

## 198108 theywerewithout alfrees

Thank you so much, Sharon and Robin, for such a beautiful spiritual preparation tonight. Dr. A.T. Robertson, one of the noted preachers of the past century, went before the Lord after a Sunday evening. He said, this evening, Lord, I am here to resign.

And the Lord said to him, A.T. Robertson, that's very fine. I am willing to resign you tonight. And I'm quite sure that there have been moments when you have been ready to resign.

But thank God the Lord is faithful and he resigns us at that time. He's a faithful God. Is there anyone here this evening who has ever been failed by the Lord? Is there anyone who has not found the Lord faithful? He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

There are many scriptures that talk about his faithfulness, the unchanging God, as we read in the first chapter of the book of Malachi. When we meet together in camp meeting, let us expect that things will happen. I'm anticipating tonight that someone is going to come to us in the next two or three days and say that as the gospel was being preached, I experienced God's healing grace.

You say, well, why do you believe that? Now, I realize that some claim that the last verses of the 16th chapter of Mark were not included in the original manuscripts. And if they were not, the reason why these words got in there is because there are many things written about Jesus Christ that even the book could not contain it. And I am confident that there are signs that attend the preaching of the gospel when the Lord Jesus Christ is honored.

When we preach, people believe and individuals are healed as a sign of the working of the spirit of God among us. You say, do you really believe that? I believe it with the depths of my heart because as I've traveled in crusades in the last 10 years, in every part of the country, I don't believe there's been a major crusade where at least there has not been one person healed. And it happens in a most remarkable way.

A Roman Catholic lady came into our crusade in Carmen, Manitoba, where we were meeting together with seven of the Mennonite churches of seven different denominations. And she was sitting in the auditorium the night before she had believed on the Lord. And she had a very serious malignancy that apparently was very well-known to her and easily detected.

During the service, she nudged the lady next to her and said, the Lord just healed me. And the lady said, are you sure? She said, I'm so sure that I'm going to get up right now and tell everybody. And the lady next to her said, don't you dare.

If you can imagine what would happen in this community, they think we're fanatics already. And she said, what should I do? I want to tell it all over the town. She went to the doctor the next day and he had no apparent explanation for what had happened.

This is just one of the many stories of things that miraculously take place, not because there are healing services or a healing line, but these things attend the gospel. In fact, I'm quite confident tonight that as we have gone through the last two or three days, someone will say, Alf, I have been released from a fear and I have been released from a sin that has held me for a long time. Or I've had a new insight into scripture.

Is there a young man here tonight who has sensed the hand of the Lord upon him and separated him for the ministry? And you say this night, I believe that during these days, the Lord has confirmed that to me. Has it happened? We should expect it, that the Lord will separate individuals for the work of the ministry. In fact, I would say that it should seem good unto the Holy Ghost and unto us that these things would happen.

Someone would have a very clear understanding concerning family relationships. All of these things are very, very important. I periodically go through the refiner's fire, as you know, and my wife knows that very, very well, because when I'm going through the refiner's fire, I put every member of the family through the fire at the same time.

Staying awake at night, tromping around in the morning, trying to know the revelation of the word of God. Friend, when I come to camp meeting, for me, it's a full-time job, 24 hours a day, searching the word of God, asking for the mind of the Lord and saying, Lord, please this night make your minister a flaming fire. And I used to think that flaming fires meant swinging your handkerchief or jumping over the pews or doing something of that nature.

I thought that the man would literally stand there and burn in front of other people. But friends, it simply means that the word comes as a sharp two-edged sword. And when you become a flame of fire, there is an unusual sense of the ministry of the Holy Spirit coming to every one of us.

But oh, this night, the Lord Jesus wants us to respond to Him. He wants us to respond in our hearts. And He wants us to say, as the lady sung tonight, that we praise Him.

And as Robin pointed out, that in difficulties we praise Him and we love Him. And yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I'll fear no evil, for You're with me, Lord, and You're with me right now. I realize that it's hard to remind all of you to bring an Old Testament, but sometimes I go through a whole camp meeting, Bible studies, evenings and everything and only preach on the Old Testament.

And I'd like you to look to 2 Chronicles chapter 15. This message was given to me while I was in the Bahamas. You say, well, that's a good place to get a message.

We were given free accommodation there on the island of Eleuthera. And as I was there, and we were there with our very dear friends from this area, Eldon and Audrey Bell, and I would get up in the morning, as Eldon quite well remembers, by about five o'clock, and I set aside as my project for the ten days that we were there, the study of 2 Chronicles. And in 2 Chronicles

chapter 15, in fact the whole chapter, I found a very wonderful prophecy from the prophet Oded.

I found that it was the word of the Lord to the people. And whenever the word of the Lord comes to the people, this is a prophecy. The Spirit of God rests in a very strange way even today upon the minister and the ministry of the word to give a prophetic word.

And it was given particularly at that time to the king of Judah, whose name was Asa. And here is the context. And you'll remember this also, particularly from the New Testament in verse 3. Now for a long season, Israel has been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

But when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord, God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them. And notice the last part of verse 2 after reading that. And if you tonight will seek Him, He will be found of you.

And if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. And these are simple, basic spiritual principles that have very little to do with dispensations, covenants, or anything else. And it has never changed.

If you seek God, you can find Him. If you reject Him, He will reject you. If you confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father in heaven.

And if you deny me, I will deny you. In this whole context, I'm taking actually the third verse of 2 Chronicles 15 as the text tonight. I gave this to a young man this evening just before the service, and he commented that it was really a disastrous situation.

This is the viewpoint of a young man to the Word of God that sees it as it is, that to be without God, to be without a teaching priest, and to be without the law is absolute tragedy. Now let's look back to our days again. We're looking at it in a contemporary context.

Many of you may have read the book by Alvin Toffler entitled Future Shock. Alvin Toffler has now written a second book, much like the first, but somewhat updated. And his third book is entitled The Third Wave.

And he says we are living in the third wave. I'm going to come to the text also and deal with that. He said the first wave was launched by the agricultural revolution.

And for you historians, much could be said concerning the agricultural revolution and its implications. The second was known as an industrial revolution. And he said the third wave is known as a civilization and scientific revolution.

And then he begins to make out all of the new implications. He writes about the new jobs and the new job style. He speaks about new lifestyles.

And he gives new terminology to those who are involved in the new lifestyles. In fact, he speaks about the earth people. And when I was down in the U.S., I found a number of individuals

talking about those who are returning to a very primitive form of farming called the earth people.

He spoke about the new handiwork and manufacturing coming out, about the sexual attitudes, the economic structures, the political mindsets. And he said the new third wave, and here's a word we're using almost every night now, will shape us. And in the book of Judges, we have the subject known as the shaping of the people.

And throughout all of this, there has been one group of people that has suffered more than any other group, and that is the family. And so consequently, big government is now talking about how to remedy the family. And you will notice this in regional community colleges.

There are new courses on family education. And I noticed that as we go into our universities, you can take a night course on the definition of the new family crises. And you say, well, what is it? Well, they put it in more contemporary terms, and believe it or not, studies are being made on the operation of the smut peddler.

There is the operation of the study of rock music on the minds and the hearing of young people, the abortion laws, feminism, sex education. And one professor said, let's wipe it all out and glue the family back together again. And you remember in the last 10 years, we talked about the global village, and young people remember when they said the global village has become unglued.

But now it's being narrowed down. It's no longer the global village. It's the unit, the family unit that has become unglued.

And so therefore, with all of this, we have three definitions that I think you'll hear more about. One is called a solo marriage. That is people who desire to live alone and they choose it to go alone.

They're solos. Then there are those who are living in what is known as between marriages. They're living on their own.

And then there are those who are living without the formalities of marriage. And this group has actually more than doubled so that the Canadian government is dealing with the complications of this to find out what to do about property and how to counsel along with the other marriage counselor. And in all of this, the World Council of Churches has made an edict.

By the way, in 1983, I believe in the month of June, the World Council of Churches will be meeting in the city of Vancouver. The evangelical population of British Columbia will gather together at that time, particularly the ministers. And they have asked us and asked me in particular to head up a school of evangelism that will take the topics of the World Council and prior to the coming of the World Council, redefine the evangelical terminology of the topics.

I wish you'd pray for this because it's going to be a great task and one beyond this. But the

World Council has made this edict. We must live together in this one global world and confess God as they know him.

Do you know what that means? Universalism, pluralism, syncretism. It means that as long as you worship Allah, you are Hare Krishna, Mohammed or Buddha, everything is all right. The edict is let us live together in peaceful coexistence regardless of what is happening.

And friends, this is why I believe tonight that God needs to return to us as a church and as a community, not only the voice of the evangelist and the voice of the pastor, but there must come the voice of the prophet where once again we hear all over the community, thus saith the Lord. Here is the Lord speaking to us. This is my dimension for this age.

It is not only Alvin Toffler. It is not only the World Council. It is not only the Hare Krishna movement.

It is not only Dr. Sun Moon speaking. It is the Lord Jesus Christ speaking. Thus saith the Lord and I know of no other place to go but the scriptures.

Now notice this important life turning event that is happening. The greatest blessing in the world is to know God and the greatest tragedy in the world is to miss him. And in 2 Chronicles 15 and verse 3, we have a description of a phase in the history of Israel which is a description that adequately fits us today.

And so let me go to that description from the scriptures. First of all, in verse 3, now for a long season, an extended period of time, Israel, God's chosen people, who at one time lived under a theocracy, which meant a period of God ruling, but desired a king like other people, had been for a long season without the true God. And you can respond and say in a very glib term, well, in other words, they were godless or they were without God.

But let me give a full description of the whole thing tonight. And I'll just add them up as we go through. The first thing is this, that they were not irreligious, but they were without the living God.

They were not necessarily immoral, but they were without the living God. Because you see, most people have an opinion about God. And most individuals have an opinion about theology.

What amazes me tonight is this, that if I would go through the audience and give a test in the area of geology, which I wouldn't be able to do, but if I had it, most of us would look up and say, don't ask me, I'm not a geologist. If I would come to you and give an inventory on, say, cultural anthropology, you would rightly respond and say, I understand that this is the teaching or the subject of the science of man in relationship to culture. And you would respond and say, I don't know anything about anthropology.

But if I come through and say, what do you know about theology? Practically every person in this place has their own brand of theology. It's what I call home brew. And it has very little to do

with the Word of God.

Most of us are not irreligious. All of us have a formed method of thinking. Even though we claim to be an atheist, has that great atheist stood up and said, the first thing I would like to do tonight is say, thank God I'm an atheist.

Yeah, but it's living without God. It does not mean that he does not dominate our thoughts. He doesn't enter our life.

It is the thought that I do not have a conscious living relationship with him. Now, if you had a conscious living relationship with God tonight, it would be difficult for you and for me to continue in my present train of thought. For instance, right now the lady that's thinking about the vacuum cleaner that she left in the middle of her living room floor.

And she says, I should get home and pick that up. Lady came to me and she said, while you were preaching tonight and you brought some of these things to my attention, I was sitting at the kitchen table and I was looking out the window and remembered that I hadn't cleaned my windows. When we gather together to praise God and to serve him and to love him and to hear the revelation of his word, it means that God does not dominate our thoughts.

He is not there in communication and in fellowship. And the Israelites could not help but believe in the existence of God. But it says that they were without the true God.

Why couldn't they help believe in the existence of God? Because they had been through the experience of Pharaoh's land. Deuteronomy says they were on the treadmill, which is bringing water up out of the river Nile. And they were in that terrible work of bringing up the mud and the water as nothing but a slave on a treadmill that they would never expect to get off.

They had every reason to believe that there is a God. Listen to the triumph of the songs. In fact, if you want a beautiful study, go to Psalm 120 to 134, the Psalms of the ascent, which is a record of the people of Israel leaving Babylon and coming into the freedom of Jerusalem.

And they begin to resound the notes out that I'm looking forward to going to the house of the Lord, to the God of Jacob and to the God of Isaac. And I need to go into fellowship with him. And friends, most of us tonight cannot help but believe in the existence of God, in a Jehovah God.

He's helped us through difficult times. We have realized his unseen presence so that no matter where you go, whether it's on the windswept deserts, on the interior land in the great country of Africa, if it's in the multiplicity of the villages of India, or if it's in the northernmost portions up on the areas of Alaska by the Baffin Sea and the Beaufort Sea and all of this, the Lord Jesus Christ knows that there's a consciousness of God everywhere. But they were not without a God.

They were without the living God. And of course, every camp meeting, no doubt you've heard this. Many of us have what is known as the God of self.

We say I'm not without God because I love myself. I serve myself. I move and do what is pleasing to me.

I buy things that make me comfortable. I serve myself to the point that if I have the slightest discomfort or pain, I'll immediately run away from it. I'll buy the objects for my home and I'll say to myself, I deserve this because I have worked so hard for it.

And the answer comes, you are not without the living God in a sense because you are there with the knowledge that God is yourself. Sometimes it's money. I don't need to go through the details of that, but I'm beginning to find out that if you have a thousand dollars, you want five thousand dollars.

And if you have five, you want ten thousand. And I can remember the day not very many years ago when I used to say to friends who were grumbling about paying income tax, if I had to pay income tax, I'd really be pleased to pay it if I could get up into your bracket. And then I began paying income tax and I'm thinking of every possible way not to pay it within the realm of honesty, David.

And, uh, you know, I, we have some dear brothers and sisters at camp meeting that operate as your conscience while you're preaching. You see the red lights come on and off and you kind of sense these things happening. It's certainly not in the realm of pleasure because you will remember that some of us are making pleasure and particularly making sports our God tonight.

Now I agree that we should watch hockey games and the football games, but listen, let me tell you this, that the day has now arrived when if you have a crusade, a revival meeting or a prayer meeting, when a hockey game is being played, Christians who adhere to the old fashioned cross and who sung tonight, I will forsake all to follow Jesus will call it a great imposition. In fact, just an intrusion on their time and action. If you should even suggest that they leave the hockey game for five minutes, I want to mention another thing to you.

As I travel around the nation, I'm beginning to find out that not only have parents done this, but they're selling their family short when they spend hundreds and hundreds of dollars on the preparation for baseball and for hockey, which I agree is a good sport and should be participated in. But friends, how many missionary church families have their children miss Sunday school because there's a Sunday morning hockey game on? How many? Now I know that it's a pressure from the kids. I realize that.

And I realize that there's peer pressure. And I know that there's community pressure. And I know that if you want to be a good player, you've got to go.

But my friend, listen to this word for a long season, Israel has been without the true God. Let's think about the matter of dress. This is an old fashioned camp meeting.

So we go through the old fashioned things tonight. I've got the list. You know, there was a time

when men could talk about the dress of the ladies.

And why is it that they always chastise the ladies for what they bought? And the fellas could stand in their finest suits and their new shoes and then their new pin and the tie and a lovely gold watch and whatever it is. But the ladies were unable to do that in the time of women's liberation. We dare not speak that way anymore.

So we speak in another way. And that means that as I go down to the mall here in Toronto to Eaton Center, when is your happiest moment? Your happiest moment in all of your emptiness is, lady, when you're going through the dresses one after another and you have the husband standing there with the credit card in his pocket, ready to lay it over when the right moment comes. But it's the fad of having to possess everything, of living a lifestyle that has actually become our God.

Now I'm not talking about looking attractive, looking beautiful and wearing the right clothes. I'm confident that there's not a man in the world that doesn't enjoy that. But I'm speaking now about a substitution.

Let me take another step. What about the habits of our life? Mr. Brother Superintendent, I say this tonight and say it really in a depth of a spirit that I trust will be readily received without talking necessarily about the church, but also about other churches that are around. But I don't want to speak for the Baptist tonight.

And I don't want to speak for the Methodist and the Alliance. And I don't want to speak for the Pentecostal. I mean, I should say I shouldn't speak for them.

I'd like to, but I shouldn't do it. In 10 years time in the missionary church, there will not be a wedding conducted where alcoholic beverages will not be served. In 10 years time, there will hardly be a church that does not have a dance sponsored by the local young people.

And you say, Alfrese, you are not only a fool, you're an old fool. But friends, I see absolutely every mark of this happening. And I see every indication.

And I would like to put it in more sophisticated terms. I have empirical evidence to back it up. And I would never come out and say how, when, and where.

But all that God might speak to us, and you may say, but Alfrese, why do you mention these things? Friends, not because these things are right or wrong in all of their categories, but because they are becoming a substitute for the presence of the true and the living God. And they are taking up our worship, our time, our concepts. They are now beginning to encircle us so that we once again stand in the pulpit, and regardless of the cost, begin to thunder out these words.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you. Because if I saw the increase in Bible reading, and I saw the increase in prayer, and saw

the increase in witnessing, and side by side went spiritual dynamic, I doubt if I'd worry. But I'd like to remind you that it comes as a package deal.

And when you fool with the things that draw away the heart, and produce lustful living, it is in diametrical opposition to the principles of God's grace, and will certainly empty our hearts, and will ultimately empty our churches. Notice the second part in verse 3. They were without a teaching priest. Now, there were ministering priests.

And in the morning Bible study, I'll be going through the teaching of how the tabernacle expresses the Trinity. I'm going to speak about body, soul, and spirit. I'll be speaking concerning the ministering priest.

And it's true that the ministering priest stood at the altar, and whether he was at the laver, the altar of burnt offering, or whether he was there in the various forms and sacrifices, and of course the watching of the dimension of the tabernacle, and the entire layout as it moved through the wilderness. Nevertheless, the Word says that there was no teaching priest. They were not without a ministering priest, but it says they were without a teaching priest.

That is outside the influence of those who teach the Word of God. So that we move up to contemporary times again, and we say, what to you is the plan of salvation? And some of the older gentlemen will lay it out to you. But some of the young men will have a very fine understanding of what the Scripture is.

In fact, to the extent that they may have been in a Bible quiz, and already they know Hebrews, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, and they even know the book of 1st Samuel. But it is what is known as apparent fashion. So that it is rather a test of the intellect, rather than a test of the spirit.

And these things certainly need to be taught, and that needs to be done. But if you would ask the same person, do you understand the terms of God's grace? Do you know what grace and mercy is? Do you understand the justice of God? Do you know what God's plan of salvation is through the new birth? Have you an idea of what repentance means, and faith toward God? There's an answer, no, I'm ignorant of the way of salvation, because we are without a teaching priest. That is, without someone to unfold to us the holy treasures of Scripture.

It may be a mother that will do it, and it could be that your home is without a teaching priest. And you have put it over on a Christian education system in the secular school, or you have put it over to the Sunday school with the hope that after your child goes through Sunday school on any of the major curricula that is being offered, you'll end up with only 27% of the Scripture being taught over a period of 12 to 14 years in Sunday school. So John 15 2 doesn't come as a precious promise.

What is it? You are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Psalm 119, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.

John 17, sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth, and so therefore the Bible is banned in the church and in the home. Banned by neglect, and therefore the hidden mysteries that lead carnal men and allow carnal men to control the local church have been totally withheld, otherwise that control would not take place.

My friends, I want to establish this before you tonight once more, as I have done so time after time, that unless we understand the biblical form of government, which is the deacons and the elders, and unless we understand the office of the pastor and the evangelist and the prophet, unless we know who are the modern-day apostles and who are the modern-day prophets, unless we can come back to the word of the Lord and say, Thus saith the Lord, and this is the local church, and here is how it is formed, and here is how you confess Jesus Christ in your salvation. You do it by baptism, and how do you enter in to the fellowship of the church to continue the testimony of the cross on a regular, consistent basis? You break bread and you drink of the cup to testify to the Lord's blood and to His broken body. We have to learn the elements of praise, what it means to sing hymns and songs and spiritual songs and make melody in our heart to the Lord.

We must emphasize and reemphasize the gifts of the Spirit, 19, 21, or 32, how many we have, and know that our church becomes mobile as the gifts operate, to see that they are not talents which are given through natural means, through parents, through birth, but they are supernaturally given from above, and the Lord will give the spiritual operation to the local church if we're willing to seek after it. Do you see they were without the teaching priest, and I have been praying during these last years, O Lord, just as there is a need to raise up an evangelist, and you can go to denomination after denomination and ask them, Do you have an evangelist, a man that apparently has the mark on his life? And the answer is, No, we haven't had one for 30 years. When do we commission them? But the answer also must be given.

When will the teacher, the teaching priest, be raised up? Brother Superintendent, do you know what I perceive as I look over our fellowship? I perceive that God, in a wonderful way in the last four to five years, has sorted out a half a dozen young men that I think we could put our hand on and say, He will be a teaching priest. And there are some great old eagles in the congregation, and some of them are just about ready to fly to glory, and they have a deposit of knowledge that should be given from the pulpit and the Sunday school class and from the prayer meeting, and the older should teach the younger, and the older women should teach the younger women, and the old men should teach the younger men. What is the authority of Scripture and where do we stand? You say, Alf, why are you going on to this, friend? I did not think that I would live to see the day that the resolutions that were passed at General Conference would ever be passed.

And I walked away from there literally on a cloud because I realized that I was not under it, I was above it. And I saw the call again for the heralding of the Word of God and for the re-

establishment of the inerrancy of Scripture. And friends, that's like honey to our mouth.

It's like water to a dying thirsty man. Will you notice the last one? It says that they were without the law. The priests, of course, were the guardians of the law.

And to be without a teaching priest simply meant to be without the law. They were inseparably connected. Now today, the priest and the law are not inseparable.

I must say that in interpretation. Because you can go to the Lord without going through a priest. Praise be to His name.

But I must cut this short by saying, the law of the Lord is perfect. And it will delight the soul. And the standard of Scripture is still there.

And we may explain it away as being cultural, community. We may explain it away as being applicable only for the time. But to be without the law, we become a law unto ourselves.

And where we were once law-oriented as a holiness church, we have now become super grace-oriented. And we have forgotten that the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And Jesus is the embodiment of grace.

But friends, He still left us the truth. And if you want to go through the Scriptures and find out what the Scripture has to say concerning moral relationships, concerning participating in things that would cause your brother to stumble, if you want to know the law of the Lord concerning salvation and the sanctified life, if you want to know the law of God for entering His heaven, which by the way is more stringent than the law of any land, you have to study the Scriptures and you have to be with the law. And I would to God tonight that teachers would be raised up who would once again teach us the difference between law and grace and understand that although we're saved by grace, the law of the Lord remains as the guide and the nurturing principle for every Christian.

What happened when they turned to the Lord? We'll notice verse 4 and verse 6, and I won't even enlarge on them. It says that from verse 4, what when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord. Trouble comes to both the nation and the individual that rejects God.

Like the prodigal son, we're allowed to go into a far country. And notice verse 6, and the nation was destroyed of nation and city of city, for God did vex them with all adversity. And note what the Word of God says in verse 5, and in those times there was no peace to him who went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexation.

And what would be the first mark upon the local church when things are wrong and we are not with the awareness of a living God and we are without a teaching priest in the law? There'll be no peace. The church in the book of Acts had great rest come upon them. And friends, the more you find your church bickering and fighting and the more agitation there is and the more disruption there is, the more the indication is that the flock is not being fed.

That the flock is not following what they're being fed or the flock has become so careless that they are without the living God. Many churches are not the church of the living God that he purchased with his own blood, my friends. We're a concoction of human methodology that has led us to a place where we can get along without God.

What were the conditions of the coming back to God? Well, you'll find it in verse 2, if you seek him he will be found of you. Verse 4, Israel sought him and was found of him. Verse 8, you can imagine how long you could preach on this.

They put away the abominable idols. What were they? Black magic, pornography, money, friendships. They put away that abominable thing that kept them back from the Lord.

But here's what I like in verse 8, it says, and they renewed the altar of the Lord. In this case it was the brazen altar, the place of the sacrificial lamb. But what is your altar? And in verse 12, they entered into a covenant with God with all of their heart.

And in a moment tonight we're going to give an invitation. And I'm not working again on response. If there is no response, God knows.

Because it has to be with all of the heart. But friend, I'm going to ask this evening that every person in this auditorium who would like to renew their covenant with God and rebuild their altar unto the Lord, I wish that you would come with us and kneel tonight and put away whatever thing has kept you back from knowing the true God, the true teaching and the true law, and say, Lord Jesus, tonight come as the crown Lord of our midst. This closing illustration, Arthur T. Pearson is the author of a book on evangelistic work, its principles and practice, and I'd advise young men to pick up that book because Arthur T. Pearson was the personal friend of George Mueller of Bristol.

You've heard of the praying George Mueller. He was a pastor of a large but fashionable church. They said it was one of the most elegant edifices in North America.

And one day Arthur T. Pearson was searching his heart and he said, Lord, please show me whatever idols are there. And he said, as the Lord began to speak to me, I saw that it was literary culture and I desired to express my literary culture before my very fashionable congregation. He said it was intellectual accomplishments because I have a double degree in philosophy.

He said it was my oratorical power because when I would look around from the chancel and the nave and the sanctuary of the church and my deep rumbling voice would cry out and I raised my arms with my hanging robes, I realized that I had oratorical power and I had worldly honor. And then he said the Lord led me to renounce them so that I would be useful. And I ultimately came to the place where I said, Lord, I cherish no idol in my life.

Arthur T. Pearson, a prince of preachers and a prince of the man of God, said finally with clear conviction, I began to say, Lord, that I may go from here and reach the unsaved. And we

wonder why our churches are often barren and empty and why they are not productive in the fertile things of life. And so he said, I didn't want to, I didn't know what to do and so I shared it with a brother.

And that's always the first step to great renewal. I share with a brother. I have about six brothers that I share with.

I tell them that my innermost feeling and my innermost heart, my innermost spirit, and I share with them and pray with them and cry with them. And my friends, I have brothers in this area that anytime we are around, they'll always come and say, brother, I would like to share my heart with you. And they know my heart.

They know my down sitting and my uprising. And then they said, I decided one prayer meeting night that I would share it with the prayer meeting crowd. And then he said against the obvious, there was still an obvious lack of power.

And I was in the church for seven long years. And he said, I decided on Sunday night to share it with my congregation. And Arthur T. Pearson said, I went down and I stood in front of the congregation and it was a snowy night.

In fact, the only thing I could do was read the promises of scripture to my very sophisticated audience. And then he said, much to my dismay, I began to cry and I cried and I prayed and I asked God to remove the hindrances that would hinder souls from being saved. And I asked God in that sophisticated New York church, Lord, will you send upon us the Pentecostal power? And then I said, Lord, cause this church to burn.

He said, I didn't know it, that that was the prophetic word because it was a snowy, windy night. And when I said that, the fire had already started in the back walls of the church. And within 10 minutes, we smelt the smoke.

And he said, within a half an hour, we were standing in the outside and my idol, my beautiful edifice had literally been burned down and everything had been taken away. And A.T. Pearson says this in his book, and you can read the same story, gentlemen, ladies tonight, anytime. He said, as I watched it burn, I said, there goes the final hindrance to the reaching of the unsaved in this city.

And he said, we went out, we rented a local theater. He said, all of those ladies and gentlemen coming up in their beautiful clothes and their beautiful cars. And they went into that smoky old dilapidated theater.

And he said, they sat down there and sang their hymns. And we had our style just as ever, because you can take everything away from people. And those who have class will have it wherever you find them.

And he stood up and he preached the word of God. And he said, New York was moved for Jesus

Christ. And dear friends tonight, I want to tell you this, that we have struggled and we have gone on.

And there's only one answer. I've got to put away the abominable thing. And I have to return to the living God and to the ministering priest and to the laws of the Lord.

And I've got to submit myself once more and say, Lord, take, break down every idol, cast out every foe. Now wash me and I shall be whiter than snow. I'm going to ask us tonight to sing just a little chorus that I think you know, although it's in the book here.

And it's entitled Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. If you know it, sing it by memory. If you don't know it, it's in 136.

And we would like you to sing it with us. And I'm going to ask Robin to begin playing the piano right now and playing this beautiful piece. And let's stand together, shall we? My father and my God tonight, I come before you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that sovereign name.

And Father, how often have I asked you that I might be as a ministering flame of fire? And how often have we asked that you would move among our people? Father, this is the body to which I belong. And Father, every person meeting together tonight, if we are in Christ Jesus, we have a common relationship that knows neither east nor west, bond or free, male or female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus. And friend, I'm going to ask that as we sing this chorus tonight, as many individuals as are in this auditorium that would say, Alfrese, I need to renew my covenant with God tonight.

I need to put away the abominable thing. I need to return to the teaching of scripture. I need to ask him, Lord, take down every idol in my life and everything that separates me from the fullness of your blessing and what I give you receive and what you receive you bless and what you bless you fill and what you fill you use.

And you may say, Al, every one of us should come, but everyone won't come. Only those friends tonight who need to enter into a renewed relationship with a covenant keeping God. You may have recognized barriers of sin in your life, barriers of carelessness and barriers of fruitlessness.

And friend, you may look at your church tonight and not to make any judgment upon others. You may say, Lord Jesus, I desire to come in order that I might be that channel of blessing to a world that is lost and in need. And I recognize that I need to have renewed, reviewed my prejudice, my anxiety, my spirit, my thoughtlessness.

And Lord Jesus, I come. Friend, as many as should come tonight, you come. Will you kneel with us? Sit along the front pews as we sing Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh in me.

God bless you. Would you come in Jesus' name? Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me. Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.

Break me, melt me, mold me, frail me. Spirit of the Living God, heal me. Friends, as we sing it once more, there may be those who want to signify the great desire in the heart by reaching to the Lord.

But oh, there may be a score of other people tonight that say, Alf, I come this evening recognizing my need, my spirit, my relationship. I recognize the longing of my heart tonight. I need to seek God.

I need to seek the Living God for a long season. I have been without the Living God, without the teaching priest, without the law. Lord, I need to put away the abominable thing.

Lord Jesus, tonight I need to come and seek you in a full surrender to tear down the idols of my life, whatever area they're found, and give them to you. Lord, I've got areas of sin that I want to hang on to that I need to give and ask for the cleansing of the blood tonight. Look at, my friend, you know where the fissures are in the church.

You know where the lines of demarcation are. You know where the brokenness is. And you know, and I know tonight, that the only way that God can deal with you and me is to have a broken and a contrite heart to let him do what he wants to do.

If you want to come and stand or kneel, whatever you'd like to do, come as we sing the chorus once more, and then we're going to pray. Spirit of the Living God, come rest upon me. Spirit of the Living God, come rest upon me.

My friend, as we gather at the front here tonight in just a moment, I'm going to just request this evening that those who are in fellowship with the Lord, that I would like a lady to stand with a lady and a man to stand with a man and then even standing there and facing each other, I'm going to ask you just to have a word of prayer so that these, our brothers and sisters, can have confirmed tonight whatever they have privately desired of God in their heart. If two of us shall agree, it shall be so. Would brothers come and stand with brothers and sisters with sisters tonight and just standing have a word of prayer together as you confirm what God has done.

I believe that this is the road to victory and the assurance. Would you come now, just as we sing the chorus, He is Lord. Would you please come? He is Lord.

He is Lord. He is risen from the dead. He is Lord.

Every knee shall bow. Every child confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. And as our friends are praying with each other, let's very quietly sing tonight, God is so good, shall we? My friend, no matter how much we've rejected him, we've been without him.

God is still a good God and his character and nature never changes. And would you believe with these brothers and sisters, not to make a spectacle in any way, that the goodness of God might really be given to them. God bless you tonight.

Let's sing God is so good quietly as we sing it. To answer his prayers. God answers prayer.

God answers prayer. He is so good to me. All friends, as we stand together tonight and wait before the Lord, I wonder if there's anyone else that would say, Alf, I realize tonight that I'm without God's blessing in my life.

I realize that I have a deep need as a pastor, as a leader, a deacon, a friend, a lady in the church. And while we sing that chorus again, God is so good, I realize the good...