

THE SUDDEN, SECRET

GOING AWAY OF THE CHURCH

 Should make anyone feel good, shouldn't it, an introduction like that? All right. Let us bow our heads just for a moment of prayer before we open the Word.

2 Lord, we say like those of old, "I was happy when they said, 'Let us go to the House of the Lord.'" We can find no place better to be, today, than to be right here with the congregation of the Lord, in worship. Though it may be raining, outside, and there may be miseries and things, but when we are in Thy Presence, we have this smile of satisfaction, that we know that You understand and are working everything just right for us.

3 We would ask special blessing this morning on those who were unable to get to the service. Many, perhaps, would have come if the weather had not been so bad. But may they find consolation in reading Your Word, and listening to ministers on the radio, and programs that are designed for those people.

4 We would ask that You would especially bless those who are in Divine Presence, for their effort of coming forth this morning, to hear the Word of the Lord, and to minister to Him in Psalms and in—in prayer, and in thanksgiving.

5 And we ask, God, that You will touch the bodies of those who are sick and needy, who are waiting just now, has come at long distance to be prayed for.

6 And we ask that You would just look upon us, and speak to us, that we who are here this morning should take inventory of our own situation. "Search me," said one of the prophets, "and try me, and see if there be any evil in me." And then, Lord, in the searching, if You find that there is evil in us, purge us, Lord, as we humbly confess our sins and our evil doings.

7 And ask only that You remember us as You look at Jesus, Thy Son, Who died to be a propitiation for our sins and our iniquity. As we confess that we believe that He died for this purpose, and rose again, that we'd have the grand privilege of doing this, this morning. Grant it, Lord.

8 And speak to us through Thy written Word, as we wait further to hear from You. In the Name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

⁹ We wish to turn in the Scriptures this morning for a reading out of the Book of Thessalonians, the 5th chapter. And I have those who has the requests for prayer also, this morning, the list. Which, prayer will be rendered immediately after this preaching service. I believe, for just a moment, to you who are opening up your Bibles, let's turn to First Thessalonians the 5th chapter, and read just for a few moments.

¹⁰ [A brother says, "Dismiss Sunday school classes."—Ed.] I am sorry. While you're opening your Bible, it is . . . the children has not been dismissed yet for their various classes. Would you just go right ahead now to your classes, you little children and teen-agers, and so forth. Go right to your classes.

¹¹ And while, if you can now, read, or open your Bibles to First Thessalonians the 5th chapter.

¹² And if it's possible that the trustee board is present at the time, I would like to see them just a few moments after the service, in the deacons' office, on some business. And if they're not, someone get them word that I'd like to see them tonight, just before service, in the deacons' office.

¹³ Now for a text, I want to take this for a text this morning: *The Sudden, Secret Going Away Of The Church*.

¹⁴ May I . . . let me announce it again, because I haven't had very much time to premeditate on any comments, but just hurrying. We were out late yesterday, and never got in last night till real late. And rushing down here this morning, but this just come to my mind. And maybe, later, I might catch something that would do someone good. I love this subject, "The sudden, secret catching away of the Church." And now in First Thessalonians the 5th chapter.

But of the times and of the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destructions cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

Ye are . . . the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, or of darkness.

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.

15 Now I wish you to look just across the page, if it is so geographically arranged in your Bible, to the 16th, 17th and 18th verses of the 4th chapter of First Thessalonians.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

16 May the Lord add His blessings to the reading of His holy Word.

17 This is an unusual thing, to speak of a subject like this on a morning that I come down to—to minister to the sick. But there is a greater sickness than physical sickness. And it's much more essential that we be well, for this great event that's just fixing to take place, than it would be to be even asleep in the Lord, that is, dead, as we would know it. It's better to be ready. I would rather be a sick man, ready with the Lord, than to be a well man, not ready to go with the Lord. But however it be, God is so willing that we be both well and ready, soul and body. "For He forgives all of our iniquities, and heals all our diseases." He died for a compound purpose.

18 And then, I thinking today on this subject of, "The sudden, and secret." I like that. God . . .

19 People live today as though, just before the Coming of the Lord Jesus, if He was going to send a host of Angels down to all the newspapers, and, for a year or so, announce it throughout all the world, in the newspaper, that, "On a *such-and-such* a date, Jesus will arrive." And to have it broadcast by the radio, and put on the televisions, and everywhere, just the day and just the hour that He was coming. Now that's the way people live today.

20 But, God has said in His Word, that, "It would be like a thief in the night, coming."

21 If that would be so, people would say, as the world thinks today, "Oh, well, there is just plenty of time. I'll . . . It'll be well announced." And, but, you see, it is announced, but it's a secret announcing. It's just those who are willing to hear it. Those who are willing to consider it and to . . . who loves the Lord.

22 I think now of what Paul said when he said, "There is a crown of righteousness laid up for me, that the Lord, the righteous Judge will

give me at that day.” And then he stopped. Did you notice? And said, “Not only me, but to all them that love His appearing.” If we love His appearing!

23 Usually in the world today, that people think of the appearing of the Lord as a horrible, dreadful thing. Oh, the world might come to its . . . “Don’t talk to me about that,” they’ll say. They don’t want to know about those things. They don’t care about them; just for the present day living. But those who love the Lord, love His appearing.

24 What if one of your loved one, some of you older people, that your mother was gone on, or your father, or your baby, and they were been away for so many years, and you knowed that they might appear at any time? Why, you’d have the house all cleaned up. You would just be ready and watching down that road, for, every car light that turned in, you’d think it would be them.

25 Now that’s the way the Church ought to be watching for the Coming of the Lord. All in order, all ready, all packed up and ready to go as soon as He comes, because, “It’ll be in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye.” Just try to time how long it would take your eye to twinkle, that’s just how quick the Rapture of the Church will take place.

26 You know, the enemy always uses the tactics that the—that the Lord uses. You know, when he seen that God was going to have a righteous Church, and the things that He was going to do, the enemy used that same strategy. He’s got a church, and he’s got a people that’s very religious. And they’re just right on the toe, as—as religious people, because he knows that Christ’s Church is the same way.

27 And he does it out in military life. I was reading an article some time ago, on the sudden attack on Pearl Harbor. That wasn’t no, exactly, any unknown attack. They had already been warned that the Japs were going to do that. But the sad part was, they ignored that warning. They had seen signs, and the Japanese army assembling themselves together, and the big ships being loaded with ammunition, and the threat was in the air. And they were just exactly in line for the invasion, but they ignored it.

28 That’s the way it is today with the church. The church is in line of judgment, but they are ignoring the Coming of the Lord. So that you can’t blame Him.

29 They said, when it was noised abroad, around, in Pearl Harbor, that the Japs could attack at any time, and that their big fleet had set out in the waters of the sea and was moving slowly but steadily towards Pearl Harbor, that they only laughed at it. And said, “Ah, nonsense. You gloom-builders. You worry-warts. All you think about is some trouble.”

30 And on the night, just before the great attack the next morning, there was a great dance, or a big party given in Pearl Harbor itself. And no matter how much they tried to say that the Japs were coming, they still would not take warning.

31 Let's just look on them for a few minutes. There's a little radio bulletin goes out. And a little piece in the corner of the paper, about like a healing campaign would be advertised, just a small place, that the Japs were on their road in the waters of the sea, a great fleet was headed that way. "Nonsense," says the others. "We don't believe in no such stuff as that. What are you trying to scare us about?"

32 And then we find, getting close to the night, I can see at the home place, instead of them preparing for to get out of the city, why, the young girls were all putting on their new frocks, and so forth. They were going down to this great big jubilee they were going to have.

33 And, also, the officers of the Army were just busy writing little passes so that the soldiers could all attend this party, big drunken party. And the trucks were roaring and humming, bringing in their best of beer, and their wine and stuff, for this party. And all the time, the Japanese fleet on its road there, and they fail to hear the warning.

34 And as the sun begin to set, and they all gathered in these great tavern of a place. Maybe on the side somewhere, the bartender polishing the bar or something, said something like this, "Say, did you hear the rumor?"

"No, I don't believe I did," said the man he spoke to.

35 "Oh, they say something about a Japanese fleet be coming this way." And then someone else drops in on the conversation.

36 And a young, silly girl bounces up there, and sticks her foot up on the bar, said, "You gloomy-headed warts, don't you know that we're here for have a good time and not talk about war?"

37 If that isn't just about the way the world is a saying today about the Coming of the Lord! "You old-fashion foggy, back numbers, what makes you dress and act and do the way you do?" But we're looking for that secret, sudden appearing of the Lord. For there's something in the air, a Message of the Holy Spirit, that tells us the Coming is at hand.

38 Then when the big shindig went on, and, oh, it must have been a horrible thing that night. For it said that sometime during the night, they took a young lady, a beautiful built young girl, and stripped her clothes from her, and put her in a little wagon with just one underneath garment on, and run her down the street and so forth, just having a big time. And all the time, the Japanese was gaining grounds, coming right on.

39 And then the next morning, when the men on the post of duty, and the airplane signal watching, and so forth, had been out all night, drunk, and running around with these women and so forth, was so drowsy and up-set the next morning, from the big party, until they were caught asleep on the job.

40 And I'm afraid that it's going to be likewise at the Coming of the Lord. The church is so took up and drunken with the cares of the world, till they're going to be asleep at the post of duty, at the Coming of the Lord.

41 And then over the city flew the planes, and the bombs dropped, and they just battered out that city, to the ground. Why? Because they wouldn't take heed to the warning. And that young lady, along with the rest of them, when those Japanese, brutal soldiers run in there, they ravished them in the street, and cut them to pieces with knives, afterwards, and so forth. For if you won't heed to warning, there's only one thing left, that's judgment.

42 Oh, if there ever was a time that this America was ever at it's lowest ebb, right now, of its immorality, of its indifference! The Gospel has been preached from shore to shore. And signs and wonders has been performed. And great miracles has been done, and they continually go on in their revelry, drinking, ignoring, making fun.

43 Out of the two hundred thousand pulpits in America, of Protestant churches, what we need today in those pulpits is prophets of the Lord, who is not afraid to blast out God's thunderbolts of judgment upon this generation of sinful people that we're preaching to. We need prophets like Isaiah who cried out and said, "A wicked generation!" And how that he did condemn that generation, and tell them of the oncoming judgments.

44 But, today, too many of our ministers are afraid to say those things. They are a scared to give a direct witness of warning, for it would mean some of their jobs. They'd have to leave their denomination, leave their pulpits. And they would have to—to go out, perhaps, maybe, and take another stand at some other church or something. But it's just too bad that we got those kind of people in our pulpits.

45 We need men like John Wesley, of the early reformation, Martin Luther. We need people like Paul, who is willing to give all, and to surrender themselves, even if it means separation from this life, as a witness of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ.

46 What it is, today, that education and societies and little frenetical, delicate things of societies, and their own feelings, has took the place of the Holy Ghost in the church.

47 What we need, today, to cry out to America, is God-sent, God-filled men with the Power of the Holy Ghost, who is not afraid to cry out against the thing that's wrong, and to warn the people of the oncoming judgment.

48 God could by no means ever let this nation escape judgment. If God would do so, He would have to raise up Sodom and Gomorrah, and apologize to them for ever sinking them, when they was such an evil people. We are no—no exception in the sight of God. What we have come today, when it comes to our politics, when it comes to our government, it is rotten, all the way from pillar to post. There is no justice no more, only in God.

49 Oh, we say we rely upon the U.N., the United Nations. And better than five years ago, they were fifty-one percent communist, of the nations in the U.N. There is nothing to rely upon but the Word of the living God. We can't rely upon nothing now, no politics.

50 I have been in trials for the last three or four months, under heavy fire, trying to accuse me of doing something that was wrong, by passing the money through this tabernacle here, for the meetings. Which, our trustee board here signed the declaration. And there's not a person that's ever attended my meetings but what I've publicly announced that this money was taken up in our . . . in my meetings, were directed through this church. And now they say, because I placed it through the church, I was trying to defraud the government, and want to give me twenty years in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for it.

51 I said, "What is that word wrote over our—our court houses, 'Justice'? It means no more than it wasn't even wrote there." Said, "When everything that your own people told me to do, I have did it. And now you say that they're not with the government anymore. How can you? You'll settle one and prove it out, then here they'll dig up something else." Not only that, but they're wishy-washy.

52 I made this statement in the federal courts. I said, "If communism had Christianity in it, I'd be a communist." But I can't be, because it denies Christianity.

53 So I have one hand to hold to, that's God's unchanging hand, knowing that He will respect truth and honor. It'll have to come forth, in justice.

54 But to let you know there is not hopes nowhere, only in the Coming of the Lord.

55 Oh, it's such a day that we're living, such a—an awful time! When, every physical thing, even to the church itself, the church peoples, the church denominations, they're so concerned about their little—their

little differences, till they won't even fellowship one with the other, and not taking warning that the Coming of the Lord is at hand.

56 Men such as Billy Graham, and Jack Shuler, and Oral Roberts, and many of the great evangelists, and Charles Fuller, who has an outreach to the whole world, they do everything that they can, to warn the Coming of the Lord. And those own men, those men who try to do right, is the men that our own government tries to tear to pieces.

57 I said to someone, "Mister, twenty-eight years of my life, I've laid on the altar of God, to try to do right. And I want someone to look at me in the eye, and tell me if I ever beat anyone out of anything, or ever stole anything in my life. By the grace of God, I'm clear."

58 That means no more, to that, than a snap of your finger. "You're guilty, anyhow! And you're a dictator in your church! You snap your finger and your church does what you tell them to do!"

"Oh," I said, "how unjust can men be?"

59 He said, "You gave people gifts when their homes burnt. Here is your checks where you give widows hundreds of dollars, and paid their rent, and done things like that." Said, "Did you go to your church board and tell them you were going to do such?"

I said, "No, sir."

"Why didn't you?"

60 I said, "The Lord told me, in His Word, 'Don't let your right . . . your left hand know what your right is a doing.'"

61 He said, "Then you're trying to plead your case by a Bible, and we're judging you by a law."

62 I said, "Which is the highest law, man's or God's?" I'll take God's law.

63 Just a few, two years ago, I had been on my vacation, was on my road back.

64 Here in Indiana the speed laws are sixty-five miles an hour in the day time, and that's on the free highways, the freeways. And it's sixty miles an hour at night, after the sun goes down. That's so in Kansas. That's so in Illinois. That's so in Colorado. That's so in Idaho. That's so in Wyoming.

65 And on my road back, after setting in a snowdrift for several days in a blizzard; and I had just gotten an elk, and I was on my road home, to give it to my friends. And I had to hurry to try to beat another blizzard was just behind me, or I'd be set up again, and the meat would ruin.

66 And I had crossed out of Wyoming, and come over into Nebraska. I was about thirty miles up, inside, the road. And all of a sudden, I looked

back, and I seen a police's red light. And I never was arrested in my life. So, I just went on. I looked down, I was doing sixty miles an hour, out on a . . . thirty or forty miles from any—any kind of a city. And just going down the highway, big four-lane highway. And, I noticed, sixty miles an hour. I looked back, and he continued to stay behind me. And I just watched.

67 And I seen the red light flicker, and I thought, "Well, why don't he pass me? He's got plenty of room." And I kept waiting. I run my window down, and I heard a siren. Well, I thought, "I'm over as far as I can get." And he pulled around and stopped me.

68 I got out of the car. I thought, "Maybe there's some message that I didn't pick up on the radio, maybe at home, my wife or family." And I got out of that car, just as innocent as I could be.

He said, "I guess you wonder why I stop you?"

I said, "I do, sir."

69 And he said, "You were breaking the speed laws." Said, "Do you know how fast you were going?"

I said, "Yes, sir." I said, "I was going sixty miles an hour."

He said, "That's right. And that's against the law."

I said, "Isn't it sixty-five in . . .?"

70 "No, sir." Said, "It's fifty-five here. You were doing five miles over the speed limit."

"Oh," I said, "I'm so sorry. I didn't mean it."

71 Said, "Give me your driver's license. Just show me your license."

72 And I took them from my pocket. And just as soon as he seen that word 'reverend,' his eyes gleamed with fire. He grabbed out his book and started writing me a ticket for twenty-four dollars and fifty cents.

I said, "Are you going to give me a ticket?"

Said, "You're right! I'm going to give you a ticket!"

"Well," I said, "sir, it's all right. But I didn't see anything."

73 He said, "Oh, there's a sign right outside the state line. You should have seen it."

74 "Well," I said, "I been setting in a four dri- . . . snowdrift for four days, and I probably just never saw it, sir."

And he said, "All right. You got any cash on you?"

I said, "Just about twelve dollars."

75 "Well," he said, "you're going to stay right here until you pay it." About ten o'clock at night, or eleven.

76 I said, “Sir . . .” I told him all, what was wrong, and the meat and so forth. That didn’t mean a thing to him. So I had to sign a bona-fide statement, that I would send them the money.

77 When I got home, I wrote the judge, of the little city, that little squire that I was to send it to. And I told him. I said, “Sir, I put twenty- . . . about twenty-five years,” at that time, “twenty-six years in the service of the Lord, trying to convert criminals to the Lord Jesus, to try to protect your life as an officer, to try to make better communities, and a better place to live, and decency for our families. I’ve put twenty something years in that service. And I just crossed over your line. I feel that you should forgive me for it.” I said, “But your officer would not even consider, at all. Which, maybe he is supposed to do that, and carry out his duties. But I’m asking you, as a judge. It isn’t the money; it’s the principle. My first fine to ever pay, and this has to come out of money that people give me to live on, through the church.” I said, “If you’ll be so kind as to forgive me for it, I’ll appreciate it. However, here is the check that’s been notarized, that you might know that it’s—it’s all right.”

78 Brother, he just signed his name across it and took it, cold-bloodily. Why? Why? And then, through rotten politics, and religious prejudice, some of them get by with murder. There it is.

79 God won’t let His Church exist very long under such things. And the world is corrupted. And the politics is corrupted. And the church is corrupted. What we need, to do more about it, is God-fearing people to get together and call on the Name of the Lord. That’s what the Branham Tabernacle needs to do. Oh, I would . . .

Just looking and seeing I had a lot ahead of me.

80 And thinking of how much we could stress here, of the way that the church is a going; how they let down upon the morals of the people, how they let them live, and go to dances and to rock-and-rolls, and dress anyway they want to, and—and everything, and still go on just the same, compromising preachers.

81 What we need is old-fashion, God-sent, Heaven-born preachers who will tell the Truth regardless who it hurts. Like John, who said, “The axe is laid to the root of the tree.” “And every tree that not bringeth forth good fruits is hewn down and cast into the fire.” We need preachers, prophets like that, who will bombard, and use the judgments of God for ammunition, to tear up, in this wicked condition that we’re living in.

82 You can never rid sin by patting it on the back. You can never rid sin by educating people. Our programs has become demolished and have failed. There’s only one remedy for sin, and, that is, Christ is that

remedy. And not Christ through intellectual confession, but through the baptism of the Holy Ghost, to a new Life and a regeneration. That's the only remedy for sin, only remedy for a nation. It's the only remedy for a church. It's the only remedy for the people.

⁸³ Here some time ago . . . I guess many of you people who travel has been there. I've stayed all night there many time, in my journey out West. Which I have to go next week, a relief, get relief from the government to go. They're holding me here. Where, if they'd send me away, they could get me right here. And I've got to go to a couple of meetings over on the West Coast. And the Lord willing, I shall pass through this little city called West Memphis, Arkansas. It's just across the river from Memphis, Tennessee. And in this place they wanted to spend two and one-half million dollars for a race court, for gambling. Two and one-half million dollars, to degrade, and to pollute, and to send souls to hell. And then catch men like Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, myself, and those who are suffering for the cause of Christ, to pass legitimate money through a church, and want to give them twenty years in federal prison. It's always been the will of the world to act like that.

⁸⁴ I said, "You . . . I have brothers who has been in federal prison."

⁸⁵ And one of the said attorneys said, "You got brothers in the federal prison?"

I said, "I did have."

Said, "Who were they?"

⁸⁶ I said, "One of them was Brother John, in Alcatraz, on the isle of Patmos. And the other was Brother Paul, in the Roman federal prison. And Brother Daniel, he was also in the prison house."

⁸⁷ And Brother Joseph, because that he had been accused of something that he was innocent of, served years, by trying to be a real servant to Potiphar, and his wife accused him. And he was condemned, and laid in prison for years, until his whiskers and hair had growed out, till he didn't. . . . Even had to shave him, to take him before Pharaoh. Sure. What for, anything wrong? For the cause of Christ! Exactly!

⁸⁸ And then spend two and one-half million dollars for a race court, to pollute and damn and send souls to hell. Talking about God coming quickly!

⁸⁹ But the Arkansas people done something about it. Every church, I think, nine or ten different denominations in them community, they all got together and said, "It's wrong. And we won't have it." And they formed a prayer meeting, and they take chains of prayers, day in and out, and night in and out. And when the judges and the federal men, and they all went to the court the next morning, to settle it, whether

they could build it or not, they were met, and it was defeated. Prayer changes things. I don't care how rotten the world is, how rotten our country is, our nation is, our people; our prayer changes things.

⁹⁰ But we're not interested in prayer meeting no more. We got so many other things we have to do, so we think.

⁹¹ And then, not only that, was that race court condemned, but it also was drawed up that they could not have, in the state of Arkansas, nothing like that anymore for years and years to come. Why? Because the people that are called by His Name assemble themselves together and pray.

⁹² Oh, what we need today is a calling together, a getting ready. And not depending on the preacher, but you, as an individual before God, make yourself ready for the Coming of the Lord, to escape all this corruption.

⁹³ No matter what they call you, and what action they take, that doesn't change God one bit. God will do it, just the same. He's depending and waiting on us. Oh, my!

⁹⁴ Some people say, "Well, I go to church on Sunday morning. I listen to our pastor, which is a fine preacher." That's good. I appreciate that. And you are the America, the world, whoever it is. But it takes more than a good message from the pulpit. It takes your life. It takes you, to get ready.

⁹⁵ In Revelations the 19th chapter, and the 7th verse, the Bible said that, speaking of the Bride of Christ, "She has made Herself ready." She made Herself ready. And you, as a member of this Bride, you've got to make yourself ready.

⁹⁶ Some time ago, a minister was preaching. And—and there was a man who had been attending his church for, oh, quite a lengthy time. And he came that morning up to the altar. And he said, "Pastor, I now wish to give my testimony and my surrender to the Lord Jesus, which I have done last night."

⁹⁷ And the pastor said, "Well, I am sure glad to hear about that, John. To know that you have decided to finally come and give yourself to the Lord, because we don't want to hurt your feelings, but we know that you have been very wicked. And we know you have mistreated your family. You've gambled away your money, and you drank it up, and live a horrible life, and your family went without. And it gives my heart joy, this morning, to know that you have come forward now and going to surrender yourself to the Lord Jesus, to become a different person, to serve Him."

He said, "Thank you, pastor."

⁹⁸ He said, "Then just what . . . I want to ask you something. What sermon did I preach, or what text did I use, and, or what song was sung in the church, in the hymns, that made you so decide to do this?"

⁹⁹ And as the man looked at him, in the face, with the tears running off his cheeks, he said, "Pastor, it was none of your sermons, though, as good as they were. It was none of the choir singing, or the specials, though as good as they were."

¹⁰⁰ He said, "Then would you tell this congregation why you have made this decision?"

¹⁰¹ He said, "I work with a man who is a Christian, and I've said everything to him. I called him a holy-roller. I called him a religious fanatic and everything, and it didn't bother him a bit. But he lived such a life till finally, in my heart, all along, he has won a place, that I want to be like that man. And that's the reason I asked him to lead me to Christ. I wanted the Christ that he serves."

¹⁰² You see, God does work through the pastor, to get His Church ready. He works through the songs, to get His Church ready. And He works through you, to get His Church ready.

¹⁰³ If your pastor would fail, and continually to fail, you'd hunt you another pastor. Quickly you would do that. If your choir didn't sing right, or your solos wasn't right, you would say to the director, the one who has the music, "Don't let them sing no more. They just make me nervous, to sing."

¹⁰⁴ But what about you as an individual? How do you fail in your daily living? How do you tally-up with God, what God says for you to be, a shining Light that sets on a hill? No one can pass that way, well, around your way, without knowing about Jesus. What type of life do you live, one of those types that's mean, insulting, and aggravating, indifferent? Or, can you speak of the peace and the love that you have found in Christ?

"She has made Herself ready."

¹⁰⁵ I've shown you the wickedness. And the time would not . . . would fail me, to go through the ages, and show that each time, like in Babylon on the night of the rioting, and dancing and drinking, and so forth, and what happened. And down through the age it's been that way. In every age God has had thunderbolt prophets, with signs and wonders, to condemn the thing in the midst of all popularity, and stand alone for God.

¹⁰⁶ Not only that, but what if I would speak of the time of little Stephens, not a prophet, not a pastor, just a member of the Body of Christ. How that this little fellow stood before the Sanhedrin Council

that morning, and spoke out to those who were condemning him, and said, "You stiff-necks, uncircumcised in the heart and ears. You do always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do you." He wasn't a pastor.

¹⁰⁷ You can't expect your pastor to do it all. You can't expect your trustee board to do it all, or your deacon board. You've got to make yourself ready. It's an individual affair.

¹⁰⁸ And, remember, His Coming is so sudden, that the Church will go in a twinkling of an eye. And if we see sin on every hand, and judgment pending, and the battleships of God's wrath coming, how we escape this? Signs are appearing. Jesus is coming. And great wonders are being done. Every milepost is pointing towards His soon appearing, and it'll happen in a moment.

¹⁰⁹ How are we standing, this morning, as we take inventory? If we should be spoke to, this morning, and the Lord Jesus should descend from the heavens, this morning, with the Shout and the Trump of God, would we be found ready, as a church body? Would we be found ready, as an individual, to join with those who are raised from the dead, who have proven themselves ready? No matter whether we are ready or not, the Lord Jesus will come just the same, at the appointed time. We must be ready, and we must do it now. It is no time to wait. We must redeem the time and be ready.

¹¹⁰ Some time ago, a story (just before closing) that struck me, as I heard it, many, many years ago.

¹¹¹ This secret Coming of the Lord; sudden, secret going of the Church. Watch! "There'll be two in the field; I'll take one and leave one. There'll be two in the bed; I'll take one and leave one." Showing that the Coming of the Lord will not be just at any certain corner, but will be universal. "One will be in the field, working," daytime. "The other one in a bed, sleeping," on the other side of the world. It'll be a universal Rapture, and will come with the Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God shall sound. And the dead in Christ shall rise. And She'll be caught away, secretly. Oh, I love that! The great Bridegroom coming, and the Bride got Herself ready, waiting for that secret moment that She doesn't even know, Herself. But She is ready, and dressed, and waiting for it.

¹¹² We see His sign posts in the world, that she's ready for judgment. We see signs and wonders in the Church, great things taking place. What kind of people should we be? Ready at the moment, for we don't know when He's Coming. "Be ye also ready, for you know not what minute or hour your Lord does come." Be ready! For, you can't get ready then, for He said you could not.

113 How many of you, all perhaps, have read of the virgins? Some were wise and some were foolish. *Virgin* means “purity.” They were all good people. Every one of them, virgin, sanctified vessels of God. But those who had Oil in their lamps, went in, and the others was left out. They were all virgins, every one. People that you couldn’t put your finger on, for anything wrong. They, every one, believed in the Coming of the Lord. They were ready to go meet Him, but some of them let their Oil go out.

114 Don’t let that be your case. Keep Oil in your lamp. Oil is a Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Never let It drain from you. When you feel your love dying away, your sincerity to Christ and to the—the Cause, quickly go to Him Who has the fountain of Oil, and buy for yourself a filling of the Holy Spirit.

115 Our nation gone, morally corrupted and ruined. Our politics, corrupted and gone. Our leaders, O God, what could we do about it? You can put a good man in, and he comes out a crook.

116 There’s only One we can bring now, that’s the Lord Jesus. Let’s make ready for His Coming.

117 I want to tell you a little story that I heard some years ago; in the close. This sudden, quick Rapture of the Church!

118 Now you say, “Certain things will take place, then I’ll make ready.” Make ready now. I’ve just related to you of Pearl Harbor and of many places where they refused to hear the warning. They refused to listen to it. Nothing was left but Divine judgment upon the people. Now, all that will not go in Christ will be under God’s wrath and Divine judgment. Please don’t let that happen to you.

119 No matter what the Branham Tabernacle ever turns out to be, don’t you let it be you. You be a servant of Christ. No matter what the church world does, you be a servant of Christ. It’s not up to the Branham Tabernacle, neither is it up to any other church. It’s up to you, as an individual, to be ready at the Coming of the Lord. You must be ready. I must be ready. I’ll sweep my own steps. It’s up to you to sweep your steps. Leave mine alone; me leave yours alone. You’ve got to make your garment ready.

120 There was a great rancher, and he owned a mammoth big ranch, way in the northern part of Colorado, near the mountain section.

121 As you all know, I done a little ranching in my life, of riding and so forth. One of my calls to God, was setting on a pair of old Texas wheel spurs, with a rifle laying on the saddle and a pistol on my side; when I heard them trees blowing, sound like a Voice said, “Adam, where are you?”

¹²² And when I looked up towards the stars, and I heard old Slim, an old cowboy from over in Texas, blowing through a comb with a piece of paper (Down at the cross where my Saviour died, it was down there for cleansing from sin I cried; There to my heart was His Blood applied; Glory to His Name), I pulled the blanket over my face and tried to hide myself, 'cause God was looking down in those hills.

¹²³ It was on one of those ranches, where the great packing companies buy their cattle, run them into the mountains, and then bring them out after calves are born, in—in the fall of the year, and brand them, and sell off some of the old herd, and the steers and so forth, and go ahead into the . . . accumulate their great herds of cattle.

¹²⁴ And on this certain ranch, the owner, or the caretaker, what we call there, “the top,” the foreman, he had about five daughters. They were all beautiful women, young, single.

¹²⁵ And there was a little lady there, which was a cousin to these girls, that her father and mother had both deceased. And she was brought over there to be . . . to live with her—her uncle.

¹²⁶ And those girls, that they was in those fancy type of frilly frocks, you know, and—and—and they just took this poor little girl and they just treated her like she was some animal. All the hard work poured right on her. She washed the dishes. She cleaned up. She fixed the bunks. She—she had to do it all. And they just stayed around with polished finger nails and manicure, the stuff on their lips, and all fixed up, you know, just prissy.

¹²⁷ And especially did they do this when they heard that from Chicago, the big packing company who owned the outfit, his young, single son was coming to visit the ranch. Oh, did they dike out in good clothes! Ah! And did they dress and make ready for his coming! And each night the conversation would be, they were going to vamp this young man and marry him. Who would . . . Then they would own the ranch, themselves, for the son would fall heir to all. So they made themselves ready.

¹²⁸ So, you see, there is a ready to be made. You make yourself ready, by joining church or something, that ain't all that's required. You got to have Oil in your lamp. See? Just your dressing, say, “We'll build a big church. We'll belong to a better denomination. We'll—we'll get a little pipe organ, to the Lord. We'll make plush seats.” That isn't what God requires.

¹²⁹ Righteousness is what God requires, in His Son, Christ Jesus. That's the garments. For the Bible said, “The white clothes which she is adorned in, is the righteousness of the saints.” So she . . .

130 These girls thought they would make themselves ready for the coming of this young man. Course, that poor little cousin, that reminds me of an off-cast somewhere. You could appreciate her. She was a beautiful woman. But, oh, my! She was a nice little girl, but she was not even considered among them, not as a relative.

131 Now that's about the true picture of the real Church, today, before the denominations. [Blank spot on tape—Ed.] Not even considered; a bunch of interdenominationalists, a bunch of outcasts.

132 So the poor little fellow just went ahead, working. And when the young man arrived. . .

133 They didn't know it, but he come looking for a wife. He was sick and tired of the city girls who just stayed all dolled up, and, oh, you know, hung around the barrooms, and rode around in the Cadillacs, and the—the different things. They—they were just sick and tired of it. He thought, "I'll go out West and hunt me a—a real girl that'll be a real mother to my babies. And somebody who'll not hang at all the sewing circles and the—and the societies and things, but will just be a real mother." What did he find when he got there, but the same thing that he had condemned in Chicago?

134 I wonder if the Lord Jesus will find a church, just a denomination, just by name, "a church," no Oil in the lamps, not ready to go? Oh, they got fine frocks. They got the biggest churches, the biggest *this*, and all these things. But God don't want that. He wants you as an individual. They may have the best pastors, they may have the finest deacon boards, but He wants you with Oil. He's coming to catch that Oil and Bride away.

135 And as he, this boy, looked upon them, he was disheartened. And that night they were having something on the order. . . In them days, it's been long ago, they called the "Charleston," which is just like a rock-and-roll. And they were going to throw one of those big parties. Many of you people remember that old Charleston dance they did, back when I was a kid, when I was out there. And so they were all had their little black and white clothes on, you know, to do the. . . Oh, it was called "Charlestons," and "black bottom." That's what they were calling. And they had them two-tone clothes, and they were going to do these dances.

136 And, but, this boy was sick of that stuff. He was hunting for a real girl, so he slipped out of their party. He was watching them. He went in to look at them.

137 So is another Son that I know of. Another Son will come to your church. He'll. . . Son of God, He'll come there. He'll look around. He'll see you're fine dressed. He'll—He'll know that you're a good

member. But He's looking for something different from just the regular trend of church.

138 So as he looked around, after while, he was so discouraged. He walked out the door.

139 And going back, walking in the moonlight, towards the bunk house, he heard somebody kind of humming. And he looked around. And here went this little girl with a great big pan of dish water, way in the night, barefooted, to throw the dish water out. And as soon as he saw her, something another said, "That's her. That's the one." So he put himself in the way. And when she . . . That's when she come back along the corral fence, why, he was standing there. And she almost fainted.

140 He said, "How do you do?" And he said, "What's your name?" And she told him her name, and it was the same name of the boss of the ranch. Said, "Then I can't understand how that this . . . Is that your father?"

141 Said, "No. I'm just a cousin, you see. My father and he were brothers. I've got the same name. But I . . . That, that's the boss."

142 You might have the name of church, might have the name of Branham Tabernacle, or Methodist, or whatever church you go. That isn't it, friend. See? It's something different. It's your character. That's what God is a looking at. You might be Methodist. You might be Baptist. You might be Presbyterian. It's not that. It's character that God looks at. Not just earthly character, but Holy Spirit character. "These signs shall follow them that believe," said Jesus, in the 16th chapter of Saint Mark.

143 She was so gotten that—that he would speak to her, even. And she hung her little head down, and she ran into the house.

144 He was there for a week or two, and he looked all around, everywhere. And he never said no more, but he kept watching her. And the night before he left . . . He was to leave the next morning. They was throwing another big party. And he watched for her. He couldn't find her. He knowed she'd had to do the dishes and so forth, so, the dirty work and all could be throwed off.

145 And that's the way the real Church of God has to take it sometime, the dirty work, all the scandal names, and all of the thing that's mean, to be throwed at It. And She's a great speckled bird. All the other birds gather around and flock at Her. That's all right. Her name is on the Lamb's Book of Life. She'll spread Her great wing some day for a flight. She's ready. Them speckles meant the Blood of Christ sprinkled on Her. See? You've read it in your Book, the Bible.

146 And this boy caught the little lady that night coming out. He said, "I've watched you. No one knows it but myself." He said, "I've come out here looking for a wife. And all that I have ever seen, you meet the requirements." How did she feel? The big man's son asking her now if she would be his wife.

147 Just imagine how those girls must have felt when they looked out their window and saw, holding hands, with that little, despised cousin, the man that they tried to vamp, with all their big fine frocks and frills, and carrying on.

And he said, "Will you marry me?"

"Oh," she said, "sir, I'm not worthy."

148 That's the way the real Church feels about it, "I'm not worthy. I can . . . If I could just wash Your dishes, it'll be all right." Are you willing to take that place? Could you wash the dishes from the Supper? Would you be willing to be called fanatic? Or, would you be willing to be take the way with the Lord's despised few? Are you willing?

149 Are you willing, at your work, to be marked, "There's a man, he's a religious fanatic, because he won't drink, he won't smoke, he doesn't dance, he doesn't run with women"? "There's a woman that keeps her head down, she walks like . . . down through the town. She's not . . . She won't join our circles"?

150 Are you willing to take the way, make yourself ready for the Coming of the Lord? If you have . . . If you do, you'll be waiting for Him to come. You'll joy at His Coming. It won't be a dreadful thing. It'll be the most gracious moment that you can think of, the Coming of the Lord. "All those that love His appearing."

151 So, when he left, he told her he would be back at a certain time. Said, "When you begin to see . . ." It was the winter. Said, "When you begin to see those trees begin to bud, yonder, that mesquite and stuff begin to take on new life," said, "then I'll be back about spring time."

152 I understand, I couldn't say it was true, but the girl only got about a dollar and seventy-five cents a week for her labor. But she saved every penny of it. Why? She was getting ready for the wedding that was to be. She was saving her money for her wedding gown. For he said, "We'll be married right here at the ranch when I come again." She saved her money all year. She was happy. She didn't mind washing the dishes. She didn't mind ironing the clothes, or sweeping out the bunk house, or what-more. She was engaged to the boss of the ranch.

153 What do we care what the world says, a real Christian? What do we care if we have to be despised and rejected? "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The Boss's Son is a coming, one day,

and we're going to a Wedding Supper. What difference does it make to us, if you love His appearing?

¹⁵⁴ After it was all . . . The days passed. The little daughters, the little cousins, made fun of her, danced around her, and done everything else. "Well," said, "you poor, silly kid! Do you not know if he . . . Why, he was just like all other men. He was just teasing you."

¹⁵⁵ But the Son of God doesn't tease. "Except a man be born again, he will in no wise . . ." I don't care how good you look, how much church you belong to, what your status is in the country. You might be a politician. You might be in the federal government. You might be in the Catholic, Presbyterian, any church you want to be. But, it's, "Except a man be born again, you will not enter. And these signs shall follow them that believe." I'm only quoting His Word.

¹⁵⁶ Finally, when the hour come, she begin to see this, the buds begin to come on the trees. She knew he would be there at anytime. And he said, "I'll try to make it just at sundown, so we can be married and hurry off." And every evening, at sundown, when she—she would go and get, make herself all ready, get her little wedding garment on, and wait at the gate.

¹⁵⁷ And these little cousins come and laugh at her, and make fun of her, and said, "You poor, silly, ignorant child. To think that the—the man who owns . . . He's the President, rather, of the company, that his boy would marry a dishwasher!"

¹⁵⁸ He was looking for virtue, not clothes. He had enough money to buy all the clothes was necessary.

¹⁵⁹ God don't care how big your fancy things you have. He owns everything in the world. So, He wants virtue. He wants something that's real.

¹⁶⁰ And so, finally, one evening, while she was standing there, and they were laughing and making fun of her, and telling her she was silly. All at once, they heard some hoofs a prancing. What happened? Across the hill come a buckboard. Now, a buckboard is a little wagon, open top, very popular in the West. And the horses all jingled and everything, coming. Across the hill, come this carriage, and it stopped in front of the gate. And she run. She said, "I knew you would come."

That's to be the Church someday.

¹⁶¹ She threw herself in his arms, and he said, "Darling, I have had a man stationed on this ranch since I left here last year, that's brought me a report of everything that you've done."

¹⁶² God has got a Man stationed in this tabernacle, this morning, He's called the Holy Spirit. He knows the secrets of your heart. He knows

everything that you've done, or what you think. He tells the Father everything that you do. He brings the message back and forth.

¹⁶³ He said, "And he has told me that you've waited, and you've worked, and you've labored patiently, waiting for me to come. Now, you been a slave for a long time, but now your slave days are over. I have brought along the minister, right under this rose trellis, you become my wife." He kissed her, put the wedding ring on her finger, and picked her up and set her in the buckboard, with his arm around her. And drove off, to find this new big palace on Outer Drive in Chicago, the selected of the nation, where she could live as his bride.

¹⁶⁴ Why? She was ready. She had lived and been the kind of a woman that he wanted. It happened just at the spare of the moment.

¹⁶⁵ And that sudden, secret Coming of the Lord, the world don't know it's going to happen, but we do. It's at hand. Don't be like the young lady they stripped the clothes from, in Pearl Harbor, you'll go down in disgrace. Be like the One who made Herself ready, and kept Her virtues, and was waiting for the Coming of the Lord, 'cause it'll be secret and sudden.

¹⁶⁶ While you think of those things, let's bow our heads to Him Who will come.

¹⁶⁷ Just before we shall speak to Him, every man in his own way, every woman, boy, or girl. And while I am speaking to Him and know that His secret Agent, the One you cannot see with your eye, so He is a secret Agent, the blessed Holy Spirit is in this building. Would you want Him to remember you before Father, this morning, that you want to be ready, and when He comes, to go with Him? If you would, would you raise up your hand to Him? The Lord bless you. I guess practically every hand in the building; mine, also. "I want You, Holy Spirit, to tell the Father, 'Look down upon me. I'm—I'm taking the way with His despised people. I—I want to go, want to be ready. I—I want to be ready right now, because He may come before the service is over.'"

Nations are breaking, Israel's awaking,
The signs that the prophets foretold;
The Gentile days numbered, with harrows
encumbered;
"Return, O dispersed, to your own."

The day of redemption is near,
Men's hearts are failing for fear;
Be filled with God's Spirit, your lamps trimmed and
clear,
Look up! Your redemption is near.
The fig tree is growing; Israel restoring.

¹⁶⁸ O God! The fig tree putting forth its buds, Israel returning as a nation! When I heard our pastor this morning, speak, to pray for Israel! Don't you know that's the putting forth of the buds? He's to come at that time.

¹⁶⁹ Seeing that *Three Minutes Before Midnight*, that article, seeing it on—on my own camera, or projector in my basement, when those old Jews crippled and coming in on ships and everything, from all over the world. The interviewer said, "Are you coming to your homeland, to die in the homeland?" He said, "No. We come to see the Messiah."

¹⁷⁰ The fig tree is growing. Can't you see it? The Day of Redemption is near.

False prophets are lying, God's Truth they're
denying,

That Jesus the Christ is our God;

Can't you see where we're at?

But we'll walk where the apostles have trod.

The day of redemption is near,

Men's hearts are failing for fear; (Think of it!)

Be filled with God's Spirit, your lamps trimmed and
clear,

Look up! Your redemption is near.

¹⁷¹ Lord God, in this great moment, where I look upon this little congregation and see red faces and tear stained cheeks, we are aware that the great secret Agent is standing near, the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷² Now let us take the way with the Lord's despised few. If there is little scruples in our neighborhood, amongst the people, amongst the church, or wherever it is, that has nothing to do with us. We shall not defile our garments with things of the world, anymore. For You shall come someday in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, that sudden, secret Rapture of Your Church. You'll be coming over the hill of time, down the horizontal rainbow, to take away the Church, for the Scripture said, "The Trump of God shall sound. And the dead in Christ shall rise. And we shall be caught up with them, in the air, to meet the Lord, and forever be with the Lord. Wherefore, my brethren, comfort one another with these words."

¹⁷³ Let that ring deep in the hearts of this congregation this morning. We'll praise Thee in Jesus' Name. Amen.



THE SUDDEN, SECRET GOING AWAY OF THE CHURCH

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