

Slightly Healed

By Paris Reidhead*

Will you turn, please, to Jeremiah, Chapter 6. I begin reading in a moment with the 6th verse and will continue through the 17th verse in order that we might have the Scriptural background for our message this evening. Jeremiah, Chapter 6, verse 6-17:

“For thus hath the Lord of hosts said, Hew ye down trees, and cast a mount against Jerusalem: this is the city to be visited; she is wholly oppression in the midst of her. As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel as a vine: turn back thine hand as a grapegatherer into the baskets. To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord; I am weary with holding in: I will pour it out upon the children abroad, and upon the assembly of young men together: for even the husband with the wife shall be taken, the aged with him that is full of days. And their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken.”

Jerusalem is God’s chosen city, the place of His abiding, the city of His dwelling, the place of His testimony. It was there that He instructed the temple to be erected. This sermon in marble and granite, in fir, and in gold and silver. God had previously had an object lesson in the tabernacle in the wilderness, as He dwelt with His people. But when they came into the land, He selected this place that it might be the point of their meeting with Him, and that there this temple which Solomon built might be the place to which the eyes of all the inhabitants of the land should look, and in looking there should remember His covenant, remember the Law, remember the offerings, the sacrifices, and all the provisions of His grace. Thus in the Old Testament, Jerusalem stands for the place of His dwelling. It is synonymous with the place of His meeting with His people. It is also to be thought of as His testimony to the idolatrous nations around them. And when He speaks of Jerusalem, He is not speaking of mud walled houses, or of stone paved streets, nor actually is He speaking of a temple that was erected out of costly material and with great thought and pain. He is speaking of the witness that He had in His people Israel. This nation that He had caused to be born out of death. For Abram was when called as good as dead. Isaac was the seed of God’s miraculous life imparted to a woman far past the years of bearing, in order that there might come from one as good as dead a nation, which would have its background in the promise of God and the power of God, that they would never be able to say, See what we have done, what we have wrought. And thus it was that it began supernaturally, but it was formed as a nation supernaturally, for Egypt was that placed where it was developed, a heterogeneous company of slaves, slaves that had been demeaned by meaningless toil, bruised by cruel task masters, and turned into brutes by the absence of any significance for life or opportunity to become what God intended man to be.

But God loved this people, and by His stretched out arm and His great power, He delivered them at the cost of Pharaoh’s life and his army. As the pursuing army was destroyed in the sea, so God’s people were delivered by His stretched out arm. And it said, He gave nations, Egypt, Ethiopia, other nations He gave for Israel that He might have a people that would know Him and understand Him, love Him, and long to glorify Him. And thus Israel was God’s chosen wife (not bride but wife). He said He was married to her. And the purpose of His having this people was that He might have a witness to those about Him, a witness to the nations on every hand. And so Israel’s experience was after the third generation of the triumphant crossing of the Jordan

River under Joshua's leadership they went back to serving Baal and Ashtoreth. It was then from that time a series of ups and downs, disobedience, unbelief, wickedness, idolatry, leading to captivity, and then a Judge being raised up, a deliverer being sent of the Lord in answer to the cry of some, and this was God's way of ransoming this people.

But you saw the Prophet Isaiah in that striking 43rd Chapter that God said He was through with this wicked, this disobedient, unbelieving, fickle nation that would serve the Lord diligently in one year, and serve the gods of the land the next. And God said, I have had enough. I am finished with you, I am through with you. It is just not possible to get anything out of you. In the 5th Chapter He said, "What more can I do for you than I have done. I have chosen a vine, a costly vine; I have dug a field, I have fenced it in. I have put watchmen and guards, and when I looked that it would bring forth fruit, it brought forth wild fruit, wild grapes. What am I going to do now?" said He (Isa. 5:1-2). I am going to take the watchmen away. I am going to break the walls down, and I am going allow the vine to become trampled in the ground.

But He wasn't through at that time. Other Prophets came. These also served the Lord. These also were willing to stand as witnesses for the Lord Jesus, and we find that Jeremiah is sent of God. He was told by the Lord that the people would not hear him. If He sent them to strangers, they would, but as He had sent them to His own they would not hear him. It's a terrible thing for a man to begin a ministry with the word that came to Jeremiah saying that (as to Isaiah also for the same thing)... He said there would be a great forsaking in the midst of the land, yet there would be a tithe. And it was something similar that was given to Jeremiah.

Now we find him as he is dealing with the generation that's there, responsible to face the dangers of their hour and the claims of God upon them, and you've heard here how that God has spoken of this people, this witness. He addresses His words to Jerusalem, but it isn't walls and streets and floors and chimneys, and fire places, and stables. This isn't what He is talking about. He is talking about men and women that are there under His Name, and calling themselves the people of God. And He is saying that instead of finding the evidence of God's grace manifest in their life, He finds that they are like "a fountain but not casting out pure water, but casting out wickedness, violence, spoil, griefs and wounds." My what a testimony it is. What a sad day has fallen upon this land when God's servant has to say such a thing as He has said here. But I think that we find this parallel. We're dealing not now with a nation. We're not dealing now with a nation of America. I see no parallel at all in the Scripture between our land and Israel. We're not a Theocracy in spite of the fact that we have "In God we trust" on our coins, and now in our pledge of allegiance we are one nation under God. We are not a theocracy in any sense at all. We are a nation that has had a rich heritage.

The parallel is not to be established between America and Israel, and I don't even think it is to be established between the church and Israel. But the point of parallel is between YOU and ME and the PEOPLE of Israel, and to establish there whether or not we are going to accept the responsibility for our day and our generation. We're so apt you know to think about how England is going to do. But do you know that England's policy is made up of a few men, just a very few men that sit together, perplexed and confused, trying to arrive at what is expedient and profitable, and the wisest course to take. England doesn't have a mind. England doesn't have a conscience. England doesn't have a will. It's men, just ordinary men such as ourselves that by the accident of circumstances are pushed into responsibilities far beyond their ability and their insight. I have told you I think some time in the past of going into the office of the Director of Education in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, a faithful churchman in the Cathedral in Khartoum, and I wanted to get into the Ingessina Tribe. I said, "You have it in your power. You can sign a paper, and no one will criticize you, you as a professing Christian, as a member of the church ought to view this people with concern and give them an opportunity to hear." He looked at me and said, "I want you to know that when I sit behind this desk I am a servant of his majesty, and I am determined that I am going to continue in this as not letting my personal convictions and my religion influence my government responsibility." But he was. He was letting them influence. England doesn't have a mind. The United States doesn't have a mind, a will. It doesn't have a character. It's people, you, and me. Decisions are being made by men now sitting behind closed doors, that are going to affect your future. They are going to affect the future of this world in which we live. The decisions are being made by fallible mortals, frail men with all the perplexities and uncertainties, with all the prejudices that we have. Just imagine yourself responsible to make some of the decisions that have to be made every day, and probably will be world shaking in their consequences next week. Well they are made by people that have perhaps more information, but sometimes added information brings added uncertainty, and added

perplexity. But it is always the attitude of some to say, "Well, let the Government do it." And so there is an impersonal "they" that are responsible for decisions.

There have been decisions made by our government that are absolutely reprehensible. But who made them? The government? The United States? No. Some man, acting from motive best known to him, or perhaps not even known to him, or on advise, good or bad. The point I'm trying to make is this, that we cannot charge something as nebulous as the church, we cannot charge something as nebulous as the — as faceless as the nation. It finally comes down to this, God is looking for a man to stand in the gap, fill up the hedge. He is looking for a man. He is looking for a woman. He is dealing with you. Now if we are prepared to recognize that the nation of America is a composite of all of the influences, all of the personalities, the history, the economic pressure, the group pressures, we are not going to be so critical, because we are going to see that these are men. If we want to change the direction of the course of the nation then change the characters of the people that are directing the course of the nation. It is as simple as that. It has got to be a personal matter. And so we find that God is dealing here with Jerusalem. But then He turns from dealing with this faceless thing, this city of stone and brick, and He comes right back to the fact that there isn't anyone to whom He can speak.

"To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear?" This is the cry of the prophet. Is there a man, is there a woman in Jerusalem that will listen to Him, that will believe what He says, will accept what He says. Thus it comes back to the fact that in our day, in our generation, we must be prepared to accept personal responsibility for the future. God is looking for you. What are you going to do about the day in which you live and the responsibilities which you face? You cannot undo President Kennedy's decisions. You have to live with them, just as he has had to live with the decisions of his predecessors. And you can't do anything about a great many things. But God is not going to hold you responsible for what you can't change. He's going to hold you responsible for whether or not you are listening to hear what He is saying through the church today, He is saying to individuals today. Are you prepared tonight to say this, I am determined to hear what God says to me. I want to hear Him. I have opened my mind to hear Him. I have surrendered my will to Hear Him. I am prepared to let God say to me anything that He wants to say. Are you? Then you are on the ground where God can deal with you.

You say, "Will His dealing with me in any wise affect the future of the land, of the state of the church?" Will it affect? Of course it will. Of course it will. Why you'd be amazed how sensitive people in great government responsibility are to the opinions of individuals. And how important it is to find out what people are thinking. Now if you are going to recognize the fact that in this Scripture that is before us God is inditing a nation because there isn't anyone in the nation that will listen to God, speak through His servant the prophet. You're going to have to say, "Well, in this day and in this hour I can't listen for anybody else. I can't give attention for anybody else. I can't hear for anybody else, but I can hear for me. I can listen to what God has to say. I will open my mind, my heart, and my ears to what God is saying today. I am prepared to let Him speak to me." Now, that's the first issue that has to be settled. If there is to be something more than the slightest feeling there has to be a preparation of mind, a readiness of heart to say I want to hear everything that God has to say to me and to others. I am putting myself in the place where I will hear what the Lord has to say. Now that's not too difficult. But this is His first inditement against this nation, that they would not listen to Him, they would not give Him ear, they would not hearken. "The Word of the Lord is unto them as a reproach, and they have no delight in it."

My how difficult it is for God to bless a people when the people will not hear. How difficult it is for God to bless a church if the church will not hear. How difficult it is for God to bless you or me if we are not prepared to listen to the Lord and let Him speak to us. So the first thing that is essential if for you to be part of the answer, and not a complicating factor in the problem is that you set your mind, you set your will, you fix your attention in this direction: I will give attention to what God wants to say. This is the least I can do. I am prepared to hear.

Now when you say, "Hear," it does not mean just put your ear out, because you know it is too easy to turn the ear, to listen and to nod, and to say, Yes, yes, that's good. I'll think about that and perhaps I can do something. And of course you haven't heard a word that is said. It is too easy to do that, and this isn't what God is asking for. When He asks you to listen, He is asking you to bring every thought into the focus of that which is being presented, and to think about that which you hear. Now this is the point of beginning. Nothing can be done other than the very slightest healing unless there is to be this close attention to

what God has to say. Listen to the Lord. Then we find that God has also stated that there are old ways. This we find in the 16th verse. I want you to see that early now. “Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”

I have been a lifelong opponent to the spirit that I call, Dodobirdism, always looking backward to the good old days, not caring where we are going, but just interested in where we have been. Now I am not contradicting myself at all, I don't believe. If you want to look back it is good as long as you look far enough back to see things as they ought to be seen. If you look back to what happened in great grandfather's day, there is only one thing I would say about it. Remember Great grandfather was just as dissatisfied as you are, and he was looking back to the good old days or his great grandfather. And so there is no margin in this. If you look backward and say, “Oh, if we just could have been here in Dr. Simpson's¹ day,” remember the people in the latter part of Dr. Simpson's day were looking back to the early part of Dr. Simpson's day, and then the people before him were looking back to other days. I believe that this is just a dead end street. It really gets us nowhere if we have something in the past, in the more or less immediate past. But if you want to look back and find the good old ways, then you have to go back a long way, and that is back to the Word of God. Our Lord came to His generation and He said, “The traditions of the fathers have made the Word of God of none effect” (Mar. 7:13). In my library upstairs and at home I have accumulated as many sets of commentaries as I can afford. There are others that I would like, but refer to them because they are available in libraries elsewhere. But you know, this is what I discover. It is extremely easy to become in bondage to a commentator. Perhaps you will recall my having related this. After these years there is hardly anything in the past before you that you haven't heard some time or other. I do not want to keep continually apologizing, but I did make — tell you that I grew up, trained in a rigid dispensational scheme of theology, and in the First Baptist Church of Little Falls, Minnesota, one day, inspired by something from Matthew 5 or 6, prepared a message. And it just leaped out of my heart, full born. I put it down on paper and was preparing to preach it. Then I thought well before I do that I'd better find out whether or not this is orthodox, shall we say kosher, and so I turned to Dr. Gaebelin's book, a set that I had there, and picked it up. I turned to the appropriate verse, and to my amazement and grief I found out that I was on the wrong track, that this didn't fit the scheme. And so I put the sermon aside. Then I began to think on the way out, You know if I should die and someone went through my effects they would find out that I was not quite orthodox. I can't leave that there for posterity to question my wisdom. And so I went back and I tore it in two and threw it in the waste paper basket. But this didn't seem nearly adequate for such a crime as mine. And so I tore up one half in small pieces and left it there, and the other half in small pieces and let it in a waste basket down the hall on the way out to my car. Now you'll have to say there is no chains, no slavery in all the world quite as destructive as the chains around the mind.

You can say, The Bible is inspired. But if it comes to the point where what is inspired is no longer meaningful to you then the inspiration is a technique rather than a testimony to truth. And so I found that it was impossible for me any longer to labor in the shackles of a system, whatever the system would be, that would put such fear in my heart. And so I am not speaking against the thing to which I refer, the men to whose books I refer. I am speaking against the attitude in my heart that caused me to be intimidated by the slightest frown. Well now having a multitude of commentators around you on every hand is a little compensation, because you find that they fought violently with each other, and took great umbrage with one another, and carried on living conflict with men long dead. And of course I would get a great thrill out of that because I find usually one say, You know, so-and-so says this. And I write that down. But he was wrong, I say this, and I write that down. And then someone else said this, and I write that down. That becomes the three points of the message. You see they all were looking at the same diamond from a different facet, and they all had some truth and so we just accept it. There is certain value in conflict if you can see the elements of truth over which they were contesting and contending. But the principle of it is this.

How do you read the New Testament? How do you read the Book of Acts? How do you read the book of the church? As a history book or a text book? How do you read it? Are you prepared to listen to the Lord? Where is He going to speak? Is He going to speak from the clouds? Is He going to speak on a rainbow? Is He going to speak from the marquee over here where the lights flash on? Where is He going to speak? He is going to speak through His Word. How are you going to hear Him? You

¹ Albert Benjamin Simpson (1843-1919) founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance

are going to have to listen to the Word. And where are you going to find the Word? You are going to find it in the record that He has left. And what is your attitude going to be toward it? It is going to be, "Teach me, Lord. Speak, for Thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:9). Where? You're going to listen to what He has said, what He has told about the new thing. You're going to find it out. You're going to discover that Acts is a text book and not a history book. You're going to discover that the New Testament Epistle is a text book, and not a history book. And you're going to have to come back to the place where you say, "This is His pattern. This is the manner in which He wants us to walk." These are the good old ways, in which He has intended us to move. This is the path that He has intended us to take. How frequently we are prepared, we are satisfied with far less than the Lord is. It takes very little to satisfy most of us. And so we are prepared, if the finances rise, the attendance rises, the enthusiasm and interest rises, we are prepared to equate that with God.

I remember one Pastor down South saying, "I know God is for us. We had 60 people join the church last Sunday, and this is proof that the Lord is on our side and what we said is right." And to the man who told me that, I said, "Would you please go back and tell him that he missed it completely. It is 61 people. He missed it by one." The Lord isn't on his side at all. He needed one more. How did he know that it was 60 and not 61, or 60 and not 65, or 70 and not 60. How did he know? Where do you find the statistical margin, the statistical evidence that what you are doing is right? If numbers are the success, the Jehovah's Witnesses are far more successful than most other things because they filled Yankee Stadium to the place where there was standing room only and seated all around. If you measure success by any of these criteria then where do you stop? No. What is the standard by which we judge whether something is right or wrong? Whim, fancy, authority? No. We've got to come back to something absolute, something inflexible, something that doesn't change. We must come back to the Word of God. And therefore every adjustment that we make, every accommodation that we make is just the slightest healing unless it brings us back to the Word of God. Thus there are good old ways, ways that we are to walk in, and they're established.

But let's come back again to the fact that we said that it's not the church but it's you. It is a personal matter. You are going to discover then that when the Lord is speaking in the Book He is speaking to you. You are going to read the Book on the level of, This is God's Word to me. He is telling me the kind of a person I ought to be in relation to the sovereignty of Christ, that I ought to be in utter submission, live in total commitment to this risen glorified Lord, and anything that's in contrast to that, anything that violates His authority, is to be dealt with as the sin that God counts it. And if you simply say, Well I want to be accepted by my group, I want to be approved by them, this is healing the hurt slightly. The great crime against God is that we turn to our own way, and to heal this implies a total abandonment to His will, genuine repentance completely given, heartily offered and perpetually observed. And so, if there is to be something genuine and real, it has to go back to God's standard, not ours. It has to be pleasing to Him, not to me. It's so easy to please us, but it's important that we make sure that we are not pleasing one another, but that we are pleasing the Lord. There are good old ways to walk in, and these ways that have been established for us in which we have been told to stand. These are the ways wherein we are going to be judged. You'll never find that God has pleased to bless until we come back all the way that He wants. It is imperative therefore that you find out, just as we've been seeking to bring you, (whether you accept the fact that the outline we've given is the only one, or the proper one, this is up to you) but the fact still is that there is such a thing as the normal Christian life. There are standards, phases of relationship, there are aspects of development, and there are steps in progress in the Christian life, and it remains therefore for us to recognize that things have to be real in our lives if they are to please the Lord. It is so easy, you know, to put things in a package, then say, Now if you will accept this package you come down, or you sign, or you do this, or you do that, and equate a moral action with a physical expressing. This is wrong. It cannot be that way.

For instance, as we have taken you week by week, and we still have a hand full of them here in the pulpit, if we consider what the Lord has given, awakening cannot precede conviction, and repentance has to follow conviction, and faith can only come on the grounds of repentance, whether you know it or not and can make the delineations. There is still the matter of being genuine, there have to be phases of progress-out of this that has been real comes this that can be real. But if you move on this level superficially the next step is going to be superficial, and from that point on it is going to be superficial. So the important thing for you to understand then from what we are saying tonight is that every phase in your spiritual development must be real. It must satisfy the Lord. It must please Him. There are good old ways that He has established. You are to ask for these, and "you are to walk in them, for in such you shall find rest for your souls." But there can be no rest unless your life is lived on the

level of reality, genuine reality each step, for the place that you allow something to pass and it is superficial, it is light, it is shallow, that place is the place where your Christian life becomes artificial and your growth stops, your spiritual development is impeded, and from that time on you are going through the motions in anything that would seem to be in advance of it.

This we will call "Healing Slightly." Oh, how easy it is for one to have a slight awakening. How easy it is for one to have some conviction. How easy it is for one to have a little repentance. How easy it is for one to have just enough faith to get out from under the cutting edge of conviction. How easy it is for one to see just a little bit of identification with Christ, and have a partial victory. My dear friend, there is to be seen something in my heart and yours that is a characteristic of the race of which we are a part. And that is, we want to get by. We tried it when we were children. Your mother said, "Wipe the dishes." So you went like this. They were dripping wet, weeping on every side, but you tried to get by. And so being of Adam's family, you mother had to deal with you. She knew all about you. She was the same way as you were. And so she to say, "Now you wipe them all over again." And this time she examined them and a few were put out. You see, you were trying to get by. And in school, you are trying to get by. And so it has developed all through the earliest days of your life that you were living in a society where the pressure was to try and get by. And when we come to the things of the Lord, we carry the same attitudes we have developed into this. This is one reason why I answered a young student out at Queens College this past week. He said, "What kind of people make the best Christians?" And then he said, "The beatniks or the drunks from the Bowery?" He said, "Which ones when they are saved make the best Christians; the people that have been way down and out when they are converted, do they become so enthusiastic for Christ, or the people that have been way out on the extreme in thought and so on in revolt against..." I said, "Personally, I think neither make a particularly good Christians because they have a great many personality problems and traits that are going to carry on over afterward." I said, "Do you want to know who I think makes the best Christian?" He said, "Who?" I said, "The one that has undergone five years of strict apprenticeship in any trade, that has learned laws, that there are laws in metal, and laws in wood, and laws in wool, laws in paint. They have learned laws and have learned to cooperate with the laws. I have no influence, but if I did, my dear friend, I would see to it that no one got into college until he had completed an apprenticeship in some basic trade." I think the Jewish people of our Lord's day were absolutely right when they said, A man's trade is his estate, and I do believe that the time is going to come when there will be far more emphasis on it than there now is, especially since the hospitals are telling us that the primary means of recovery for the mentally ill is to give them the therapy of some creative craft or trade. And so we see sick people going in and learning how to run a loom or work in a power shop with some tools and getting well, just well enough to go back to the ulcer circuit and break down again in a little while. But we are glad that they have learned that there is certain therapy in doing constructive things with their hands. So personally I think the one that has mastered a trade, mastered the laws of earth, or of metal, of glass, of wool, fabric, or fiber, that this person is best prepared. He has learned that you can't cheat. You can't cheat on a piece of metal. You can't cheat on a piece of wood. You can't cheat on wool. It's there or it isn't there. And oh, if we could just discover that we can't cheat on God. It has to be real! It has to be genuine! It has to have gone all the way through. You can gild this, but gilding it does not make it gold. And you can gild the life, but it has to be real. If God would give me my choice of ministries in the world in which I serve it would be to ask Him to make me an apostle of reality in the things of the Spirit, that it be real from the very first, a real awakening, real conviction, real repentance, and reality each step of the way up. It's so easy to have formulae. It's too easy to set up a little patter, a little hoop you jump through and you are in. No we can't do that, my dear. We have got to recognize that if there is to be a conformity to the image of Christ, there has to be a healing of the illness, not slightly, but deep, deep surgery that goes to the root of the malignancy, and strikes at its core, and brings it on up in health. You know full well that is the purpose of God in grace to deal with you. And so if you are to ever know all that God has there has got to be a ruthless, honesty with yourself.

If you would like to write down two words, two phrases in the back of your Bible and hold them as precious as I hold them. I wrote them down in my mind. I haven't had them anywhere on the page, but perhaps you can remember them. It is simple enough. I sat in the office of J. Robertson McQuilkin, the honored son of an even more honored father, the founder of Ben Lippen Conference and Columbia Bible College. And talking with this dear young man, now missionary in Japan, and he said to me. "You know, after my years in my home, with my father, and in the school and in the conference, and then to college and seminary, there are two expressions that have come to mean more to me than anything else in all the world." I said, "What are they?" He said this: "*Intellectual honesty, and spiritual integrity.*" I don't believe you can improve those. Intellectual honesty,

and spiritual integrity. This is what God is saying to His people through His prophet. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

We find people today glibly talking about faith in Christ, that leaves them unmolested in their sin, unchallenged in their iniquity, content in their ungodliness, and disobedience. And we say, Peace, peace. Well I know the Lord. And our Lord has stated expressly and clearly, "Whosoever is born of God doth not keep on practicing sin, for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot *sin*, because he is born of God. And this is manifest, the children of God and the children of the devil" (I Joh. 3:9-10). And so as we come back to the Word then, this is what we are discovering, that God wants these words to become real, intellectual honesty. Listen to what He has to say, face the claims that He makes, the correction that He makes, the inditement that He makes, the provisions that He makes, opening our mind to all that He presents and all He offers, to Him. And then, spiritual integrity that insists upon reality in every area of the life.

Now you know that there is great consequences of pretense and hypocrisy. Let me put it this way. The day that you read the Bible just because you read it yesterday, and you don't want to break your record, you started to catholicize your experience, you started to form your own superficial level of pretense, and then when you come to the place that you find that you are praying just because you do not want to get a reputation in your own mind of not praying every day, and you are just praying to keep up your record, something superficial has happened, something deadening has happened, something destructive has happened. When you were saying, or doing, or acting anything other than out of the flow of life, something is happening to you that is enduring and callousing, and deforming, and withering, that cuts the very life flow. There has to be integrity. There has to be spiritual integrity. You know that it's true.

You know that in the past - I think of one man, just dealing with him the other day, telling me about it out in Indiana. He told of a man that came to an altar where he was. He went to see him and prayed with him. He said, "Oh, it's all right. It's all over." A little while later this same man came to the Pastor and he started to tell the Pastor about his problem, then he said, "Well, the Lord has given me relief." He had been to the altar with this Pastor and said it was all over. He went to the office of the Pastor and said, "It is all settled now. I have peace." But you know three or four years later, this man's life had become immobilized. He had become almost atrophied. He met at another altar in another church, a rally, and this time he said to the speaker, "Stay right there with me on this altar;" I must tell you. Now in the past he hadn't wanted to mention his sin. He hadn't wanted to tell what he'd done. He hadn't wanted to put into words what had happened. And he hadn't gotten peace. He just had enough to get up and go again, but the thing kept eating on him, kept eating on him. And finally this day at that altar with the Pastor nearby praying, he said, "Pastor, come here." The Pastor came over, and the speaker was there, and the man went back to the thing of 4 or 5 years before. He told what had happened. He told his sin, he told his failure. He told his shame. And you know, it wasn't until he was willing to go clear down to the bottom of it and get it out that it stopped tormenting him, stopped bothering him. He had to get it out. He had to get it clear. He had to get it free. And from that time on there was marked development and progress and growth. Oh, how important it is that we should not accept a placebo; we shouldn't accept an aspirin when God wants to do spiritual surgery. Now you are the only one that can demand this. You've got to set this as the goal of your Christian life. I am not going to accept the superficial dealing. I am demanding reality. And go right to the root of the matter, and build on the solid foundation of what's real. Distinguish between what your intellect perceives and your heart has experienced, in each step of your Christian life and your Christian development. Don't say peace, peace, when there is no peace. And don't let anyone else say it. Insist on reality. Insist on genuineness. Insist on what you have as being real.

I close with this. When I came back from Africa in 1949, I was desperate because of my own sense of failure, spiritual failure as a missionary. And I think you may have heard this, that I went to the Pastor in Palm Beach, Florida, and he said, "Well, why don't you go to Seminary." I went up to a seminary, matriculated, bought the books, paid the bursar my fees, and got all ready to settle in. Our second child was expected in April, wife was cared for with the family in Florida, and I was going to take some time at seminary, work toward a degree. Well I sat there one night and looked at the books. Some of them I had read and been bored stiff by when I read them, and now I was supposed to study them for a semester which seemed nonsense. I couldn't come to that. And I knew that this was just an escape from the issue. This wasn't what — I didn't say I didn't need seminary, but I didn't need it for why I was taking it. That wasn't the reason. But the next day I went and said, It is hopeless. I have no heart for this. I want as much money back as you can give me. They gave it to me. Then I said, Now will you let me stay in your

room for a little while. I was honorable enough to stay here as a student, would you allow me to stay here. I want about 4 or 5 weeks of rest. I have to think and pray. And they kindly agreed. So I just stayed there in seminary, seminary dormitory. I would pray all day. Sometimes sleep all day. Made no difference. Nobody cared. I didn't interfere with anybody. But the whole purpose of that was spiritual inventory. I tried to heal slightly. I read this book by that speaker out in Africa, and I said, "Now Lord, I'll take it by faith, but I didn't take anything by faith." All I had was faith enough to get up and go along enough until God caught me and cornered me again. I didn't have reality. And so I said, This isn't doing it. Nothing happened in this. So I started hunting for something real to build on. And you know that my heart was just filled with truths that I had gathered here and brought from there, and put there, and I began to sort through and blow them away the same way children are raking the yard these days and getting the leaves off, last year's leaves, so that life can spring up beneath them. And I started hunting for something that was alive, and I went back through 1949, 1945 when I had gone to the mission field, 1943 when I had started to College, 1940 when I had graduated from the Bible Institute, - 1937 when I had become Pastor, 1935 when I started my training, and I didn't find anything real. You mean to say, You didn't remember anything you had been taught? I had far too good a memory not to. But I remembered what I was taught and saw them as what they were, words, good words, true words, but words, orthodox words, biblical words, but words. You cannot live on words.

You know what I discovered? The last real thing that ever happened to me was the first real thing that ever happened to me in relation to God. Back in 1932 at an old camp meeting down in St. Paul, Minnesota, Red Rock, when Paul Rees² gave the invitation, and a boy came up and knelt in the straw, broken, and bankrupt, and lost as the devil. And a man came and opened the Word and pointed him to Jesus Christ, and saw the wounds of the Son of God cleansing a mountain of guilt. And that night casting myself out over the abyss of hell I landed firm in the arms of His infinite love. And God for Jesus' sake forgave my sin and gave me the witness of the Spirit that I had been born again, and I could no more deny the reality of that than I could deny my own existence as a person. And so I found out, that after how many years? 17 years I had to begin all over again as a baby.

I remembered what happened. I gone the next day to Julia Hibbard, bless her memory, dear, dear woman. My how she helped me. I used to go to Red Rock just to be near her. She was so fragrant. But you know fragrant people can sometimes do foolish things. She did. I said, "Miss Hibbard, last night God saved me." She said, "Well, that's fine, Sonny. Now you need to be sanctified." I didn't think it was nearly that light. But she said, "Come on with me." So we went in to the altar, and she said some words, which I don't remember. And I got down beside her and I prayed, and I did everything she told me to do, and then she saw Dr. Rees and she said, "Sonny has something to tell you." And I said what she told me. And what had been real now was covered with a veneer of superficiality, and from the day after I was born again I began to accumulate words until God finally got me cornered, and had me see that the Christian life is not words, but it is the presence of the living Lord. My hurt had been healed slightly, and there was peace, but there was no peace. It hadn't been real.

O dear heart, tonight, don't let anyone say "peace, peace when there is no peace." Be honest with your own heart, because God can only meet you there. And if God can give us a wave of honest hearted men and women that are absolutely determined to have reality there is still hope that He can do something even in days as far advanced toward destruction as these days are. But you know where it's going to spring out. It is going to spring out from within your heart, and yours, and yours, and yours, when you cry out, My soul demands reality. I can't take words. I've got to have Him. Not just the words about Him, but Him. O don't be content to be slightly healed; demand reality, whether it's of repentance, whether it's a matter of regeneration, justification, the witness of the Spirit, victory, brokenness and confession of sin, the fullness of the Holy Ghost, every step and phase of the Christian life has to be real, has to be real, has to be real.

Is your life real? If people knew what you are deep within you would they like you as much as they do now? God knows. He loves you. He is your friend, but He demands reality. Don't be content to be slightly healed. Don't say peace, peace, to yourself when there is no peace. There are good old ways to walk in. He says, "Stand, stand ye in the way. See and ask for the old paths, the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." There is rest here and there's no other place.

² Dr. Paul S. Rees (1900-1991)

How real is your experience? How real is your life? Where did reality begin? Where did it leave off? Are you determined to have reality in every step and phase and aspect of your life, Can you say, My soul demands reality? Don't be content to be slightly healed. Insist on reality. Shall we pray.

I wonder if the Spirit of God has spoken to some heart tonight and someone will say God has found me out. I've met so many words, so many words. My soul demands reality. All I'm going to ask if this is you, you'd raise your hand for prayer. After the service is over and the benediction is said, I'll be happy to meet with any who wish to stay and we can meet here in Wilson Chapel. But all I'm asking now is for you to start by saying, my soul is beginning to demand reality and I see areas of my life where I've had words, healed slightly peace, but there hasn't been any peace. I'm going to stand in the good old ways and ask for the good old ways for God said there would be rest for my soul. Right now I am restless. Would you raise your hand? Everyone, yes I see it, God bless you. Are there others? Thank you, you may take it down. Yes, I see it. Still others, anywhere? Yes, I see it. God bless you. Anymore? Anyone? God's found me out, found me out. It's just not real. I want reality. I'm not going to embarrass you. I want you to honest with yourself. If you feel there's just say yes, God has, put your hand up, take it down, put you on the step toward reality. I can't make it real, but I can help you to recognize and deal with what God has shown you tonight or else another time. So just a moment. Pray for me, yes, my soul demands reality. Anyone?

Our Father, Thou hast seen the hands that have been raised, the hearts behind these, the indication, genuine, sincere, and openhearted. We trust demanding reality. O Spirit of God, Thou knowest what Thou art saying to us as individuals, what Thou art saying to the church, what Thou art looking for. Thou art looking for people that are determined to be healed throughout, no malignancy allowed to remain, no infection tolerated. It's got to be real. We pray, Father, for these whose hands have been raised. We pray for others to whom Thou hast spoken, but who have not made this expression, to all of us that have heard Thee speak in some area, for none of us but what heard Thee speak somewhere. Grow out of our Lord Jesus. Move upon our minds and wills tonight and demand, help us to insist for ourselves and for the glory of Christ that in everything we not be slightly healed but that the matter be dealt with. Breathe upon us Breath of God. Oh, that Thou couldst get a people who will meet Thee, "stand in the old ways, the old paths," allow Thee to be God, allow Thee to do again as Thou hast done. Thou canst break forth on the right hand and on the left and start a movement for eternity. Come upon us to that end. For Jesus' sake.

Do not leave tonight with unfinished business. When I say that, begin at least. I can't promise you that just because you stay for prayer all your need will be met, but I believe that if you respond to the prompting of the Holy Ghost and seek help it will put you on the way to clearing up all that is superficial and getting a foundation of reality on which your Christian life can be built. So do not leave tonight without the help that you feel prompted of Him to beg and ask for.

Let us stand for the Benediction.

Now Father, seal Thy Word to our hearts. Grant that [Tape stopped] our parting may be in gratitude that Thou hast kept for us good old ways. Grant that we may stand in them. Take us with a new hunger back to the Word to find out what these ways are, and may the days of the week that lie ahead be days of precious experience of the unfolding of Thy will and purpose and plan for us, and lead us as a people to the place where Thou canst use us as an instrument of blessing, in these trying and tragic days which Thou hast called us to serve. For Father we feel that the warning to Jerusalem is a warning to us, to the church, and to our day, and to our land. O God, grant that it may be heeded, and heeded by us first. For Jesus' sake we ask it. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, March 25, 1962 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.