when John saw him, he saw him in the midst of the candlestick. This is where he loves to reveal himself. Where are you? Shall we pray?

=====

==

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/25/SID25581.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/paris-reidhead/the-yardstick-for-measuring-your-life/>

=====

==