
LIFE STORY



Thank you. Good evening, friends. Very happy to be here this afternoon. And this is one time we have to get together to keep from freezing, isn't it? Well, I've often heard it's the ill-wind that blows no one some good. But they said they had a—some kind of a ball game over at the other place, and that's—that's kind of knocked us out a little.

I'm sorry, sister. I've got a big hat here you can hang up there if you want to. But it's the—the—the sun's back and forth, and I think you all are very loyal and very nice to come out in a real cold afternoon, and set here for this occasion, to just hear the experience of—of a life story. And I pray that God will just abundantly bless you for these efforts, and of you coming in for this afternoon.

² And I'm sorry that . . . You know, we . . . These lot of things are, they come when we don't know when they're coming, and that's the way all of life is, isn't it?

I was coming down the elevator a while ago, and I said to the man, I said, "Your job has its ups-and-downs."

He said, "That's right."

I said, "Well, all life has that."

And we . . . You know, we don't enjoy the ups 'less we have the downs. Is that right? Did you realize we wouldn't have any mountains if we didn't have any valleys? You wouldn't appreciate the sunshine if there wasn't any night. Is that right? And a person sometimes, very, very good health, maybe they don't know how to appreciate, 'less they had a real sick spell sometime, and almost died, and then they—they can appreciate your good health. So you have to have . . . It's a . . . What is it called? It's the law of contrast, I believe.

³ I doubt whether you can hear this very much, 'cause it's just backing right up this a way. Can you hear all right out there? If you can, back in towards the back, raise up your hands. It's—it's kind of a mumble, or . . . Is that better? Is it better if I get back a little piece from it? Can't hear it . . . ? . . . Now, let's see. Who's on the business end? All right. That's—that's . . . Now, can you hear that better? How many can hear back towards the back? Would you raise your hand? They can't hear a thing back there. All right. Step it up just a little bit. Can you hear that now? Now they're getting that. Now that's—that's just better.

⁴ Well friends, I won't—I won't keep you but just a little while, just as quick as I can get through. It's a life story. No one hardly, especially, has had a life like I have, enjoys telling about it. But in doing so, it

sometimes, it causes those who are having traveled these rugged roads yet, maybe they see the jumping off places, and helps them to bypass a lot of rugged places.

And now, I—I trust that you will be at the service tonight. I don't know whenever I've tried my best to put, to do the best that I knowed how in the services. This is really one of my first campaigns in Kentucky, my home state, and I wanted it to be a success for God's glory so very bad. Of course, I can expect Satan to give me just as rough the way at it as he can do it. But I know I have thousands of friends throughout Kentucky, God's people.

⁵ And I was talking a while ago to some friends, and telling them that there was some . . . Told me about how that the Holy Spirit had talked to a woman, and how that He had told her different things. And what was . . . Said, didn't know how that I would understand that. And I told her, "It was . . . Wasn't me. I just see it happen in front of me, and I just speak what I see. That's all I know what to say, is just what I can see."

And I believe that we're just now living in the one of the most glorious times that mortals ever lived. I believe we're near the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I just so happy to be alive today to speak of Him to the people.

⁶ I want to read some Scripture just before we start into the service, found in Hebrews the 13th chapter, the 10th through the 14th verse.

And now, are you hearing any better, any—anywhere? Can you hear back over in this corner? I notice many people even going out, that they seem like they look at one another, and shake their heads and just get up and go out. They can't hear. Bear with me just a little while, if you will.

I read these words:

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

For here we have no continuing city . . .

⁷ (Thank you.) Can we bow our heads just a moment now? Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the privilege of being gathered here in the building today, and for living in a nation where freedom of religion, and we can have a right to speak, and to talk, and to congregate

together. And as the poet said, “Long may our lands be bright, with freedoms holy light. Protect us by Thy might, great God, our King.”

⁸ And today, as we’re going to take a little visit, if it be Thy will, down the lane, backing up, where we used to trod years ago, we pray that You’ll be with us, and help us. And may many here that’s aliened away from home, strange country, I pray, God, that You’ll let them draw nigh unto Thee. For we know that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world. We’re seeking a city to come whose Builder and Maker is God. Bless everyone. May something miraculously take place today, because that these poor people has made an effort to come out, and to set in this cold room, under this difficult, just to gather for the Gospel’s sake. We pray that You’ll grant these things, in Jesus’ Name. Amen.

⁹ Let us, today, as . . . And I will hurry and watch my watch. It’s . . . Life is—hasn’t been a flower bed of ease for me, Christian friends. It’s been one toil and tussle after another. To go into it in the right way, and tell of what God has done would take hours, so you just have to kind of cut it up in a few moments, so that you won’t get too cold, as we’re trying this afternoon.

But there’s no one here but what likes to think of childhood. Isn’t that right? Most of my audience this afternoon are at least middle-aged people, few young folks. But no matter wherever you roam, you’ll never find no place like home, no matter where it is.

Many of you elderly people here this afternoon, gray-hair, if you could just close your eyes and take a little mental trip back down that old path that you used to walk when you was a child, and think of the old garden gate, and many things, a mother that’s gone on long years ago, an old dad, it—it brings back something that we cherish as a picture in our heart; but nothing can take it out of there. How many of you can remember an old home place this afternoon? Let’s see your hands. Just looky. How many of you are away from home, away from your home place? Let’s see your hands. Just look.

¹⁰ There’s something about childhood, and the adolescent age, that there’s nothing else through life will ever take its place. Remember the old . . . How our mothers used to catch us, and dad when we’d do wrong, give us a little spanking? Oh, that was horrible. But you know, many of you this afternoon, along with myself, I would just give anything that I could think of if my daddy was on this earth to give me a spanking. He can’t be no more though; my father has gone on, and many of you the same way. There’s nothing like the childhood.

I, with many of you here this afternoon, was born here in Kentucky, up here in a little log cabin. Well, we moved to Indiana, just across

the river, when I was just a little lad, just very young, not over two years old, three.

I remember our first experience here, we were very, very poor. That's the reason today that I, my choice. . . And I—I say this with reverence. My choice is to be a poor man. I could've been a multi-millionaire if I had wanted to be. One person brought me a check, FBI agent, for a million, five hundred thousand dollars, a bank draft, and I refused to look at it from the Mission Bell Winery in California. A woman was healed, been to St. Louis, and both breasts taken off, and she was. . . Cancer went through her, and a doctor was converted on the case, Dr. Theodore Palouveas, which is preaching the Gospel this afternoon in Oakland, California. And how the Lord spoke to the woman, told her on three days she'd be shopping in the street. Told her daughter she was unconscious. The doctor said, "The very idea, Reverend Branham, you build somebody up on a false hope like that, and that woman laying there dying."

¹¹ I said, "I'm in position to stay here. If that woman isn't walking of the street well in three days, I'll put a sign on my back as false prophet, and you just run me around over town in front of your car. And then if she isn't, I'll do that. And if she is, let me put one on your back and go."

The doctor was converted, preaching the Gospel today. One of the best surgeons on the West Coast, people even flew from New York to be operated by him. And they sent me a—a million, five hundred thousands in a bank draft; two agents brought it, me living in a two room shanty at the time. But it isn't money what makes happiness, it. . .

Happiness doesn't consist of how much of the world's goods you own, but how contented you are with the portion that has been lotted to you. Just make yourself contented as long as one thing that brings contentment, and that alone, is Jesus Christ.

¹² Here some time ago, Mr. Avak, over in the same country, was given a great, big, nice Cadillac. I appreciate that. Any man that can ride in one, I appreciate it. And at that time, I had an old Chevrolet, old truck, all beat up, about eight, ten years old. And some of those wealthy, fine Armenian people said, "Brother Branham, we gave Avak a Cadillac. We got one for you."

And I said, "Thank you, but I don't believe I could use it."

Said, "Well, we'll give it to you. We'll give you a Packard, or whatever you want." Said, "That old truck, you beating around in it. . ."

I said, "If I got what I deserved, I'd walk." And that's true. But how could I come down through Arkansas, where some of my meetings

are held among the poorest of people, a little old mother out there pulling a cotton sack, half dead with female trouble or something, eating jowl bacon, and corn bread for breakfast, putting a dollar in the offering at night, and me come along down through there in a big, nice Cadillac . . . “There goes Brother Branham.” I—I—I couldn’t do that. No, no, I—I—I don’t. . . I’d rather have favor with God than to have anything that I know of in the world. And if I got favor with God, I can serve His people.

¹³ I’ve always been a black sheep in my family. And I was always in my church a black sheep. And it’s just recently that I have begin to come into a group of people that love me. And to that group of people, I aim to give my life in service. And I—I love them, and they love me. And all my life, I’ve been in the—a person that wanted somebody to think something of me.

Sorry to say, but my family wasn’t religious. My father was just a typical Kentucky boy up here, drank up every penny he had. And I—I hate to say those things, but what is truth is the truth, no matter if it hurts, or whether it doesn’t. If it’s dark, and it’s on me, why, it’s just on me. It’s the truth. And you be truthful and honest with God. God will bless you for it. And although my daddy did drink, and drinking’s what killed him, but no matter what he did, he’s still my daddy. And out there on his grave today, where the white snow lays, he’s still my daddy.

And let me tell you young people something, no matter what you ever do, don’t you never disregard or disobey your mother and father.

¹⁴ They got such a word today, they say, “The old man and the old woman.” One of these days, when a squeaking casket is going out the door, and they’re going out head first, and you look down to see your mother or dad at the last time you’ll ever see them on this earth, you’ll realize it’s not the “old man and old woman” then. “Honour thy father and mother, which may lengthen the days on the earth the Lord giveth you.” That’s the first commandment with promise: obeying.

I seen dad work. We lived in a little cabin up on the Utica Pike, where we moved to from Kentucky to Indiana, right on the River Road. I seen him work in the log woods for seventy-five cents a day to make a living for me, when I was too young, four or five, six years old, till his shirt would sunburn into his back. I’ve seen my mother cut the shirt from his back with a pair of scissors. I don’t care what he done; he’s my daddy. And I love him.

¹⁵ He died on my arm, his black, wavy hair laying across my arm, and his little Irish blue eyes looking up at me. Seen a white Angel standing before him; I led him to Christ just before he died. He was my dad, and he had a great respect for me. The last drink he ever taken in his life, he

was standing in a little old saloon down there, wasn't two weeks before he died. He started to . . . Somebody was treating him. It was during the time of depression; he was broke. They give him some drink, and he started to take it up in his hands, and he started spilling it. He tried to drink it, and it went all over his face. And they started teasing him. Before he took it, he said, "Look, fellows," said, "I got a boy standing up there in the pulpit. That boy's right, and I'm wrong." He said, "Don't let this reflect on my boy." Said, "This is the last drop I'll ever take in all my life." And it was.

¹⁶ So I honor him today as my dad. It's hard work. I remember when we went to school. I'm firmly against drinking. I remember reading of a man that was borned a hundred miles from me, a hundred years difference, in a little log cabin. His name was Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest men Kentucky ever produced, to my opinion. And Abraham Lincoln, when he got off of the boat down in New Orleans, he seen them auction some colored people off as a slave, a big heavy man. His little, poor little wife and children standing out, crying; breed him, like cattle, to bigger, heavier women to make better slaves. Lincoln, as many of you know in the history, when he folded his hands and smacked them together and said, "That's wrong. And by the help of God, if it takes my life, I'll hit it with all I got." And he did.

¹⁷ Here some time ago, I was standing in a museum, and when he had to cross the river, in Illinois . . . I seen an old colored man with a little white rim of hair around his head, looking around, watching for something. He looked into a little box, and he stopped real quick and got back. It just looked like it just froze him. And the tears dropping of his cheeks, he raised up his eyes like that towards God, and he had a prayer. I just stood off, watched him for a little bit. I walked over to where he was at, and I said, "How do you do, uncle?"

He said, "How do you do, sir."

I said, "What excited you so?"

He said, "You don't understand?"

I said, "No."

Said, "Come, look here."

¹⁸ And I looked in there; under a glass was a little old dress, just a little dress folded up laying there. I said, "Well, I only see a dress."

He said, "But that spot on the corner is the blood of Abraham Lincoln." He said, "I got a mark across here as a slave belt, and the blood of that man took a slave belt off of me. Wouldn't that excite you?"

I stood there. I couldn't answer him. I thought, "If a colored man, by taking a slave belt off of him, how much more ought a Christian to be excited of the Blood of Jesus Christ, that taken sin from his life and made him a new creature in Christ Jesus?" Down his life went.

¹⁹ We had a hard time, very hard. I remember going to school with no clothes hardly. Went to school one year without even a—a shirt. My dad was a good man, but it was drinking that ruined him. I put my coat up like this, buttoned it with a . . . Or, pinned it with a pin. A rich woman, Mrs. Watham had give me the coat. And I, knowing how it made us go without something to eat . . . It made us go without shoes, and I would never got an education, all because of drinking that drove my daddy to it, a habit. That's the reason I'm against it today, to fight it with everything I got. It's wrong. And brethren or women, if you're here, and do such, God have mercy, don't do it no more. Don't let it boss you. You boss it.

And I remember going to school one day . . . This kinda sounds like a joke. Got summertime, and I didn't have no—no shirt to put on. I was still wearing this great, big, heavy coat. I had a pair of tennis shoes on, the toes out of them, wet all the time. It's a wonder, if God hadn't been with me, I'd have had pneumonia and died.

²⁰ So the teacher said . . . It was real warm . . . The trees, the maples was all blooming out like. And the teacher said, "Well . . ." I—been . . . had just a little bit of fire in the old school room, one—one room of school, and she just said, "William, why don't you take that coat off?" I couldn't take that coat off. I didn't have no shirt on.

I said, "Thank you, teacher. I—I'm just a bit cold."

She said, "Well, you better come over here to the stove." Said, "You got a cold." And me just about to smother anyhow, and she build up the fire and set me behind the stove.

I was setting there, and the perspiration running off my face, she said, "Can't you take that coat off yet?"

I said, "No, ma'am."

I couldn't take it off because I didn't have on any shirt. And so I just had to sit there and just suffer it out.

²¹ I remember the shirt that I got. One of my cousins that come to stay with us, a girl about my age, and when she left, she left one of her skirts. I got to thinking one day, seeing it had short sleeves, why couldn't I cut the . . . this bottom part off of it, and so far down, and make me a shirt out of it, her dress? So I went and cut it off. And it had that little . . . What did you call that stuff around the sides, you know? Rick-rack all over the side of it like this, you know. And that's the wrong name. It

ain't rip-rat is it? or—or something on . . . Anyhow, it that stuff all over the sides of it, you know.

So I went to school with this on, you know, and I felt just as fine and cool. The kiddies got to laughing at me, and I said, "Don't laugh. That's my Indian suit." It was my cousins skirt. They laugh at me, and I got to crying, went home.

²² Many of you here can remember in the 1917 when they had the big snow. Oh, my. It was banked up here, one of the coldest winters we ever had. My mother was sewing for the government at the time. And I remember all the boys at school had sleds. They could slide down the hill. I didn't have no sled, brother and I. So we got down at the old country dump and got a dish pan. It got a big sleet on top of the ground, we'd set down and put our legs around one another and our arms around one another, and here we'd go down the hill. We wasn't as much class as the rest of them, but we were sliding just the same. So we—we went right on down the hill with this old dish pan turning around, and around, and around. When we got to the bottom of the hill . . . That went all right until the bottom come out of it. The bottom come out, well, we got us a log, rode down on this log.

I remember, there was a boy named Lloyd Ford. And it was during the time of the First World War. We was little lads, and he was selling this *Pathfinder* magazine. How many remembers the old *Pathfinder* magazine? Well, he was selling this magazine, and he got to wear a boy scout suit. And he belonged to some kind of a scouts, or something like that . . . Scout suit for selling it, lone scouts, or something. Oh, everything that was . . . had to have a uniform on, and I always wanted to be a soldier. And I asked Lloyd; I said, "Lloyd, when you wear that out, will you give it to me?"

He said, "Yes," he'd give it to me.

²³ Looked like the thing never would wear out, it just kept on going. One day I said to him, "Lloyd, what happened to that suit?"

He said, "Oh, I forgot it, Billy." He said, "I'll see if I can find it."

The only thing he could find was one legging, one a little draw-string on the side of the little legging about like that, and I said, "Well, bring that to me."

I wore it around home, that one legging, and I thought it looked fine. I wanted to wear it to school, so I just stuffed it back in my coat. I was riding down on my log that day, and I act like I hurt my leg. I wanted to wear that legging before the kids (You see?), at school. I put this one legging on, so I said, "You know, I hurt my leg. I happened to think, I got one of my leggings here from my boy scout suit." Put

that one legging on, and here I went into school. I got up to work at the blackboard.

You remember the old country school, and the blackboard? I got up to work the problems; I put both legs together like that, and this legging on the outside so they couldn't see the other one. Stood sideways and worked like this, so they'd see that one legging. Kids got to laughing at me, and teacher . . . I got to crying. The teacher made me go home.

²⁴ I always wanted to be a soldier. When the second war come along, that war, I was too young, the next war they wouldn't take me, but I finally got to join the army, the army of the soldiers of the cross. My uniform is not on the outside this afternoon; it's on the inside. God gave me a uniform that I wouldn't trade for everything in world, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, dressed me up as a soldier from the inside, to give me grace to stand in the hours of trials.

How well I remember that old country school, and us kids who'd go down there on the Utica Pike to the old school. I remember the teacher had a great big pointer up in the end of the room, and that was the business end of the school. We certainly got what we needed when that good old country teacher would come up, and we'd do anything wrong, she'd really give it to us. I got my share.

²⁵ So I remember one day, it was around Christmas time . . . How many remembers going and getting the old cedar tree, and pop popcorn and string up around the old Christmas tree? Do you remember that? Well, my, my. I'm not the only country boy here, am I? So they'd string this old popcorn around the Christmas tree, and mom had some left over, so she give it to my brother and I, the one next to me, in a little half-a-gallon syrup bucket. And we'd took it to school, and I'd . . . We'd set it out in the cloak room, and that was something rare.

We couldn't eat dinner with the rest of the kids. The rest of the kids, they get . . . Their mothers baked light bread and made sandwiches. But we'd have a little half-a-gallon syrup bucket, and we'd have a little jar of greens, and a little jar of beans, and two spoons, and two pieces of corn bread. That's what we had, maybe. And we was ashamed to eat before the other children, 'cause they had cookies and things, and we just had a rough time. Hair hanging down our neck, great big old any kind of shoes we could wear, anything. Well, it was terrible, but I'd like to live it over. I'd just love to go back one more day. That's true.

²⁶ I remember, one day when the mama had baked, and got us this corn, and we set it in there. I—I got to thinking about that corn. I thought, "You know, I believe I'll get a handful before school." That was dishonest with my brother. I held up my hand, and asked the teacher if I could be excused, and when I went out through the cloak

room, I just got a great big handful of that popcorn, went out, stood behind the school house and eat it.

Well, dinner time come, kids like, when we—we. . . The rest of them all begin to go out in their rooms to eat, and we got our little bucket and went over on the hillside down towards the river, right on the banks of the river here, and we ope. . . 'Course, we had to eat the popcorn first. We never had anything like that around home, maybe once a year. So we opened up this bucket; it was pretty near half gone. My brother said, "Say, something's happened to that, hasn't it?"

I said, "Sure has." I knowed what had happened to it.

²⁷ You know, here not long ago I was coming from Texas, and I was. . . Been real tired in the meeting, and I was standing over on the side there, and wife went over and got the babies, they was picking some violets. And I was trying to rest my mind, and oh, my, those visions. . . You just don't realize, people, what it does to you. And I—I was standing there leaning across the fence like this, looking, and I remember how we used to line up there, little old boys, and holes in our socks. And look up across the hill, and remember when pop used to come across the field with a little old wagon and mule.

Every Saturday night we'd go to town, get the groceries for the week. And I thought about that handful of popcorn. You know, it's best not to do nothing wrong, isn't it? It'll come home to you sometime.

²⁸ I stood there and begin to think, "Now, Edward's gone. He's been dead for years. Just as soon as he got any age on him, he was killed." He died calling for me. I was working on a cattle ranch out west. And when. . . I stood there and begin to think about him. I thought, "I remember that handful of corn that I took out of that bucket." And I thought, "I'd give everything that I ever could own in this world, if I could go to him again and take him that handful of corn that I took." I can't do it. Here we have no continuing city.

I remember the old house that used to set up there, big, log house, and how big the logs was in it, and we had a little old apple tree on the outside. There's a piece of looking glass tacked up, a mirror on the win—on the little bench built on the tree, and we'd go out there and pop would come in and wash. He was about thirty years old, I guess, then he'd wash his hands and things on the outside, come into the little old cabin to eat. And I remember how strong. I used to look. My daddy was a small man, but a great, big muscle. And I thought, "My, he will live forever," such a strong man, and a wiry, real typical Irishman. And he was—he was as wiry as he could be. And I thought, "Oh, how strong my daddy is."

29 I just look at the old log house and see how tight she was put together; I said, “My, that old house, it’ll be there when I—my children are—are old.” And you know what? About twenty-five years, there’s a housing project there.

The old spring I used to drink out of, filled up and gone. House is gone. Dad died at fifty-two years old. Here we have no continuing city. That’s right. But brother, sister, we’re pilgrims and strangers today, seeking one that has eternal foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.

I was very bashful as a kid. I remember trying to be a business man when I was a kid. How many ever got in the old wagon, or something or other, and put some quilts around you and throwed some straw in a bed and ride downtown? Let’s see. You go down to get the groceries. . . Oh, my. On Saturday, I remember we used to do that, and every time pop would pay the tremendous grocery bill, about two dollars and seventy-five cents, three dollars for a week, five kids. The grocery man was so pleased to get that big bill, why, he’d give him a little sack of candy. And when they’d bring that sack of candy out, old stick peppermints. You remember? Say, it’s pretty good, isn’t it? I used. . . That and salty crackers goes good for me yet.

So they had that little sack full of candy and bring it out, and setting in this pile of hay out in that wagon was about five little pair of blue eyes looking for that candy, waited all week for it. If there wasn’t a stick around to go around to every one of them, they had to break it up, just exactly equally to each one. I remember every one waiting for his part. And we’d suck on it. We couldn’t eat it, go too quick, had to suck on it.

30 So, I remember I used to take mine and wrap it up in a piece of paper and put it in my pocket. And Monday come, I lived like a king. Mother’d say, “William?”

I’d say, “Yes, mama?”

“Go to the spring and get a bucket of water.”

“Yes, mama.” I’d say, “Hey.” Called my brother Humpy, I’d say, “Humpy, tell you what I’ll do, if you’ll go get that. . .” It was big old cedar buckets, you know, and a gourd dipper, and you. . . I said, “If you’ll go get that bucket of water, I’ll let you have five licks off of this piece of candy.” I’d undo it and say, “Smell it. See, it’s good.” Salesmanship. . . Brother, I took it easy as long as that candy lasted. I really had it made when I had that piece of candy. He’d go get it. I’d be sure it was five licks alone; no, six, five licks. Anything that had to be done, I’d let him do it for me, the rest of them: businessman, with this stick of candy.

³¹ I thought of that when I was standing there thinking about when we used to line up. And perhaps today, I guess I could go buy a whole box of chocolate Hershey's if I wanted to, but it'd never taste like that good, old peppermint candy then. That was really good.

I know it's cold in here. We'll hurry as quick as can. I love you, and some glorious day, maybe if not in this life, when we all cross over the river on the other side, I—I'll set down with you over there. We'll talk it all over then. It won't be cold there. No, we'll set down by the evergreen tree.

I want to tell you about me getting married. I. . . My father, making whiskey, and seeing people come there and getting the whiskey and drinking, and seeing the misbehavior of women, how young women would come there with other men, knowing it wasn't their husbands, I swore I'd never have nothing to do with a woman. I thought that was the littlest, lowest. . . And I haven't changed my opinion; it is. That's right. Oh, my. I thought, "That's horrible." I said, "Me, I'll be an old bachelor as long as I live."

³² They'd have little parties at the house, you know, and play these little old games about "hunt the buffalo," or whatever it is, you know, the old, Kentucky dances they used to have. And have the fiddler stand on a box, and saw the fiddle, and they'd all. . . Oh, I don't know. Every kind. . . But me, I never stayed to one of them in my life.

I had an old coon dog. Now, how many knows what that is? You mean me standing in Kentucky, and only about five man knows what a coon dog is in Kentucky? Say, is this Kentucky? I don't believe we're far enough down yet. You're too close to Indiana here. All right. An old dog, and I had an old .22 rifle, and there's where I lived in the woods all my life nearly. I'd go out, lay on top of the roof. Never went to a dance in my life.

³³ When I was about seven years old, I was packing water one day. you've heard that part of the story. Sorry to say, packing it to a moonshine still for my daddy, two little half-a-gallon molasses buckets. And as I went up the lane, it was in a September. The leaves had begin to turn kind of brown, and I set down under the tree and was setting there, crying because I couldn't go fishing out to an old ice pond. All the other boys was gone out there to the ice pond.

And while out setting there, just as still as it is in this room from the wind, I could hear something a blowing, like a "Whoosh." I wondered, "Where was that?" And I couldn't see any leaves blowing. It sounded like leaves. And I squalled a few times. Had on a pair of overalls with a fodder twine across for a gallous, and a nail for a button, or for a

button. I don't know whether you ever used one or not. It makes a good one. And I had my . . .

I stumped my toe, and I had a corncob tied under it to keep from getting the dirt on it, you know, walking along with a corncob tied under my toe. Oh, I was a picture. And I was squalling. I wanted to go out to fish and the rest of the boys, they was gone out there. I was setting there under the tree thinking, "Now, their daddies don't do this. And why would I have to do this? Pack this water to a moonshine still doing prohibition." Daddy made thousands a gallon of it, died a pauper, hungry when he died. That doesn't do you any good. Wrong will always pay wrong.

³⁴ So I remember setting there and hearing those leaves a blowing, and I got up, and I couldn't see them anywhere. And I squalled a couple times, and picked up my buckets, and started on up. We had several gallons to pack. They was going to run whiskey that night. And on the road up, I heard It again. I turned around, and about halfway up a big old cottonwood tree, silver poplar it's called, It was, looked like a whirlwind. We call them little cyclones. They're whirlwinds in Kentucky, I think is the best name. It's whirling around in the bush.

Well, I'd noticed them things before. So, I . . . It didn't leave. And out of there . . . Now, you can think whatever you want to, friends. I can only be honest with you. But out of there come an audible voice, and said, "Don't never smoke, or drink, or defile your body in any way. There'll be a work for you to do when you get older."

³⁵ Well, liked to scared me to death. I dropped both buckets, starting running, screaming at the top of my voice. A lot of copperheads in that country, and mama thought a copperhead had bit me. She was only about twenty-two years old. She picked me up, and I was kissing her and hugging her. She put me to bed and went over to Wathen's and called the doctor. He said, "Oh, he's just nervous."

About . . . I said, "There's a man in that tree. And I heard Him, what He told me." And I said, "I ain't going to never go by there." And till this day, I have never been there. I'd go down the one behind the garden, going back to . . . The pump was down at the barn, and we had to pack water up to the house. I've never been there to this day, and from that time. And that was—been a long time ago.

³⁶ So then, I remember about two weeks after that, I was playing marble with my brother, and there I—I felt something strange come over me. I didn't know what was taking place. And I went out, set down just a minute, and I looked, and right before me, I seen something moving. And the waters looked like the river was looking closer to me. And I seen the Municipal Bridge that spans the river now, come up and

cross the river, and seen the amount of men dropped off, and went in and told my mama. She said, "You had a dream, honey."

I said, "No, ma'am. I stood and looked right at it, and I seen what it did."

And—and twenty-two years from that very same year, the bridge which spans the Ohio River, and just exactly the same amount of men lost their life. And they just kept on going. Every time, everywhere, just vision after vision. Nobody . . .

³⁷ I remember my first date I had with a little girl. You know how boys are. When you get about sixteen, seventeen, you got a sweetheart. And oh, that first one, you know how she looks. I was a big, old, bashful, country boy, but I remember the first girl that I had. Oh, she had teeth like pearls. She had eyes like a dove, neck like a swan. Oh, she was the prettiest thing I ever seen in my life.

So, she had just come into school, so I said to the other boy friend, I said, "You get your daddy's old Ford. I got seventy-five cents. And we'll get us two gallons of gasoline for a quarter. And so, and I'll have fifty cents left, and we'll go out and have a good time."

³⁸ So we had to jack the old Ford up, and you know, make . . . Did you ever do that to your old Ford when it was about half backslid anyhow, you know? And—and pull it up till we got is started, and he got his girl, and I got mine, and away we went. My, I think, she'd go out with me. Went at nighttime, didn't have to dress too good, you know; we wasn't going nowhere anyhow. So I setting back in the back of the car talking to this little lady, her way over on one side, and me way over on the other, just a bashful, you know. I—I just . . . My, I know my face was bound to be red.

³⁹ So we stopped down there at a place to get some sandwiches. You get a great, big ham sandwich for a nickel. So I was—I was the sport of the crowd. I was going in, and was going to get some ham sandwiches. So I got some sandwiches, and come out with some Cokes, and we drank the Cokes and ate the sandwich, and I thought, "Oh, my. I'm a real fellow now. Somebody likes me, and oh, my, we just having a good time."

And just along about that time, where women begin to backslide enough to smoke cigarettes. And when I come back out, my little queen was smoking a cigarette.

Well, I've always had my opinion of a woman that would smoke a cigarette. It's the lowest thing she could do. And I haven't changed my opinion a bit. If God . . . If the Holy Spirit that deals with me . . . If you expect to get to heaven, you'd better stop 'fore you get there with that stuff. That's right.

40 Now, I'm not here to preach the Gospel. These . . . There are ministers here do that. But let me tell you something, women: it's a disgrace to the world. See her with . . . When I get statistics from the government, shows that eighty percent of the babies that's born has to be raised on cows milk. If they nurse from their mother, they'd die within eighteen months on account of nicotine poison.

Communists, fifth columnists? Listen, brother, don't you fear about Russia coming over here and doing anything, or Germany, or any other nation. It's our own rottenness that's killing us. It ain't the robin that pecks on the apple that hurts the apple; it's the worm at the core that kills the apples. We're becoming so demoralized till no wonder we're breaking. We're breaking ourselves. All right, so much for that.

41 Anyhow, she was smoking this little cigarette. I looked at her, and, my, she sure passed out of my view. And I—I looked at her, and I could hardly believe it was her, that pretty little girl, setting there smoking that cigarette. She was blowing it through her nose, you know, sickening looking. Any man let his wife smoke cigarettes, shows what he's made out of. That's right. That's right. That's exactly. Brother, mine may do it, if she does, she's got the same door to go out of that she come in there with. That's exactly right. Setting there smoking . . . Shows who's boss at the house. Setting there, it's bad enough, and too bad for men. And there she was setting there blowing that smoke through her nose. I thought, "Well, poor girl."

She said, "You have a cigarette, Billy?"

And I said, "No, ma'am. Thanks. I don't smoke."

She said, "Now, they . . . You say you don't dance." She is one of these little pop, or snicklefritz type, you know. She said, "You don't dance. And—and you said you don't drink, and now, you don't smoke." She said, "What do you like to do?"

And I said, "Well, I like to hunt and fish."

That didn't interest her. So she—she said, "Why, you big sissy."

Oh, my. I was going to be big, bad Bill. See? And here I was a sissy in her estimation.

42 Once before that my daddy had called me a sissy. We was going down to pick up some bottles down at the river, you know, along the river, and—and brother and I got a nickel a dozen for picking up bottles, where they put the whiskey in. And I was . . . And I had an old boat, didn't have no rudder on the back of it, and we had two boards. My brother in one side, and me in the other, and this man had a big duck . . . ? . . . on, and I thought it . . . His name was McKinney. And he was going to let me use his duck boat, and I thought, "There's one guy

that likes me.” And when he was going to let me row up the river in his duck boat, and that day we was going across the hill, down below the old home place, there was a tree that blowed down across the path, and dad just threw his leg up across the tree . . . One Sunday morning, and he stopped and pulled a little flat bottle of whiskey out of his pocket, give it to Mr. McKinney, and said, “Have a drink?”

He taken a drink, handed over to me. He said, “Have a drink?”

I said, “No, thanks. I don’t—don’t drink.”

He said, “What? A Branham and don’t drink?”

And pop said, “No, I raised one sissy.” Sissy?

⁴³ Why, that got me. I said, “Hand me that bottle.” And I took that bottle with as much determination to take the drink as I am to have a service tonight. And I pulled the cork out of it, started to turn it up to drink it . . . Now, you can call this whatever you want to. But when I started to take that drink of whiskey, I heard something go, “Whoosh.”

I thought, “What is that?” I started again, and something, it just kept making that noise like a whirling of the wind in the leaves, the same Noise that told me never to smoke, or drink, or defile. I couldn’t take it. What was it? It wasn’t because I was too good to; it was because God was protecting His gift. See, it’s nothing by man. He’s nothing. It’s God.

⁴⁴ I dropped the bottle and started crying, run up to the field. And that night, when that girl called me a sissy ’cause I wouldn’t smoke a cigarette, I said, “Nobody wants me, and here even my girls won’t have nothing to do with me. Hand me that cigarette.” And I took it, just as determined to take that cigarette and smoke it, as I am to—to finish this story. And she handed it to me; I pulled one of the cigarettes out of the pack, reached down and struck a match, and started to put it to my mouth. And just as I started to do that, I heard it go, “Whoosh.”

⁴⁵ “Well, that’s just my imagination.” I got it again and started up to my mouth with it again, and again roared. I looked at the cigarette; the match was burning down. I looked at her. I remember that, “Don’t you never drink or defile your body in any way.” I stood there a little bit. I got real shaky. I started crying. I dropped the cigarette. She said, “Well, you big sissy you.” And I just throwed it down and started walking up the road by myself, crying, with my hands in my pocket. And they followed me with the car, with the lights on me, in an old model T ford, a laughing at me. And I went out and set down in the field. I left and went across the field. I could take you and put you right on the same spot.

46 I set there and said, "I'll go home and finish the job. Nobody wants me, and nobody . . . My life is a misery, so what's the use in me living?" Setting out there in that field that night . . . God's grace . . . Wished I had more time, but I can't, to get into that right there, to say what taken place; but someday I will, with God's help.

You might wonder how I got married. I finally found a girl that didn't drink and smoke. Just look around; they're still here. The backbone of the nation . . . So, she was a lovely girl. How glad I'm . . . ? . . . glad to talk about her and her boy, and about her and I setting back there listening at me. She was a queen. She was everything that a lady could be.

I went with her. She was out of a good family. I was . . . My family wasn't much. But she was such a real nice girl, Christian girl. I'd go with her to church; that's where she'd taken me, to church.

47 And I remember my conversion when I was a converted. I'll just have to bypass most of it to hurry up now. I remember in the . . . I begin to make up my mind that I . . . She was too good of a girl for me just to go with her. Somebody ought to marry her who'd make her a good living, and I was only making twenty cents an hour, so I—I knowed I couldn't make her no living at that, working as a ditch digger. And her father made five hundred and something a month during the time of the depression, a brotherhood organizer on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

But she loved me, and I loved her. So I thought there's just going to be a . . . I'd just have to tell her and just walk away. And I couldn't do it. I tried to. Every night I thought I'd tell her I just wouldn't come back no more, and let her go ahead and get with some—with some good boy that would—could make her a living, and make her happy. And I was taking up her time, her young life, and I—I didn't want just to do that. So I—I was all mixed up. And I didn't want to give her up, 'cause I loved her too much. And I certainly was in a bad shape.

48 So I was too bashful to ask her to marry me. I just couldn't do that. Guess you wonder how I ever got married. I wrote her a letter and asked her, if you would. It worked. Now, it wasn't, "Dear Miss," I . . . It was, you know, a little more than that. I set down one day and fixed it all up, and fixed me up a letter.

Now, her father was just a good friend. Her mother was a good woman, but she was out of a real starchy church, you know, that—that she believed in. Guys like myself, I guess, wasn't too much. So I—I thought, "I could get by with her daddy, but her mother is what was bothering me."

49 So I just went to work that morning. I said, "Now, if it don't work, all right, so that'll settle it." And I closed the letter and dropped in

the mailbox, and went to work. And I had to take her to church on Wednesday night, had a date. So I went over and put the box Monday morning. So Wednesday night come along, I had to go to church. And I happened to get to thinking, you know. Never thought of it before, but me mailing that letter, what if her mammy got a hold of it? And then, well, if she didn't get it. I thought, "Oh, my. I'd sure be in for it when I get up there, if her mother got it besides, she didn't get it." Well, the more I thought of it, the more I thought I'd better stay away Wednesday night.

⁵⁰ "Well," I thought, "no, I can't do that, now. I've got to go. So what am I going to do about it?" So, I thought, "I'll just drive up out front, and go easy." I knowed better to drive up out front and blow the horn. And boys, I'm telling you that now too, and to you girls, if your boyfriend don't think enough of you to come up to the house, ask for you, keep away from him. That's right.

So I pulled the old Ford up out there; it was stopped. Got up on the porch, I thought, "I just won't go in the house, you know. She'd get me in the house, then I'd be in an awful fix." So I knocked at the door. And so, Hope, my wife, or sweetheart then, she come to the door. She said, "Hello, Billy. Come on in."

⁵¹ And I thought, "Oh, oh. No, no. I'm afraid to come in. If your mother got that letter, then I'm going to be—get me in the house I can't get out, then. So I would be in an awful fix."

So, she said, "Won't you step in?"

I said, "Thank you," I said, I'll just wait right here on the porch."

And she said, "Oh, come on in."

My, I walked and set down at the door, and hold my hat in my hand. I thought, "Oh, this is sure under a lot of strain."

After while, her mother come in. She said, "How do you do, William?"

I said, "How do, Mrs. Brumbach? Sure a fine day."

"Yes, sure."

So went on. I thought, "She never got that letter."

⁵² Went on to church. I didn't hear a thing Dr. Davis said that night. Only thing I was thinking about, "She's . . . Just as soon as church is over, she's going to tell me, 'All right, this is your last night.' I was going to lose my girl then." Had that on my mind. You know how the devil can tell you lies. So then I thought, "I will lose my girl as soon as church is over."

So then, I never heard nothing the preacher said. When we went home that night, we . . . She said, "Let's just walk."

⁵³ I thought, "Oh, oh, I know she got the letter, now." So I was just walking on down the street. I kept looking over at her. Oh, my, those dark eyes, and that moon shining down, you know. I—I just hated to have to lose her. So I—I thought, "I know I can't marry a girl like that. So I guess maybe I'd just go ahead and have to be an old hermit. Always said I was going to have a bunch of traps and a dog, and live back in the woods.

So I thought, "Well now, I just guess this is it." And we kept on walking, and got almost to the house, why, I thought, "You know, maybe she didn't get that letter. Maybe just hung up in the mailbox, and she didn't get it." So I got pretty bold, you know, then. I was talking right along. She didn't get the mail, so I was kinda glad she didn't.

⁵⁴ So then I—I was going on, you know, talking fine. Just about the time we got almost to the house, she said, "Billy?"

And I said, "Yes, Hope?"

And she said, "I got your letter."

And oh, my, I said, "You did?"

She said, "Uh-huh."

Well, I thought, "This is it."

So walked on a little farther, and she just walked on just a quietly. You know how a woman can keep you under suspense, you know. I thought, "Well, say something. Tell me not to come back no more or do something." So I just kept walking on. I looked over at her, and she looked over at me, and just kept on going. So I thought, "Well, what are you going to say?" Well, she just kept on walking, just never said nothing. I thought I'd kinda break the ice, and I said, "Did you read it?"

She said, "Uh-huh."

⁵⁵ Well, I thought, "Well, comment it some way." So didn't say a word, just kept on going. We was just a little piece from the house, and I thought, "You're going to lead me right up to your mother, aren't you? And then I know we're going to have it."

And so I said, "Did you read it all?"

She said, "Uh-huh." That's all I could get out of her, "Uh-huh."

So I said, "What did you think about it?"

She said, "Oh, it was all right." We got married, we sure did. It worked fine. Yes, sir.

The trouble of it was, I . . . We had to ask her parents. And she said, "Billy," said, "you'll have to ask mother and dad."

56 I said, "Look, Hope," I said, "you know, the best I remember, now, that married life is supposed to be fifty-fifty. See?" I said, "Now, I'll tell you what, I'll make an agreement with you." I said, "My fifty part, I'll ask your father. And your fifty part, you ask your mother." I knowed I'd get by with her dad, but I was doubting her mother.

She said, "All right." She said, "If you'll ask dad first."

I said, "Well, all right."

She said, "We ought to ask him right away."

I said, "I guess that's right."

57 So I went up to her house, and I, that night, and set up there. And I got ready to go. We was all setting, and Mr. Brumbach was setting over at his desk typing off something, you know. And oh, my. I just thought I'd stay all night. So finally got time, I had to say something. So I said . . . Got nine-thirty, that was my time to go home. How times have changed. So I said . . . I got up to go home, and so I said, "Good night, you all," walked out.

And Hope walked over and said, "Didn't you—didn't you ask? Why don't you ask him?"

I said, "Oh, I just can't." I said, "I just can't."

She said, "Well, you got to ask him."

And I said, "Well, you take your mother and go in the other room."

And she said, "All right."

So she went back and said, "Mom, would you come out here a minute?"

So I stood there at the door a little bit. And I said, "Charlie?"

58 He was writing on something. He turned around and said, "Huh? What did you say, Bill?"

And I said, "Could I—could I speak to you a minute?"

He turned around and said, "Yes, why? What's the matter. Bill?"

And I said, "Would you come here just a minute?"

And he said, "Yes."

He walked out on the porch. And oh, I was sweating and my heart beating so fast. And I said, "Sure is a pretty night, isn't it, Charlie?"

He said, "Sure is, Bill."

I said, "I like these kind of nights."

He said, "You can have her." How he spared me.

I said, "You mean it?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "What about her mother?"

He said, "I'll take care of that."

⁵⁹ I said, "Thank you, Charlie." I said, "Now look, Charlie," I said, "I know you can get her good clothes and everything. And there's probably many more boys around here who could make her a better living; and she's a pretty girl, and a nice lady," and I said, "any—anybody would want to go with her." I said, "I don't know just how breaks ever happen like that for me." I said, "Charlie, there's nobody in the world loves her any more than I do." I said, "I can't do for her like you can, 'cause I don't. . . I only make about twenty cents an hour." I said, "Charlie, I'll work as hard as I can, and do everything that I know is in my power to make her a living and be good to her."

⁶⁰ I never will forget. And he laid his (He was a German, and me an Irishman, and we was always guying one another.) laid his big hand over on my shoulder, said, "Bill, I'd rather you have her than anybody I know of." He said, "Life don't mean what you've got. It's how contented you are with what you have."

I said, "Thank you, Charlie. I—I love her." And I said, "I'll be good to her, and true. And I'll work as hard as I can for her."

He said, "I believe that."

We got married, moved into a little two-room place. I never forget what we bought to go housekeeping. And I'll be done just in a minute.

⁶¹ We. . . I went down, I had enough money to go to Sears and Roebucks and make a—a payment on a—a breakfast set that hadn't been painted yet. And I never forget it. I got me. . . I was painting it yellow, and put a great big green shamrock right on every chair, an Irishman, you know, would. And we had an old folding bed. How many ever knowed what a folding bed is? Somebody give it to us. And I went over to a junk dealer and got a stove for seventy-five cents, a cooking stove. And I had to pay a dollar and something to get grates to go in it. And we put her in there and went to housekeeping.

We didn't have very much, but we were happy. We had one another. That's all that mattered. We loved one another, that settled it.

⁶² Later on along, God gave us a little boy, standing right back there looking at me now. And how happy we were when this little fellow come into the world. And we loved God with all of our heart.

Just before, or just right after the boy was born, I took my first vacation. We saved up enough money till I had, I believe, around six, eight, ten dollars saved up, besides the car payment. And I went up to Michigan to visit an old friend of mine that I'd met, by the name of John Ryan, setting right here now.

I didn't know too much about Pentecostal people. And this old man, I thought, belonged to the House of David, because he wore long hair and beard. But I found out it was wrong. I went to visit him. And guess, you remember, Brother Ryan. We stayed up there a few days.

And on my road back is when I got my first acquaintance with Pentecostal people. We come through Dawa . . . or Mishawaka, and there was a . . . Mishawaka, Indiana. And there was a great convention going on. And there were old Fords, and Cadillacs, and everything setting around, and I heard a lot of noise. And I went in to listen to these people. And they were shouting, "Whooo," all the dancing, and running, and screaming. I thought, "Tsk, ts, ts, ts, ts, ts, ts, ts, such manners in the church." And how they were going on. I thought, "Well, that's terrible for people to act like that in church." So I listened at them, and they were running up-and-down the floor dancing, and a screaming, and a carrying on. And I thought, "That's just awful that they'd do that." My self-styled Baptist ways, you know, so I—I thought . . .

⁶³ So that night I just waited to see what they would do. They had all the preachers come up on the platform.

They said, "We're—we have . . ." About five hundred of us up there, and he said, "Now, we haven't got time for you to say nothing, but just say who you are, and where you're from."

So I just said, "William Branham, Jeffersonville." Went . . .

Next day, there was something or another them preacher's preaching, they—they brought an old man out there, an old colored man, had a great big old long coat on. All them preachers had been preaching about different things that day, but he took his text from over in Job. "Where was you when I laid the foundations of the world . . ." and so forth. They had been preaching about earthly things, and he preached about heavenly things. And he took Christ up before the foundation of the world, brought Him in the second coming, down the horizontal rainbow.

⁶⁴ When they brought the old fellow out there, he was so old they had to lead him out. And about time he got all wound up to preaching, he jumped up in the air, clicked his heels together, said, "Glory to God! Whew." He said, "There's not enough room here for me to preach," and walked off the platform.

And I said, "Boy, if It'll make an old man act like that, I want that too. What will It do for me?" I said, "That's what I want."

I didn't have any money, so I couldn't eat with them. I had seventy-five, or eighty cents left besides my gasoline I had to buy. I couldn't stay in a tourist court, so I went and bought me a big sack full of second

day rolls, you know. that'd . . . So I'd eaten them. I went out in an old cornfield and laid down that night, and I pressed my trousers between the two seats, you know, back seat and front seat, and put them in there and pressed it out. And I prayed all night for God to give me favor with those people. They had something that I wanted. And so I thought, "Oh, that's what I been looking for, right there."

⁶⁵ So I went back down the next morning, and I'd all shined up, best I had. I had a T-shirt on and seersucker trousers. Nobody knowed me, anyhow. So I went in and set down. The colored folks was there. They had to have it above the Mason Dixie Line so this color could set around. And I happened to set down, and first thing you know a colored man set down by me, and I'm a southerner too, you know. I looked around and thought, "Now, this ain't right." Looked at him. . . First thing you know, they come up. All that big group of people, all of them singing, and going on like that. And I thought, "This is wonderful."

So the man come out. He said, "Last night on the platform, there was a young evangelists by the name of William Branham." Said, "Anybody know the whereabouts of him?" Two or three thousand people there. Seersucker trousers a T-shirt, so I just set real close like this. Said, "Anybody knows where William Branham is? We want him to bring the morning message." Morning message, seersucker trousers, and a T-shirt? I just hunkered down real easy like this, you know, down under the seat.

⁶⁶ So he announced again, said, "Anybody outside, if you know where William Branham is, tell him to come in." Nobody knowed me.

So this colored man looked around and said, "You know the man?"

I had to lie or do something, you know. So I said, "Look, I—I—I'm knowing, yes."

He said, "Well, go get him."

I said, "I . . . Look, don't say nothing." I said, "I'm he. See?"

He said, "Well, get up there."

And I said, "Why, I—I can't do it." I said, "Look here way I'm dressed."

He said, "Dem people don't care how you dress. Go on up dere."

And I said, "No, think . . ." I said, "Shhh, don't say nothing like that."

He said, "Anybody found William Branham?"

He said, "Here he is. Here he is." Oh, my. "Here he is."

⁶⁷ Oh, my. Seersucker trousers with a T-shirt, here I went up. I never seen a microphone before. And here I went walking up in this great big,

cathedral of a place, there, walking up there, you know, and I thought, “Oh, how out of place.”

I took my text of when the rich man, in Luke, you know, lifted up his eyes in hell, and he cried. I got up there, and I said, “And he lifted up. There was no children in hell, so he cried. There was no flowers, so he cried. There was no prayer meeting, and he cried. And there’s no this, that, and that.” Then I cried. And the first thing you know, the Holy Spirit got caught into that building, and I never seen such a carrying on in all. . . Why, I went unconscious nearly. I was right in the right place and didn’t know it.

⁶⁸ After I got outside, we come to. I got outside, and this fellow walked up to me with a great big Texas hat on, a pair of cowboy boots, said, “Say, I’m Reverend *So-and-so*.”

I said, “Well, say. Maybe my seersucker trousers is not so bad.”

Another fellow walked up and had on these little old golf playing trou- . . . clothes, you know, said, “I’m Doctor *So-and-so* from down in Florida.” He said—said, “Will you come preach for me?”

Well, I thought, “My.”

I had a whole string of invitations. And I got in my old Ford. I was going to tell my wife. And down the road I went. See, it’d thirty miles an hour. That’s fifteen miles this way, and fifteen miles up-and-down that way, you know. Down the road I come, just as hard as I could go. I’d pull on the old brake out there, and the two back wheels scooted. Bless her heart, she run to the door, and her arms open, you know, and she said, “Did you have a good time?”

⁶⁹ I said, “Oh, a wonderful time.” Telling her about being with Brother Ryan here, and so forth. And that’s when I said, “Honey, I got something to tell you. Just let me show you.” Reached down in my pocket. “See all them?” I said, “I’ve always wanted to be an evangelist.” I said, “There is. . . I’ve got enough invitations to last me all year. You go with me?”

Said, “Sure.”

Well, we still owed about a hundred dollars on the old Ford, and debts and things, but she wanted to go with me.

Well, we went and told her mother. “Mom,” she said, “go ahead.” But her mother said, “Bill, no.” She said, “That ain’t nothing but a bunch of backwash out of other churches, just what other churches had kicked out.”

⁷⁰ “Why,” I said, “they’re the happiest people in the world. They’re not ashamed of their religion. They just scream, shout, just as free as the water runs.” I said, “I like that.”

She said, "It's just what other churches has kicked out." She said, "It's nothing but a bunch of trash."

And she . . . And I come to found out, what she called trash, is the cream of the crop. And I say that with respect. That's exactly right.

So I said, "Well . . ." She said . . . I said, "Well, that's my wife."

And she said, "But, it's my daughter." She said, "She can go. If she goes, her mother will go to a grave brokenhearted."

Then Hope started crying. She said . . . There's where I made my fatal mistake, right there. So she said, "Well, if you want to, if you want to go, I'll go with you."

⁷¹ And we went on, talked it over. Instead of listening to God, I listened to the woman. Now, she may . . . She might be setting right here this afternoon for all I know. I don't see her, but she may be. She's a good woman, but she just didn't understand at that time.

Then sorrow set in. Immediately, the . . . We had a . . . After that little while, another little fellow was born, a little girl called Sharon Rose.

The 1937 flood come up. Sorrows begin to break in. Things went wrong at the church. My congregation begin to drop. Just get out of the harmony with God one time. And friends, I'll always regret it as long as I live. Right then, my church thought I was a fanatic. They still do. Not my church body at Jeffersonville, no, no, I mean the Baptist church that I belonged to.

⁷² At home, I was a black sheep, because I didn't drink and things, and all the rest of them did. In society I didn't dance, and didn't go to places, and didn't play cards and those things. So I was a black sheep there. In church I was a fanatic. And I just found out that that backwash was right where I belonged. I was one of them, just exactly. They had something that was down in here. And deep was calling to the deep, and it was where God was trying to get me.

I ain't disregarding any other, any church, or nothing about it. Every person that's borned of the Spirit of God, is a son of God. That's right.

⁷³ But then, I remember when the flood came up, and my wife took sick. And I never forget that hour. My, the night the dike broke through down there, the levy . . . Brother Ryan, you was there. And I was working on the patrol. I thought I was a pretty good boatman.

And I'm fixing to close the service. And I never forget that night, these few seconds . . . I want to try to put it to your hearts to let you know of what taken place at that time.

My wife taken sick. And the dike broke through that night. I remember meeting Brother Ryan and them out there, and he was in my old boat, standing out at the edge of the water, preaching to the people, going down the river.

⁷⁴ And then, I went to the hospital to get her, and the whole thing had washed away. And there I was, out in the . . . Went out to make a rescue to a woman that come, told me there was out there on past Chestnut street, and the house was going in, and the people were drowning. And I got in the boat, and pulled . . . Little old pull string motor, and I got out there, and got to where the woman was, and the house was about to go over, a big two story house shaking back and forth. And I come down through the back of a alley like, where I had to get in. And I tied the boat, went a got a mother and some children and put them in the boat. The mother fainted. I got her in the boat, packing her, put her in the boat, and got back out. And when she come to, when we got her to shore, she begin to scream, "My baby, my baby." And I thought she left a baby in that house up there.

⁷⁵ Well, I tried to go back again. Come to find out, it was a baby she was . . . A little two year old, three year old child she had there with her, and she didn't know where it was at. But I'd done got in the boat. And I went back to get the baby. And as I tied the boat to the post, like this, and got it again to look around, there was nothing in the house, the bottom give way, and here I was in the house. And I run and jumped through to the door real quick, and fell into the water, and got the post like this, and pulled a string loose, jumped up in the boat again. And the current had done got me out in the middle of the Ohio River, which is three or four times as wide as it is here, and then it was really wide. The whole city was swept over.

⁷⁶ And the motor . . . Something had happened, and I couldn't get it started. And that current was taking me out in towards the dam down there, over the falls. It was just as hard as it could swirl me around. I was setting out there pulling that string as hard as I could, and it wouldn't start. And I'd pull it again, the boat turning, the waves almost as high as this building. It's just like that.

I had plenty of time to think about whether that was backwash or not, or trash. I thought, "Oh, my. Just little while longer and over them piers and through the falls I'll go, and that's the end of it. I thought, "A wife, two babies . . ." And I got to pulling the string like that, and I was going on out into the river. And I seen it wasn't going to start, and I started crying. I said, "God, be merciful to me. Don't let me die out here like this." I pulled the string like that, and pulled it again. It wouldn't start. And I choked it, and I had it flooded, and I was pulling

again. I thought, “Oh, my.” Why, I couldn’t. . . I didn’t know what to do. And then just about time they got in current it started.

⁷⁷ I whirled around and got back, come back way down towards New Albany, got in, went up to find my wife. The whole hospital was covered through, there at the government, with water. And they’d. . . I thought, “She’s drowned and gone.” She had Billy Paul back there and Sharon. She was down with double pneumonia. So I ask them, “What become of them?”

They said, “They got on a train and went out in a cattle car.”

That sick mother, with a hundred and five fever in a cattle car, and the sleet blowing just as hard as it could across. . . And then they said, “They went towards Charlestown.” And I started out to hit Charlestown. Got my boat and got in there, there was about seven miles of water where a creek had backed up the. . . broke through this way, and the current coming just as hard as it could come. I tried hour after hour, and I couldn’t get that boat to even pierce that—that current. It’d bring me right back around like this again. I tried and tried. And there I come to find out I was marooned out on a island to myself. And there I set for days, thinking all about that backwash, kicked out of other churches.

⁷⁸ When I found her, after the waters went down, and I got to where she was way up at Columbus, Indiana, in a Baptist Hospital, a place, room like this, I went through there screaming at the top of my voice. I was about wild. And I seen her raise up her hand, and there my darling, she’d fell off so much weight, till she didn’t—wouldn’t weigh over a hundred pounds. That pneumonia had went into tuberculosis, and she was dying.

The intern come, got me, and take me back, said, “Just a minute. Aren’t you a friend of Sam Adair?”

I said, “Sam Adair,” that’s doctor in Jeffersonville, a buddy of mine.

⁷⁹ And he said, “Well, look. Now, we’re going to send her to Sam,” said, “the girl is going to die.” Said, “She just. . .” Said, “Now, you’re a minister, aren’t you?”

I said, “Yes, sir.”

Said, “Well, you. . .” Said, “Just don’t go to her. Don’t be excited.” Said, “You just. . .”

I said, “All right.”

And I straightened myself up and went down to see her. And I. . . ? . . . she said, “Bill?”

And I looked, and her jaws sunk in, and those dark eyes way back. And I knelt down beside of her, and I started praying. We brought her home, her and the baby; we took her out the hospital. They done everything that could be done. Dr. Miller, here, Louisville, come to look at her and said, "There isn't a thing can be done." And went on and on, until she laid just a few hours to live.

⁸⁰ And I was out on patrol when I heard them call me. And I turned on, come down the road as hard as I could. They said, "She's dying." Said, "Calling for Reverend Branham to come to the hospital: Wife dying."

And I went into the hospital (I'll never forget it as long as I live.), rushed up the steps, went over to where she was laying there, looked at her. And she'd already turned over on her side. Dr. Adair coming down the hall, bless his heart. We're neighbors now, and always been buddies. He was coming down the hall; he seen me coming, tears running down his cheeks. And he darted in sideways. And I went in there, I said, "What about it, doc?"

We fished together, hunt together, lived together. He said, "Billy, she's probably gone by now."

I said, "Doc, let me hold your hand. Let's go in together."

⁸¹ He said, "Billy, I can't go in there." And said, "As many pies and things as Hope's cooked for me and things." Said, "As good as she's been, like my sister." Said, "I can't go in, Bill." And he was breaking his own heart.

And I said, "Doc, I'm going in."

Said, "No, you set here, Bill, just a little while, and we'll let the undertaker come and get her."

And I said, "I'm going in, doctor."

He said, "You can't do it."

And I said, "Yes I can."

⁸² And he tried to pull me back, and I just went on, walked down the hall, opened up the door and went in. And there she was laying like that, this sheet up over her. I pulled the sheet down. I looked at her laying there. I put my hand on her head, felt real sticky, and I said, "Sweetheart, can you hear me?" I shook her again. I said, "Do you hear me, honey?"

And if I live to be a hundred years old, I'll never forget those great, big, dark, angel eyes opened up. True, lovely woman, she looked up (twenty-two years old), looked me right in the face. She said, "Oh, Bill." I knelt down and started crying. She put her own arm over on me and begin to pat me. She said, "Why'd you call me back?"

83 Just then, the nurse run in, said, “Reverend Branham, you can’t stay in there.”

I said, “Just a minute, nurse.” We knew her real well.

My wife called her over. She said, “Juanita,” said, “I hope when you get married you have a husband like mine.” Said, “He’s been so good to me,” and she had her arm around me.

And I said, “What was you talking about, honey?”

She said, “Bill, I was being taken home.” The nurse left the room. And she said, “I’d been taken home, and some Angel’s like was going down.” Said, “It’s just so peaceful, a great tropic,” and said, “the big birds was flying from tree to tree.” She said, “Now, don’t think I’m beside myself.”

And I said, “Yes.”

What it was, her eyes were just opened to see paradise just as . . . And she said, “You know why I’m going, don’t you, Bill?” And that’s what hurt.

I said, “I believe so, honey.”

84 She said—said, “I hope I didn’t influence you when I was crying that day, when her mother said that these people were backwash.”

I said, “No.”

She said, “Bill, it’s the most glorious thing in the world to die with the baptism of the Holy Ghost.” She said, “I don’t mind.” Said, “I hate to leave you.” Said, “But take care of Billy Paul.” That’s my boy setting right there. Said, “Take care of him and raise him a Christian.” And said, “Then, you also . . . And Sharon, the little girl.” And said, “Don’t stay single.” Said, “I want to ask you some things to promise me.” Said, “Remember that time you wanted to buy that rifle in Louisville, and didn’t have enough money to make a down payment, two dollars?”

And I said, “Yeah.”

85 She said, “After I’m gone,” she said, “go home, and look up under the folding bed on that newspaper. I was saving nickels to get enough money,” to make the down payment on that rifle for me. She knowed I wanted it so bad.

You’ll never know how I felt when I went home and seen about a dollar and seventy-five cents laying there. She’d saved it for months trying to get enough money to make that payment.

Said, “Will you promise me you’ll get that rifle?”

Said, “Yeah.”

And she said, “Then, I don’t want you to stay single.” Said, “You get some good Christian girl, with the baptism of the Holy Ghost that’ll

raise the children right.” Said, “Will you? I want you to meet me there at the gate.”

Said, “All right, honey. But I won’t promise to get married again.”

86 She said, “Please promise me.” Said, “I don’t want my children pulled from post to post like that.” And said, “Promise that you’ll never let down no more. That you’ll always preach this wonderful, glorious Gospel, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost.” She said, “Bill, there’s not one worry in the world that I have right now.” She said, “I’m just as . . . She was just as willing to die as the water flows down that river. Said, “I just hate to leave you and the children.” but she said, “I’m going back.” Said, “I have no desire to stay.”

87 I said, “Honey, on that morning, I . . . You stand over on the east side of the gate. Somewhere, somewhere in the world, if I’m living, I’ll be preaching this Gospel until the time that I meet you. And if I sleep before then . . .” We don’t believe in death. There’s no Scripture in the Bible says a Christian dies. No, sir, they’re not dead. And so, I said, “If I’m sleeping, I’ll be by your side there at the grave.” I said, “But if I’m not, I’ll be somewhere in the world preaching the Gospel. And—and—and I’ll get the kids together, or you get them, and you stand on the east side of the gate. When you see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of them coming up, I’ll be there.”

88 And she put her arms around me, and I kissed her good-bye. That was it. The Angels come packed her away. I took off home. And just as I got home, not knowing it, here come someone running in, said, “Brother Branham?”

“Yeah.”

Said, “You’re baby’s dying, also.”

“Baby dying?”

“Yeah.”

Little, fat healthy thing. I remember her mother used to put the little three corners on her, set her out in the yard, and I’d blow my horn when I was coming around. She was just big enough to jump and go, “Goo-goo, goo-goo, goo.” Just sweet and plump, and how I loved her.

I said, “My baby’s not going.”

“Yep.”

89 I rushed to the hospital real quick. Sam Adair said, “You can’t go in, Bill.” Said, “She’s developed tubercular meningitis, and she’s dying now.”

I said, “Where’s Billy Paul?”

Said, “We got him away.” Said, “You can’t go in now.” Said, “You’ll pick up that germ, take it back to Billy.”

I said, “Surely, doctor.”

I waited till he turned his back and I went in anyhow. And I went in, and they had her in an isolating place, not a very good hospital, had . . . The flies was all in her little eyes. And I went down there, and looked at the poor little thing. And I shook her. Her little legs was fat, and moving back and forth, little spasm like. And when she opened her little eyes and looked at me . . . She was blue-eyed. And those little blue eyes, she’d suffered so hard till they were crossed. And when she looked at me, I said, “Sharry, do you know your daddy, honey?” His . . . Her little lips begin to quiver, and she was trying to reach for me, and was dying.

⁹⁰ I knelt down, and I said, “O God, please don’t let my baby die. I’m sorry that I listened to what somebody else said. Take me, and let my baby live. I’m the one that sinned. I’m the one that did wrong.” I said, “Let my baby live, God. Don’t take her. I love her so much.”

And while I was praying, I looked, looked like a black sheet come folding down. I knowed—I knowed that was it.

Just a few minutes, the nurse come in, and said, “Reverend, you can’t stand in here.”

I said, “Just go on out.”

Seen the Angel of God come, take the little thing home. I walked over and put my hand on her little head. I said, “Sweetheart, God bless your little heart.” I said, “You’re going to be a little angel directly in the arms of mother. She’s laying there in the morgue now.”

⁹¹ I said, “God, I’ve done wrong, but someday, if You forgive me, I’ll make it all right to You.” I said, “You gave her to me; You’re taking her away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.” I said, “I love You, Lord, with all my heart.” I felt her little flesh quiver. She was gone.

I couldn’t hold myself together. My bones wouldn’t hold together, looked like. I was dying. I taken her, put her in her mother’s arms, take her up there on the hill, dug a hole. I was standing there, and Brother Smith, the Methodist church, my buddy, preached the funeral. I heard him reach over and get those clods and say, “Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust, earth to earth.”

Just then, whispering down through those pine trees, come a wind, seemed like it was singing:

There's a land beyond the river,
 That they call the sweet forever,
 We only reach that shore by faith decree;
 One by one we gain the portal,
 There to dwell with the immortals,
 Someday, they'll ring those golden bells for you and
 me.

⁹² Here real recently, my boy, he was just a little bitty fellow, we was taking a flower over to his mother's grave. He had his hat in his hand, and a little flower, holding it on Easter morning. He started snubbing, and crying (Billy Paul, the one that helps me here in the service.); I put my arm around him. Walked up, and he put the little flower down just as it was breaking day. I said, "Now, stand up, honey." I said, "Mother and sister, their body lays there, but way across the sea yonder now there's an empty tomb. Some glorious day by His death and resurrection this one will be empty, and we'll be with them again. So don't worry, honey."

I couldn't stand it. I tried to work. I tried to . . . I could see my wife going, but my baby? I just couldn't get over it.

⁹³ I remember one evening started to come from work. I picked up the mail on the side of the house, and I looked. It said, "Miss Sharon Rose Branham," her little Christmas saving: eighty cents. I went in, I was trying to batch in our little old two rooms there, and one of them, I never had no fire in the other side. Frost come up through the floor, and I knelt down there by my little old stove, and my cot, and I was praying. I said, "O God, I'm . . . Why did You take her?"

And while laying there praying, sobbing away in the night, I must've fell asleep. And I dreamed that I—I seen, going walking along. . . I've spent a lot of time, about twenty years, in cattle, in the West. I was going walking on. I had on my hat, big hat, and I was kicking my spurs along, just going on along like that, whistling that song, "The wheel on the wagon's broken. A sign on the ranch 'For Sale.'"

And I looked, and there was an old prairie schooner there, and the wheel was broke down. And I looked, and there stood a beautiful, young girl, standing there. She said, "Hello, daddy."

And I said, "Who are you?"

⁹⁴ And she said, "I'm your little Sharon." She said, "Mother's waiting for you." I said. . . "Up at your new home."

I said, "New home?" I said, "We ain't never had a new home, honey."

She said, "You got one up here, daddy."

And I started up, and I hear them singing that song, "I see the lights of the city so bright." And I got up, and there she was standing there, looking at me. She put her arms around me, and greeted me, as she always did. She said, "Won't you set down?"

⁹⁵ And I looked, and there was a—a Morris chair. I started looking at that Morris chair, looked back at her, and she said, "I know what you're thinking about."

Down here one time, I'd . . . We had just one chair. And that . . . the chair only cost fifteen dollars. I was going to buy down here. And I made a two dollar payment on it, and was paying a dollar a week. You know, when you get to a place where you can't make ends meet. You all know what I'm talking about. It's no disgrace to be poor. I just couldn't make the ends meet, and I missed two or three payments, and they told me they was going to come get it. We just couldn't make the payments. And one day, when I come in, I'll never forget it. She baked me a cherry pie, and everything, and she said, "Come in." And I went in the front room, and my chair was gone. Where I had . . . When I'd work hard all day, and preach half the night, and then come in and sit in that chair, 'cause I liked to. And they come took it from me.

⁹⁶ And she said, "Won't you set down?" And the chair looked like it, only much bigger. And she said, "You remember that one down on earth?"

I said, "Yes."

She said, "Bill, they'll never take that one. That one's already paid for. It's yours. Set down."

Excuse me, people. And some glorious day, someday, I'm going to preach my last sermon. I'm going to pray for the last person I'll ever have to. But there's a chair setting across the river. I want to set down awhile.

Someone would, said to me not long ago, said, "Brother Branham, you're at home. You go all night, and all day, and every day, and everything," said, "when do you ever get any rest?"

I said, "When I cross the river. I got a chair over there. I'm going to sit down and rest a little while."

⁹⁷ Let's bow our heads. Lord, forgive me, Lord, for being a baby, but in the journey down through them old lanes I re- . . . The scars, and things as I remember. God grant that the people, if there's any here, Lord, that's kind of undecided about what they're going to do hereafter, may they reach out, Lord, and touch Your hand.

I believe at the other side, You have my beloved wife, my baby, my little Sharon. I thank You for restoring to me, Lord, all that I lost and more. I love You. It's truly with all my heart, I—I want to serve You as long as I live. Don't make any difference what they call, or what they say, I—I want to serve You.

And dear God, there may be some poor, little, old, Kentucky brother or sister setting here this afternoon, that doesn't know You. I pray, God, if there is, that You'll forgive them right now. Grant it, Lord. May they come to this. When that great time of rest comes, when their labors are all over, that we'll set down together in the Kingdom of God. Hear the prayer of Your servant.

While we have our heads bowed just a moment, are you here without God this afternoon? If you are, would you raise up your hand, say, "Brother Branham, I—I want to meet you over there. I want—I want to share the fellowship together in God's Kingdom with you. Will you remember me in prayer?" Will you raise your hand up if you will? Say, "Remember me." Is there anyone in the building? God bless you, honey. Don't . . . God bless you, you, you.

⁹⁸ If God will hear my prayers to open the eyes of the blind, to make the deaf to hear, and the cripples to walk, won't He hear if you seek Him after His righteousness?

Is there any here that hasn't got this wonderful baptism of the Holy Spirit, never been borned again?

You say, "I belong to church, Brother Branham." Well, that won't work, sister, brother. It's all right to live here, but wait till you come down tasting death, then you'll know. If you haven't the Holy Spirit, would you raise up your hand? Say, "Pray for me." Let every head be bowed now. God bless you, lady, you, and you, and you, and you, and you.

Would you give us some little chord on the piano? I'm going to ask just a short season now, while we remain just quiet as we can. Those who are seeking God, will you come up here and stand at the altar? Want to shake your hand, put my hands on you, pray with you. Will you come, now? All right.

God bless you, sister.

Will you walk up here just . . . God bless you, lady. God bless you. God bless you . . . ? . . . God bless you . . . ? . . . All together, now, while we sing.

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
 Calling for you and for me,
 See on the . . .

Won't you come, right now, and stand around here with these if you need Christ? Don't turn Him away. Won't you come on up and stand here just a . . .

. . . for you and for me.
Come home, come . . .
. . . come home;
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
Calling, O sinner, come home!
Why should we tarry when Jesus is calling. . .

Won't you come? Someone else stand around here with these who are seeking God. Are you a sinner and don't know God in the free pardoning of sins? Won't you come, now, right around the altar and stand here just for a word of prayer? We're going right away then. If you haven't got the Holy Spirit, come and receive God's blessings that's for each one of you. Won't you come? Once more, now.

Come home (all the audience, now, together)
come . . . (God bless you.)
. . . are weary come home;
Calling, O sinner, come home!

⁹⁹ All right. Let us stand to our feet then. Now, sincerely as you can be, if you will, just a moment. Friends, you're standing around the altar here knowing that you're mortal beings that's got to step out into eternity in a few days.

How many ministers are in the building? Spirit-filled ministers? Would you come here just a moment, brethren? Stand around with these people. Spirit-filled ministers of the Gospel or altar-workers, would you move up? You that's got the baptism of the Holy Spirit, altar-workers would stand right around these people. That's wonderful. God bless you. That's right, many coming, moving around the altar.

Now, you that's seeking God around the altar here, the only thing you can do, now, is come near to Him in your faith and believe. I want you ministers to reach over and lay hands on them, if you will. Come here, brother. Lay your hands over on these that's standing here seeking God. If the audience will be real reverent out there just for a few moments while we pray, if you will. Now, you be ready, the Holy Spirit here to bless you. I'm going to ask prayer then, brothers, you continue on with prayer. Now, shall we all bow our heads everywhere while we are praying? Everyone offer prayer, now, for these people.

Our Heavenly Father, mercy, we believe that You'll come into this congregation just now. These who are standing here needy, wanting the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; this may be their last time, the last dying hour of their life. They're wanting to be saved and filled with the Spirit.

I pray that You'll grant it, Lord. You said, "Except a man be born of water and of Spirit, he will in no wise enter into the Kingdom."

Now, I ask Thee, Lord, O God, poor little ol' people here trying their best to get with You. You won't turn them down, will You, Lord? You sure won't. They're welcome in Your House. They're welcome with You and I pray just now that, in Jesus' Name, that You'll fill each one of them with the Holy Ghost, Lord. And as these ministers and workers have their hands laid upon them, may the Holy Ghost come, Lord, bless them and fill them with the goodness of God. Hear the prayer, Lord, through Jesus' precious Christ's Name, we ask it. 

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