

The Voice of the Lost

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I resume tonight an interrupted series of evening sermons which I have called Voices That Entreat Us. I have talked of the voice of God's love, the voice of Jesus' blood, the voice of reason, the voice of conscience. Tonight, I speak on the voice of the lost.

Let me read the words of our Savior as found in Luke 16, beginning with verse 19. There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.

Moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died and was buried.

And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things.

Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot. Neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.

Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, that thou would send him to my father's house. For I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham said unto him, they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead. Verse 31, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

This cuts across about everything that I have heard in evangelistic circles from the time I can remember. Deathbed stories are the stock in trade of the preacher. And if he can get a series of handkerchiefs out, and have it said there was not a dry eye in the house, he feels that he has done something. For there is a feeling that if the dead speak, and we could get somebody back from the dead, it would mean a great deal.

Our Lord Jesus Christ knew humanity better than we know humanity, and He said that there is more power in the Word of God to convict the human conscience than there is in apparitions, or ghosts, or dead men come alive, or miracles. So that the conscience

that will not be persuaded by the Word of God, would not be persuaded if a series of dead men came back from the grave and told their horror stories.

Now that seems contrary to facts, but Jesus said it. So, let's string along with the Son of God. That's not my text, however. I felt I wanted to say that.

Now, in this series of sermons, I've had a single thesis. I have attempted to develop it variously by approaching it from various directions. My simple thesis has been that man is a moral wanderer, and God is calling him home, and that He is calling him home by many voices.

Now, man is a moral wanderer, venturing dangerously from a home in God, and unable, or, and unwilling to return. But I have used a generic word, man. And I think I know the treachery of the human soul well enough that I'm not going to let you hide there, behind that generic word, man.

I think one verse in the Bible that's the easiest verse to hide behind that I know anything about, is the verse, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. That is the prime favorite text for the Bible school student who is studying how to win souls in ten easy lessons. He falls back on that, and he attempts to bring conviction on a man by saying all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. One of the most comforting verses in the Bible. You know that now.

Think a little bit with me. One of the most comforting verses I know is all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Because our reaction to it is, the universal reaction to it is, while it's true, and in its context, it is right, the Holy Ghost put it there. But it's a comforting verse.

For what everybody has wrong with them, nobody need to worry about. And we say, boy, sure I'm a bad man, but so is everybody else. Abraham, Gladstone, Theodore Roosevelt, Francis Havergal, and Florence Nightingale, and Hitler. It's just a universal, you know. And then we laugh it off. It's comforting to know that if you're bad, everybody else is bad too.

But the Holy Ghost never meant it that way. And the Holy Ghost says, thou art the man. And when I say that man is a moral wanderer from God, I don't want you to hide behind that and take comfort in it. I want you to know that you are.

And my friends, I call attention to something I've never heard mentioned before. In fact, I've never thought of it before. It just now pops into my head. Hell must have had a lot of people in it. Must have been a lot of people in hell.

But did you notice that when the rich man went there, he hadn't a comforter any place. He was alone. As far as he was concerned, there wasn't anybody else there. The only people he knew about or remembered were the people that were still alive. Hell has a way of singling men out and taking it from the general to the particular, robbing them of the comfort of the crowd, and pointing them and pinpointing them in the middle of a trembling eternity, and robbing them of all human supports, taking them out of the mass so they don't comfort them anymore, that they are a part of a great lost world.

But they're all alone in their lostness. All alone as if there'd never been anybody else. That soul there was as completely alone and unsupported and uncomforted as if there never had been in the universe anybody else but he. And he was the lone sinner in the universe, there was by himself.

So let me say that when I use the word man and I say, man is a moral wanderer venturing dangerously far from God and home and unwilling to return, don't you say flippantly, well if I go to hell, I'll have lots of company. The rich man didn't have any company. He was doing his suffering by himself. God had pinpointed him in the universe, cut him out of the herd, and he was all alone.

The second part of my thesis is that God's calling men back to himself while they're still on the earth. And the third is that God entreats with many voices. Not one or two or ten even, or the number I've given, but many, many voices. He's entreating and saying, O return ye unto me.

He entreats probably most perfectly in the revealed word of God. He entreats by the Holy Ghost. He entreats by general truth, that is reason and common sense. He entreats by the facts of life and the fact of death. He entreats by the facts of human history, which we all know little about. And he entreats by our own moral constitution. Spinoza, Kant it was who said, the wonder of life was, the moral law within and the starry heavens above. And the moral law within, that is our moral constitution, constitutes an eloquent, accusing, pleading, entreating voice saying, O return ye unto me.

Now the morally wise will hear this. Some would say, I have no doubt that Christianity is all right, but it's never been tried. One man said that once. Christianity is all right, but it's never been tried. And you hear illustrations every once in a while, cropping up about somebody said, soap is all right if it's used, and so Christianity is all right if it's used, but nobody's using it. Don't you fall for that. They are using it.

Don't you for one split second think that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not having its effect, and that God hasn't redeemed people. He has. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of Man. And don't you think for a second the ark wasn't effective because only eight people got into it.

I can imagine some wise old baby pulling his beard and saying, I believe that preaching about that man Noah. The ark is all right. Trouble is nobody applies it. Eight people applied it. They did apply it. Don't let's talk down the ark because only eight people got into it. The ark was all right.

And the eight people that got into it were all right. And they made fools of the millions that didn't get into it. So don't apologize for the ark. It worked. And don't say it's failed because nobody tried it. Eight people tried it and they found it worked.

And so with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Don't let's say patronizingly. Oh, the gospel is all right, but nobody tried it. Nobody applies it. Yes, a few people have applied it, and it does work. So that the morally wise hear the entreating voices. They always have and they always will. And they do now, and they are now, hearing that voice. God

Almighty doesn't bellow to the wide universe and have it come back as an echo to His holy ears.

But He says the Word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return unto Me void. And the word that goes forth from God's mouth always does produce. And it needs nobody to run around apologizing and thinking up illustrations in order to apologize and explain away the power of the Word. The morally wise hear the Entreating Voice, one kind or another.

You will remember that it was Augustine who was traveling in his wild dissipating days, was traveling with a friend and suddenly his friend was struck dead with lightning by his side. It was a rough, terrible voice; literally it was the voice of thunder, the hammer of Thor, was hurled down and his friend dropped dead by his side. Augustine turned to God with all the fury and energy of that mighty nature of his and became one of the greatest saints, greatest Christians of all time. That was an awfully rough voice, a thunderous voice, but the wise man heard it.

Nicholas Herman was walking one day in winter, and he saw a tree. And that tree stood stark and leafless against the gray sky. And the young man stood and looked at it and began to reason from it. The voice of reason began to talk within his ear and said, Herman, what will that tree be like in the spring?

And the young Herman said, in the spring that tree will stand green and beautiful again. And said the inner voice, if God can take that dead, leafless, stark thing standing there in its helplessness and kiss it with the wind and touch it with the sun and bless it with the rain and bring it out from its stony grief and raise it to fruitfulness and life, can't he save you? And Nicholas Herman said, yes, thank God, He can.

Nicholas Herman gave his heart to the Lord Jesus. Several generations of Christians have thanked God that he did. For he wrote, "The Practice of the Presence of God," perhaps the second most useful book for Christians that I could recommend or know anything about.

This loving man that lived in the heart of God every second and never got out of it and stood at the sink and washed dishes as a litany of devotion to Jesus Christ his Lord. The voice of reason sounded there. Now that didn't get into the newspapers. And there wasn't a great multitude that marched in his train, but he got in. And the wise man always hears and gets in. But the moral fool never does.

And when I use the word the moral fool, I'm not abusive. A fool is somebody that acts without regard to consequences. And the moral fool never hears any voice. He has ears to hear and he hears not.

I have a passage I want to read in your hearing. These terrible words of Jesus. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which said, By hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. And then

with a tender look at his few beloved around Him He said, But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and blessed are your ears, for they hear.

The moral fool never hears. To him there is no tongue in any tree, no book in any running brook, no sermon in any stone, and no voice in anything. He goes his way, comparing automobile with automobile, deciding how much he can make on the deal, and figuring close and cutting corners on his taxes, and wondering whether the Sox would win two or lose two, and if they did would the Yanks lose or win, and where would the standings be?

And is Ferris Fane the best infielder or the best outfielder? He's having his time, he's not a bad man, he's just a moral fool. He never hears a voice. If he gets sick, he hears a voice and runs to a doctor, and if he gets financially in trouble he goes to Tallman or somewhere else.

But if he hears no voice from God, no voice, no tongue in any tree, heaven has no voice, no sound. He's a moral fool. He's living for this world. And if he can keep healthy, keep his hair on his head, keep his car with four wheels under it, rubber they call it. I've got a good rubber on my car. If he can keep good rubber on his car and keep himself reasonably in reasonable good shape, he's satisfied. He's a moral fool.

But don't let's imagine that because most of the world is like that, that we have to go pat Jesus on the back and say, poor Jesus, you're an idealist and you did all right, and you certainly are to be honored, and your gospel certainly is a beautiful thing, but nobody tries it. He turned around and said, blessed are you, you tried it. Blessed are you, you heard, blessed are your eyes, they saw.

And wherever the gospel has been preached, all over the wide world all these years, the Lord Jesus Christ has some he can smile at and say, thank God for you, you heard it. He raised his eyes to heaven in the 17th of John, He said, Father, here's the ones I'm praying for. He said, I'm not praying for the big old world, Lord, they wouldn't listen, but here are these.

Do you see them here? Peter, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Judas. Do you see them? Not Iscariot. He said, there they are, Lord. He said, they have heard Me, and they know that You set Me, and they believe that I came from the keep Thee, Holy Father.

So, let's stop this apologizing and spinning illustrations, showing that the gospels never work. The gospel always works where it's tried, and it's been tried. Thank God it isn't coming back void. The gospel ship, the Ark of God, is not a ghost ship floating on a sea. She has a full crew, and she has her passengers. They're not as many as God wants, and they're not as many as can get on board.

The college song used to be, get on board, little children, there's room for many more. And there are, there's plenty of room for many more, and we're doing what we can to get more on board. Snap to attention when you see the sails of that mighty ship arrive over the horizon. Don't apologize. Snap to attention. The holiest thing in the world is

this ship of the gospel. Full man, full crew, the winds of the Holy Ghost in her sails, and a crew not of slaves, but of free men bound for a free port in a holy land.

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, did an unusual thing here in the text, an extreme thing. This Lord of all the worlds. Oh, I don't know whether I want to go on or whether I want to talk to you about that phrase, the Lord of all worlds. If you could only see Jesus bigger, brother, your Christianity would begin to bloom and blossom. If you could only see Jesus bigger, the Jesus we have is a little Jesus.

And I told them out at Keswick that we've preached Jesus down and looked at Him through the wrong end of the field glasses until He's a little Jesus, dressed in overalls, saving people, sure, but nothing to get excited about, nobody to fall in love with, nobody to excite your passion for rapture.

But if we would see Him as He is, Lord of all worlds, Lord of all beings thrown afar, thy glory flames from sun and star, center and soul of every sphere, yet to each loving heart, how near and how dear. Lord of all worlds and of life and of death and Lord of eternity, did a strange and extreme thing. He drew aside the opaque curtain and let us see and hear what had never before been seen by living men, only by the dead.

And He let us hear what had never been heard by the ear of any living man, only by the dead and the damned dead. He let us hear the actual words of a condemned man. He let us hear the actual words and see the actual form of a condemned man.

I've seen condemned men a few times before they died. I saw one once at Sing Sing with a handball, throwing it and catching it against a brick wall. I never forgot it. It's been many years ago, but still, there's in my memory the sight of a young man, like some of my boys, in that little pen of a place with a handball, tossing it. He's been dead a long, long time. And he died in that chair that I sat in, that terrible chair there in Sing Sing. That I've seen, I say, and others, I've seen condemned men before they died.

But He lets us see a condemned man after he's dead. And this is the only place in the Bible that I know where we see a condemned man and hear him talk. We're told vaguely in the 20th Revelation that the dead sea gave up their dead and they all appeared and so on, but God never lets us see them.

Here he lets us look in his face. Here he lets us hear the quivering tone of his voice, this condemned man who's already been executed. Strangely, wonderfully, this lost man becomes an evangelist whose voice tonight still remains a powerful entreaty. And by it the sovereign God shows that hell as well as earth and heaven are someday going to bow and own His right and own the righteousness of His ways.

Now let's look at this story a little. I won't be long. There are some conclusions I'd like to draw and the things I want to say are things that are not being said about this. I know what everybody's saying and I'm avoiding them because I believe the message is deeper and further back than the average preacher shows.

Well, this beggar, I want you to notice, he was a poor fellow and he was sick, or at least he had sores. And he was so poor that he had to beg a crumb as he was able from the

rich man's table. The rich man, on the other hand, had plenty. There's nothing bad about the rich man here. There's nothing said bad about the man. You can't make a rascal out of this rich man. He had plenty and he had gotten it, and the Bible doesn't say that he stole it. He might have gotten it with all the honesty in the world. He just had it, that's all. And he lived sumptuously. That is, he had plenty and that's the way you and I do.

If we have it, we spend it, and if we don't have it, we grumble. But if we have it, we spend it. The American people are throwing money right and left, basketfuls of it, constantly, millions, billions. We never use the word million much anymore. It's a small word, billion now, which means a thousand million.

So, there wasn't anything particularly wrong with this rich man. He fared sumptuously and was dressed in good clothing, but he had a right to be because he had enough. He had plenty of money and the beggar was a beggar.

And I want you to notice two or three things here. One of them is that the beggar was not saved because he was a beggar. There's too much of that. The poorer the preacher is, the more eloquently he preaches on the beggar being saved and throws the emphasis on the fact that he was saved because he was a beggar, which just isn't so.

Nobody ever yet was saved because they were poor. You can be poor as a church mice and bad as a church rat. You can be sitting cross-legged with a hat in your lap, begging dimes at the corner of 63rd and Halsted if they'd let you, and have a heart that's so black that if you died sitting there, you'd perish in a moment.

Being a beggar never saved anybody and God never said he did. Poverty never redeemed any man. Rags never got anybody into heaven. It's only poetic, religious nonsense. And if a man has had a good suit, God will rip it off of him and put on hair cloth. And if he's had rags, God will rip it off and put on golden robes or linen.

Oh, there's nothing like that in the Bible. It doesn't say that. The beggar didn't go to heaven because he was a beggar. If he did, then salvation would depend upon poverty and rags. And you could tell how near a man was to heaven by the bank account or the absence of it. And that would make religion a human thing, which it isn't. And besides that, how many beggars do you know that are liars? And every liar shall have his part in hell.

How many beggars do you know that are thieves? How many beggars are unclean and deceptive? And how many beggars do you know that are hiding out from the police, sitting with dark glasses on? I don't know them by name, but they're there. So you can have rags and sores and be on your road to hell. But let's get out from that sentimental and superstitious idea that if you're a poor fellow, you'll go to heaven, sure enough, and if you're rich, you go to hell.

And the rich man did not go to hell because he had plenty. That would be to equate eternity with time and say, well, God is going to take all the rich people that enjoyed themselves down here and send them to hell through eternity. I venture to say, ladies and gentlemen, that it would not be the way God does things.

A man spends 50 years or 30 years, or 20 years here enjoying riches and then make him spend an eternity suffering hell because of 20 years of enjoyment of riches. It's not the way God does things. The rich man didn't go to hell because he had plenty.

Do you know many holy people? Lady Huntington used to say, smilingly, she was an ardent evangelical Christian in England years ago, and she was a lady. She used to say, I'm glad Paul had an M when he said, not many noble are saved. She said, I'm glad there was an M on there. If it had been A and Y, I'd have been out. She was a noble woman.

But he didn't say, not any noble are saved. He just said, not many. So, we have Lady Huntington, Lord Shaftesbury, and we have William Wilberforce and Gladstone and perhaps Victoria.

And in our own country, the man who makes the green toothpaste, kids you with it, it never stopped bad breath since the world began, but they sell it. He's dead now and long ago gone to heaven. Do you know what he did all his lifetime? He gave 90% of his income to the Lord and lived on 10. Made soap, toothpaste, and other things. They make our teeth rot and so on, but he was doing the best he could and didn't know any better.

So, the Lord blessed him. And he unquestionably is in heaven. John Wanamaker kept his great Bible classes going. And the name of John Wanamaker is still a name to be revered in the city of Philadelphia and all over. We know men like Letourneau and other men, honest, simple-hearted Christian brethren who count their money not in thousands but in millions.

So don't imagine that that rich man went to hell because he was rich, nor the poor man went to heaven because he was poor. Then that'd be the simplest thing in the world. Strip down to necessities and throw everything away and flap your wings and you'll soon be in the celestial city. And God will punish everybody that has any money with hell. Oh no, no, no, that's too simple and it destroys moral and spiritual values and ignores man's spiritual nature.

Now let me tell you why the rich man went to hell. Let me tell you why the beggar went to heaven. The beggar went to heaven because he had a nature that belonged there. And the rich man went to hell because he had a nature that belonged there. That's it and there isn't anything else. The beggar died and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

What are those angels doing down there? They had all the vast universe to roam around in. Why did a couple of angels turn up on the curb stone when that poor beggar turned over and closed his eyes and said, Father, here I come? Why were those angels there? What are they doing there? Those broad-winged angels, messengers of God, full of wisdom and strength. What were they doing there?

They were drawn there by the magnetic attraction of a heavenly nature. A man was there lying in his rags who had a nature that belonged in heaven. And that nature was about to escape the sore body. And God can't have a disembodied soul that he's redeemed, that carries his nature in it, roaming like a ghost through the universe.

So, he sent his angels down and said, get down there, boys. He's getting weak. Get down there. He's getting weak. He won't last much longer. Be near him.

So, when the last gurgle came into his throat and his old, sore-covered body writhed a bit and he died, the angels grabbed his soul and winged away with it to Abraham's bosom. Why? Because it belonged there.

Remember this. Everything must be put in its place in God's universe at last. That man can be living with that other man's wife, but there'll be a day when God will put every man where he belongs.

That man may have the widow's property now, but the day will be when God will put everything where it belongs. In the valley of dry bones, there were bones all around, a little bone over here and a big bone over there, and a little bone by a big bone and a head bone by a foot bone. They weren't in place.

The jackals and buzzards had worked them over for years, and they were all out of place. But when Ezekiel stood and preached the word of the Lord unto him, there was a great rattling, and bone came to his bone, and God put everything in order. And God always puts everything in order, always. Right now they're out of order because we're in a state of probation.

I shocked some people here not many Sunday nights ago when I preached on probation. But I shocked some people, and they couldn't. They said, one woman said, Brother Tozer, I went along with you that came to that word probation. Then she said, now I understand, but I was bothered there. She thought I'd gone off the deep end and become a heretic. I still believe in probation. And I still believe the world in which we live is a confused, mixed-up world.

And there are persons who get the headlines that if the truth were known, they'd get a striped suit. And there are persons who are ignored that if the truth were known, they'd be in the front of Time magazine next Thursday. God isn't mixed up, though. He's watching patiently. And he's just sorting out the checkers, just sorting them out, that's all.

And there are people strutting around with what they call the cloth. I've always sort of had a sarcastic enjoyment of that, that he's a man of the cloth. Well, thank God, at least he is. He'd be rather an odd chap if he went down the street otherwise. But he's a man of the cloth. Indeed, there's many a man of the cloth that when God Almighty unfrocks him and takes the mask away, he'll be a man terrified and shrinking.

And there's many a man that receives the eulogies and plaudits of the world that will be, when the time comes, when God sorts us out and puts him where he belongs. So this happened here with simply God sorting men out, that's all. He doesn't sort them out down here. He didn't even sort them out when his twelve disciples were with Him. Peter was a coward, and Judas was a lover of money and a betrayer. He didn't sort them out, not till the last minute did he even mention it.

Then they didn't know who was which. But as soon as Judas died, he was sorted out. He died and went to his own place. Remember that? Death sorts us out, brother. And we don't go to heaven because we're poor and we don't go to hell because we're rich. If we go to heaven, it's because we've got a nature that belongs there, and God sorts out all the natures that belong there and takes them there.

And He sorts out all the natures that belong in hell and sees that they get there. That's the story of Lazarus and the rich man. So, let's remember that.

What kind of nature do you have? That's all that matters. That's all that matters. The rich man had been content with the things of this world, but so are we, more or less. There's a bigger house or bigger car or bigger TV set or bigger anything, you'll get it. And there's nothing wrong. We can't condemn it.

We can't church anybody for using the money that circumstances has thrown at their feet. But don't imagine that'll send you to hell. It won't. And don't imagine that the bunch down on Skid Row will all go to heaven when they die, like a flock of birds at sunset. Not true. All over this wide universe, God has His saints washed in His blood, born of His spirit, begotten of the Word of Truth, saved by the miracle of redemption. And He'll call them all home when the time comes.

In 1933, though I'm not sure, well, it might've been 34, when Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States, in order to save the sinking bank situation, financial situation, we went off the gold standard, and he called all the gold in. Nobody dare keep any gold. Once in a while, you'd run onto a gold piece, a tiny little thin thing as big as a streetcar token worth \$10. I used to see one once in a while. I think one or somebody gave me one once or twice in my early ministry.

But as soon as the call had gone out from Washington, the treasury saying, all gold must be called in, give it up. Everybody had to release their gold. And the treasury said, now, wherever you find a hunk of gold, get it, get it, call it in. Wherever there's gold, call it in.

And in that heaven of heavens where our God rules, God's word has gone out, call in all the ransom, call in all that's like me, call in all that has a nature that belongs here, call them all in. Don't overdo it now, don't rush the gate. Some of them are still down there and they got to live a while and do some things for me. But as soon as they die, call them in. Ranks of angels wait and watch.

If it's a 10-year-old boy converted the night before under a burning pine knot in the hills of Kentucky, if he dies, he's taken where his nature belongs. And no matter if he's able to afford a \$35,000 wedding, some have, if he doesn't belong there, he'll go where he belongs. That's the story.

Now, this man was a better man after he was dead than he was while he lived. While he lived, he didn't give much of a care about anybody. Threw the crumbs to the poor man, but he didn't think about it much. He was busy with these stocks and bonds and bay-faced cattle and all the rest. He didn't think much about it. He didn't have time much to think about other people. He didn't have much sympathy for other people.

But when he was down there, he began to sympathize with his brothers. And he said, Father Abraham, send Lazarus back to my brothers, lest they come to this place of torment. He was an evangelist making an altar call from hell, only that it didn't get through. An evangelist, a voice, a condemned man already executed, whose nature had gone like a plunk where it belonged. But he was a religious man.

I want you to notice, he was a religious man, this man. He called Abraham, Father, and Abraham did not disallow. He said, Son. For Abraham had sons according to the flesh, and he had sons according to the Spirit. There were sons of Abraham after the flesh, and they were the Jews. They're the sons of Abraham after the Spirit, and they are those who believe with faithful Abraham.

And the man who said, Father Abraham, send Lazarus, was answered, Son. Remember, he was a son of Abraham's flesh, a Jew. Here was a religious man, this rich man. This was a Jewish environment here, a Jewish context. The whole thing was Jewish, the most religious nation in the world. And he was able to say, Father Abraham. And Abraham was able to say, Son, remember.

And to further show that he was a religious man and came from a religious home, Abraham said, they have Moses and the prophets. He couldn't have said that if they'd been Greek or Roman or Assyrian or Egyptian or Ethiopian. He could only have said it if they were Jews. They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

So, I ask you to notice that this man had been a religious man while he lived. And if you could hear them tonight, I have no doubt that there would be the voice of many a church member who's walked up and down the aisles taking offerings. Many a church officer who has sat, oh, the horror of this, has sat in boardrooms and discussed holy things and given his voice and helped run the local church. But he's dead now.

And there's many a voice that one time was head elder in a church that would be sounding and giving an altar call from the lost world and saying wildly, frantically to this one or that one, I have two sons. I have a wife back there. I have brothers back there. Go back and tell the rest of that board, that elected us, trusted us with holy things, told us to carefully guard the interests of the Kingdom. And I sat and voted and decided on who would preach and how much we'd pay him and all the rest. And I am here.

And some of the boys I sat with once a month in board meetings are back there still meeting once a month. Go back and tell them lest they come to this place of torment. And your neighbor that died two blocks down, they found him dead on the lawn. He was a good man, but not a Christian. If you could hear his voice tonight, it might well be a voice saying, send somebody. Send somebody with the wise voice of God.

And Abraham said, no, there's no use. There isn't any use. A church deacon that can receive communion once a month and handle funds and lead in prayer and hear the word preached and still resist me, and I can't get to him if I send a dead man back to put a sheet over him and mutter. He wouldn't listen.

God knows the human conscience. And He knows that the most effective voice in the world is the voice of the Word. And if men will not hear the word of God, they won't

hear anything else. Though God speaks many, many ways and supplements, as I have said, do not mean any contradiction when I say that God speaks in His Word and speaks through His Word, but speaks also through reason, but never through uncanny methods, never. Spooks and ghosts and banshees and all the rest that superstitious old wives' fables have given us mean nothing to God.

That's why I never tell or rarely tell a deathbed story. I could only pass this on to you. It happened only a little while back in Keswick. They have a reclamation place there. They're called the Colony of Mercy. They take men who've been beaten down by drink and dope, and they're reclaimed, brought back. Men have been there who've had high positions in offices and in great concerns and went to the dogs. There have been doctors there.

In one case, a Catholic priest spoke seven languages. They went down to their gutter with dope and drink or dope or drink and came there. Beaten men, were converted, rehabilitated, went back to their families and to their jobs, got started in life again. Now they're givers and supporters of the work.

One man who had been a very bad man, beaten down, whipped, defeated, counted out by dope and drink or dope and drink, came there, gave his heart to the Lord Jesus, marvelously saved, went back and tried to make right what he could make right, paid up what he could pay up, used the paying up of his old bills and the straightening out of his old life as a way of contact and testifying to men.

They began to get anonymous letters one day on this certain man, Charlie. These anonymous letters would say, do you know who that man Charlie is? And then they would give a list of things that he had done. They said, do you know who this fellow Charlie is? And this next letter would say he did thus and thus.

Mr. Ross went to Charlie, and he said, Charlie, I'm getting anonymous letters about you. They're telling me that you did this, and you did that and you did that. And he said, Mr. Ross, I admit it, I told you I did. That was my old work, Charlie, but God's converted me and I'm trying to make it all straight. And they'd get another anonymous letter. They didn't know, of course, who it came from.

Then one day a woman said, Mr. Ross, my husband was the one who was writing those letters. He was determined he was going to get this man Charlie, that you say has been converted. I begged him to stop his letter writing. I begged him. He got in the car and was on his way over here to Keswick to expose Charlie and discredit him before the world and was instantly killed in an automobile wreck on his way here.

And that's as near to deathbed stories as I ever get, but that's fresh in my knowledge. They're talking about it over there with hushed voices. You say, an accident, it could have happened any time. Yeah, sure. But brother, God Almighty operates with the precision of a Swiss watch. And when God forgives a man, don't you write him. And when God pardons a man, don't you dig up his past. And when God says he's clean, don't you call him unclean. That's what happened.

Charlie's still living and his detractor's dead. And if that anonymous detractor who was only unfrocked or unmasked after he was dead by a grief-stricken wife, if he could preach from where he is tonight, what do you suppose he'd say? He'd say, Charlie, forgive me, I was a moral ass. Forgive me, Charlie, I was a fool.

Now talk to my brothers that they may not come to this place. Here's your church member. Here's your religious professor. Here's your bead counter. Here's your Sabbath keeper. Here's your tither. Here's your hymn lover. Here's your elder. Here's your deacon. You can be any of those things and still not have a nature that belongs in heaven.

You know, friends, even in a church like this, a middle-class church, there's a little bit of a tendency to be snooty and snobbish, and we tend to fall into cliques. You know it? Now don't deny it. We've got little cliques. We drink coffee together, and these cliques usually follow the income and the size of the house you're having, whether your furniture is good or whether it's tacky. Some people never get a look in, hardly a handshake, year in and year out.

How is it everybody is cultivated? I'm not sure God Almighty's going to let us get away with that much longer, for I believe with all my heart that there are simple-hearted, shrinking violets of people who have natures that belong in the celestial city, and when they die they'll be swished away there with the speed of light, whereas there are people who, because of certain sets of circumstances, are made a lot of in fundamental churches that have a nature that belongs below.

A missionary told me—I promise you I'll never mention Keswick again—told me over there last week, a missionary said, Mr. George, I am off of evangelists. I said, What? She said, I was one who worked as a secretary, and my job was to give them dates, date them up and get their slates arranged and all the rest.

She said, I walked out on them in disgust. She named a great city, and she said, the man in that city, the layman in that city, whose job it is to arrange prayer meetings and evangelistic, union evangelistic service, is a scoundrel, and I don't believe in him, and I don't believe a word he says.

I know how he lives, but he's the big shot in evangelistic circles in that town, that big American city. And if he died, there wouldn't be a church that would hold the mourners that would come to say, there was a prince fallen in Israel this day. But if that woman's right, I wouldn't want to go where he'll go. For she says he's a fair going scoundrel, but he masquerades as the big evangelistic leader, Christian businessman fellow in that town.

Always remember this, friends. You can get away with murder down here, but when you die, you'll go to your own place. Keep that in mind. Where does your nature belong? That's the most important question I can ask you tonight. Where does your nature belong? Think a little. Last week, the week before, give your nature away. You did the things you were. You did the things you were, and what you did proved what you were.

Now, what you are, does that belong in heaven? What you did, what you are, does that belong in heaven? I hope it does. I hope it does, but if it doesn't, and the only hope in the wide world for you is to have a rebirth, transformation, the impartation of a nature that belongs in heaven, and then they can't keep you out.