



Campbell Chapel

Sermon by Bob Bradley



Are you following afar off?

Wednesday, October 3, 2018

Bob Bradley

We are going to talk a few minutes here tonight about some things the Lord has laid on our hearts and we want to talk about this evening. I think it is very important for all of us. I want all of us to hear this. The young people, the middle aged, the old, and all of us; tonight, I want you to hear these things. It is just good to be in God's tonight. Good to see you all. We appreciate the Lord.

Matthew 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Mark 14:71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

I read you two scriptures. One says, "Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the other says—the same guy begins to say, he begins to curse and swear... "I don't know this man of who you are talking about. I don't know who He is."

When we look at those two scriptures, we think that surely that could not come from the same person, but it did. They came from the same person. Probably three, four, or five months apart; maybe, or a few months apart. However, this same fellow said those two verses. Sometimes we think we have them backwards. Maybe we should have read Mark 14:71 first and he said he did not know this guy. Then after that then he said... Do you know what? That is not right at all.

Peter, they are at Caesarea Philippi in chapter 16 of Matthew. It was a very beautiful place from what I read. Probably it was a lot of mountains and a lot of rocks; it would have been a beautiful place to be. We know that Jesus comes and asked the disciples "Whom do men say that I am?" "Some says thou art Jeremiah. Some say you are one of the prophets and different ones." He says, "Guys, who do you think I am?" Peter said, just what I read to you.

Matthew 16:16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Peter said that on that day. Peter understood that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. There is no doubt that the Lord wanted to get these guys to the point that they could understand that He was the Messiah. There is no doubt also, in my mind that it would have been something great for him to hear. It would have been something great for Peter to confess. It would have been great for the disciples that were there. It would

have just have been a good time. It would have been a good time to be there and to see what was going on and to experience this great time of worship. It would have been a good time.

As you read the rest of the story, Jesus says, “Blessed are thou Simon-Barjona. For flesh and blood has not revealed this unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.” Do you remember that? He goes on to tell him here— “Thou art Peter and upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” He said that. Didn’t he? He goes on to say this. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom. Whatsoever thou bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou loosed on earth shall be loose in heaven.” He said that. Didn’t he? He told them that.

Then the Bible says in the next verse, “And he charged his disciple that he should tell no man that He was the Christ.”

It would have had to had been a great time. It would have had to had been a great time to have been there in that beautiful place listening to the Lord teach and talk and being there with people that you love to be around. It was probably a warm time. We know that a lot of different things about that. However, it would have had to have been a great time.

Jesus—Peter has just confessed that He is the Christ. Jesus is going to tell him some great things that he is going to do. he was going to build a church, and He was going to give Peter the keys. Soon there were going to be some great things happening. There is no doubt in my mind that as Peter is hearing the words of Jesus; he is thinking about the words of the prophets. The prophets had talked about that when Messiah would come what Messiah would do, that He would heal those that were blind. The crippled would walk. He would give freedom and liberty to those captives. No doubt, Peter, in his mind is thinking, we are there...this is the time. The kingdom is going to be set up. This is the Messiah. Israel is going to have freedom and we are going to go back to the glory that we once had with God. We are there. Peter was probably thinking that. If we would have been there and you would have been there; you would have been thinking that too. However, something is going to change here, something that Peter was not looking for.

In life sometimes, things come our way that we are not looking for sometimes. Things comes our way sometimes and life plays out in ways sometimes that we absolutely are not looking for. When they come sometimes; do you know what we do? We don’t understand them.

Lord, we thought there was going to be a kingdom, but now there is not going to be a kingdom. Lord, we were looking to do this or that. We lost our job. We are sick. This happens. That happens. Lord, I don’t understand. Have you ever been there? Sure, you have. If you have not, you will be. If you have not been there in the last few days, you will be there in a few days because we have questions. Not everything always plays out in life like we think that it should. Does everybody get that?

The Bible says in verse 21, of chapter 16...

Matthew 16:21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Get this. Here is Peter, Lord, you just told me you were going to build a kingdom. Lord, you just told me that you were going to give me the keys. You were going to give me authority in this kingdom. Lord, you just told me that the kingdom is just about ready to be set up; but now you are telling me that you are going to go to Jerusalem and you are going to go up there and they are going to murder you. Lord, this can't be right. Lord, you are wrong in your thinking.

How many times in life do we feel the same way sometimes when things come in our life. Do you know what we think? We think Lord, you have to be wrong. This can't be right. Lord, this can't be coming down this way. You have to be wrong. You can say, amen, because that is true.

Here is what happens. That is what Peter did. Look what Peter says...

Matthew 16:22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

I don't think that Peter was very kind when he was going to do what he did here. He probably got Him by the arm. Peter, in my mind and when I read these scriptures, Peter a lot of times, put his mouth in gear before he did his brain. A lot of times, he probably was a fellow that was very authoritative and sometimes that is needed. Here is a guy—Peter no doubt, got Him by the arm—I don't know that—but he took Him aside. Do you know what he tells Him? He begins to rebuke Him. Jesus is being rebuked by Peter. Do you get that? The Creator is being rebuked by what He has created. Do you get that? He took Him aside to begin to rebuke Him. He began to wear Him out. He said, "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Do you see what he is doing? Do you see what he is saying? "Lord, you are wrong. You just told me about a kingdom. You just told me you are going to build a church. You just told me that I was going to have authority and now you are telling me that you are going to Jerusalem and die? Lord, you are wrong. That is not going to happen that way."

In life, we do sometimes the same thing. When problems come in life and things come that we don't understand and that we can't figure out; do you know what we try to tell God? You have to be wrong. Lord, you must be wrong. Lord, you have messed up somewhere along the line. I want you to understand something tonight. God never messes up. We may not always understand and probably do not understand very much. But listen, God knows what He is doing and I absolutely have no right to rebuke Him.

That is what Peter did. Lord, you are wrong. You are wrong, Lord. You can't do that. You are not going to do that. You can't. It is not going to happen. Look what Jesus did.

Jesus in verse 23...

Matthew 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Do you know what the Lord is telling Peter? Peter you are listening to the wrong voice. You might be thinking that you know what needs to be done. You might be thinking here what I need to do. However, Peter, you don't understand. If there is going to be a kingdom, then I have to die. Peter, if there is going to be a church, then I have to die. Peter, if this thing is going to work then I have to die and I have to be raised from the dead. Peter said it is not going to happen.

However, Jesus said, "satan you need to get behind me because you savor not the things of God, but you are savoring the things of men." Do you know what that means? Peter was looking at things from man's point of view. Satan would have loved for Jesus to by-pass the cross. Satan would have loved for Jesus not to raise from the dead because if He does not get up from the dead then there is no church. If He does not get up from the dead there is no resurrection. If He does not get up from the dead, we are not going anywhere but to the ground. That is where we are going to be.

"Get thee behind me satan." Those are strong words. Don't you think? This is Jesus talking to Peter. Peter is probably a pretty tough guy.

Here is what happens. When things don't go our way—get this—we start down a path that we start getting farther away from the Lord, by steps. We don't like to talk about this word and we would like to hear this word. We live in a world today where so many Christian people are going backwards in their relationship with God. You can say amen on that because that is the truth. Church attendance is down 30% to 50% across the United States and some places more than that. From the Baptists to the Methodists, to all the different denominations; church attendance is down 30% to 50%. Do you know why? It is because people start getting away from God. They are getting too far away from Jesus. Now look what happens here.

Here is Peter. Peter knows Jesus is the Messiah. He knows who He is. Now Peter really gets rebuked. The Lord really rebukes Peter now. He really is going to line Peter up. Peter you are listening to the voice of satan. You are not following me. You are not listening to me. What Peter was really saying was "Lord, you don't know what you are doing. You don't really know what you are doing, Jesus. I know you are the Messiah but you really don't know what you are doing. You listen to me and I will teach you some things." However, it does not work that way. The Lord knows what He is doing.

Me and you, some days we may, but most days we may not. Jesus is always right every day.

Peter here gets rebuked and he starts down a path. He starts getting farther and farther and farther away from the Lord. You might say, how do you do that. How do you get from "thou art the Christ..." to where you curse and swear that you don't know Him?

You do it gradually. You don't do it over night. It does not happen overnight. You don't backslide overnight. You don't get a long way from God overnight. If you have ever been saved, you do it gradually, gradually, gradually, gradually you get away from God.

Peter did not like what Jesus said. Peter did not like what Jesus said was necessary. Jesus said I must die. They are going to kill me. I am going to raise from the dead. Peter did not like what was necessary. Peter did not like what was going to come. Peter did not want to hear that.

There have been times in my life that I did not like to hear what was coming either. If you would be honest, there have been times in your life that you did not like what came either.

Do you know what Peter does? He starts down a road one step at a time, getting a little farther, and a little farther and a little farther away from God. He did not like Jesus' methods. He did not like how He was going to build the church. He did not like how He was going to do that. If it takes you dying Lord, for us to be able to have the kingdom then let's forget it. Peter did not know what he was talking about. Peter did not understand. Peter did not have a grip on things.

Sometimes, you and I don't have a grip on things either. Sometimes we don't have...we think we do. We think we do. We think we do.

If you read the book of 1 Corinthians 12, there is a warning there. Peter should have known this. It talks about a fellow that needs to take heed. A man that boasts, a man that thinks he is going to stand, he boasts that he is going to stand; we need to take heed lest we fall. When we start bragging how big and how strong and how mighty that we are and we are never going to fail, and we never do fail; then do you know what is going to happen to us? We are about ready to fail. Amen! Peter was that kind of a fellow.

A lot of times we are just like Peter. We are absolutely just like Peter.

Do you know what happens here? Peter gets a little farther away from the Lord now. The Lord says, this is what is going to happen, this is what I am going to do. Peter says, Lord you are wrong. We shouldn't do that. Jesus says, Peter you are listening to the wrong voice. You are listening to satan. This is what is going to happen. Then there is a division there. He gets a little further away. He starts down a road getting a little farther, and farther, and farther away.

Listen. If we are going to be people that God is going to bless, we are going to follow Him wholly, totally, completely, whether I like where the road goes or not. Amen! If you are not willing to do that, if you are not willing to follow the Lord, then God is never going to bless you. You are not going to have any answered prayers. Your life is going to be a wreck. Your life is going to be a mess, day in and day out. If you are not willing to follow the leadership of God—Jesus said, Peter, I am going to die.

Do you know what Peter should have said? Lord, where do you want to be buried at? That is what he should have said. Peter did not believe Him. Peter did not want to believe Him. I don't believe that. We are not going to do that.

He must and we must, if we are going to be blessed, if we are going to be blessed then we absolutely have to listen to the voice of Almighty God.

When you go to the book of Mark—we are going to read a few verses there. It is about the same story. Mark gives us some more information than Matthew does here. When you look down in verse 29, of chapter 14, the Bible says this.

Mark 14:29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I.

“Not me!” Jesus just told him here that they are going to smite the shepherd. The sheep are going to be scattered. They are all going to be offended. They are going to be scattered in the night. Peter said, “Nope. Hold on Lord. Nope.” Now the rest of this gang; they might run off and leave you, and they may not be dedicated like I am dedicated, and they may not be near as strong as I am; but I want to tell you something Lord. They all may run off and leave you but this cat is going to be there.” That is what he is saying. That is exactly what he is saying. He is saying, “I am better than these other guys are. I am stronger than these other guys are. I can do this. I know what I am doing. I have got this. The rest of the gang they may run off, but I am a lot stronger than they are.”

When we make statements like that we are getting ready to hit our nose in the floor. When we think that we are better and stronger, and smarter, and bigger, and prettier, and all this other stuff that other people are—do you know what is going to happen? We are getting ready for a fall. We are getting ready to have a fall.

When Peter makes this statement, he gets a little farther because he is bragging on self. He is putting himself above other people. He was putting himself above the other eleven. “I am better than they are. They may run off and leave you, Lord, but I am a lot stronger than they are. Lord, you know that.” Do you know what the Lord tells him here, when you go on down through here?

Mark 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

Do you know what happens? Jesus here—He leaves the Upper Room after Peter says, “Lord, the rest of them may forsake you but I am going to be here.” He leaves the

Upper Room. He goes down to the garden Gethsemane. He tells the fellows there to stay here. He takes Peter, James and John and goes a little bit farther and He tells them to watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.

Do you remember reading that?

Mark 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

Jesus now, this is the night that they are going to get Him. This is the night that they are making their plans and they are probably on their way down the side of the mountain when Jesus told these guys to watch and to pray; I am going to go over here a stone's throw away and I am going to pray. I am going to come back. He comes back and here they are sleeping. In verse 37, as I read to you...

Mark 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

He did not call him Peter, but He called him Simon. Do you get that? That is just not put in there just to be put in there, friend. That means something. Simon, He says here...

Mark 14:37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

Get this. When we will not accept what God is doing and what God wants us to do, when we boast, and when we brag that we will never do something. We get a little farther. When we allow our devotional life to suffer then we get a little farther away from God. What I mean by that is...

I did not ask you to read your Bible just to give you something to do. Do you know what I know about the Word of God? If you will honestly and sincerely read it, and you really love the Lord, when you read God's Word, you are going to pray. I know that when you read your Bible and pray, God is going to do something in your life. I know that if you do not read and you do not pray, you are not watching but you are asleep. I know that. It is so important that you read your Bible. It is so important that you pray.

As you read God's Word, and you seek God's face and you do your praying, then God speaks. Do you know what you do? The first thing you see when you look at this book and pray; do you know what you see? You see God, but you see something else. You see yourself. This book is just like a mirror, when you read the book of Mark. It is just like a mirror that when we look into this word it shows us, it is a reflection; it shows us who we are. It shows us how much we need Him. It will give us discernment. If you want to know the right path to go in life, read and pray and obey the Word of God and God will direct your path.

I am not talking about anybody when I say this... I have had people talk to me for 40 years about something, "I don't know what to do." Listen. If God wants you to do

something, God is big enough to tell you and you will understand what you need to do. Amen!

A fellow came to me one time and told me, the Lord has called me to preach. A young man, a smart educated fellow, a school teacher. If I mentioned a name some of you guys may know him. I said...how do you know that God has called you to preach? He said well I had this dream about all kinds of lizards, snakes, alligators. He talked a few minutes. I said, hold on a minute. You are telling me that because you had a dream about lizards and snakes and frogs; that does not have anything to do with God calling you to preach. Do you know what? He was convinced that he did. Do you know what he did? He preached for a year or two or three; if you see him every now and then, he in and out the drive-thru's and buys his liquor. He is a drunk. I don't know whether he is a drunk or not but he drinks all the time. Do you know why? Because he listened to the wrong voice.

If God wants you to do something, the same that saves you is the same God that is big enough to let you know what you need to do. I don't care what it is. He talked to Moses and told him he needed to go to Egypt. He spoke to Moses and told him to get his shoes off.

God speaks, if you are listening. However, if you don't read His Word and if you do not spend any time alone with God praying, you don't hear Him. You don't hear Him. You hear all this junk going on in your head and you get all confused. Nine times out of ten, we flip coin, should I do this or that. Do you know what we usually do? We mess up. We make the wrong call. The sermon is something we need.

Peter here when you read what is happening here—Peter had let his devotional life slide. Jesus said, you need to watch and pray. Peter was asleep.

In our churches across the world today, people come in and sit with their eyes open but spiritually, so many are asleep. I am not jumping on anybody. I promise I am not guys. I promise I am not trying to hurt anybody's feelings. I am not doing that. Do you know what I know? I know that right here in this little place beside the road, in Lawrence County Ohio; there are people that loves Jesus Christ. There are people that God has saved, and God has called, and God has laid His hand upon and God can use in a great way but we have gone to sleep. We have gone to sleep. We have allowed the world, we have allowed family, we have allowed our jobs, our homes, or whatever to lull us to sleep. We have to spend time on activities other than spending time in our devotional life to God. We don't pray. We don't read our Bibles. Then we wonder why we feel the way we do on the inside. We feel dirty on the inside. Amen! The Word of God will clean you up.

Peter gets another step further. Not only did he try to rebuke and tell Jesus He didn't know what He was doing. He wouldn't accept what the Lord had to say. Not only did he do that but as I read to you here—he said, "Lord, the rest of the crowd may run off and leave you, but I will never...it won't be me, Lord. I will be right there with you until

the end.” The Lord had a message for him. Didn’t He? Peter you are wrong. Peter would not admit that he was wrong, but he was wrong. Here Jesus tells him to watch and to pray. He comes back from praying. They are getting ready to kill Jesus and the disciples are laying here asleep.

Get this. ...The Lord is going to do some great things here on earth. We may not have revivals like we used to have that we saw 500 to 1,000 people saved. I don’t know that in the age that we are living in. However, God is not done saving people. Do you know why I know that? I know that because we are still here. Since we are still here, then I know that God is not done with what He is doing. Amen! God has a plan. God has a work. God has a purpose for you. However, you can’t do it while you are asleep. Not only that but I have to hurry along here.

You can look down here in verse 38, Jesus says this.

Mark 14:38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

Peter did not understand that. Peter did not understand how weak that he really was. He was bold. He thought he had it all. He thought he was very strong. The Lord looked at him and said, “Peter, I need to tell you something. You have a lot of zeal...but you are really weak, Peter.”

Mark 14:47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

The multitudes from the chief priests, scribes and elders came from Jerusalem, down over the mountain, down in the Kidron Valley, down in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here they come, and they are coming to get Jesus. They come down to where they are at. They asked, “Who are you guys looking for?” They said, “We are looking for Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said, “I am He.” The Bible tells us when He said that they, the soldiers, fell backwards, hit the ground. Jesus said, “If you guys are looking for me, that is fine, but let these other guys go.”

You read the story and do you know what Peter does? Get this. This is a real lesson here. Peter draws out his sword and he swings it and he hits one of the servants, high priest’s ear; he cuts his ear right off. Do you remember that story? His ear is gone. It is laying on the ground. Probably blood running down the side of his head. Jesus told Peter, “Peter, put your sword up. He that lives by the sword, dies by the sword.” Jesus picks up the ear and puts it back on this guy’s head and it is all cool.

Listen. Peter was trying to substitute zeal for what he should have been. He is trying to substitute works for being who he should have been. He wasn’t who he said he was. He said he was strong. He said he would never deny the Lord. We do that in life.

We substitute zeal and things and works and really what we should be in our life; we should be having a devotional life of reading and praying and seeking the face of God.

We substitute doing for that. We think all this stuff I do and all this stuff I get involved and all the zeal that I have—that will substitute and that will override and that will take away the thing that I should be doing which is reading, praying, and studying and seeking God's face. When I do all this stuff then that will take this desire, or this thing I should be doing—that will override that and I won't have to do it.

Listen. God wants me to read my Bible and pray and seek His face and be obedient a lot more than He wants me to have zeal. Amen! When I have zeal, when I want to read my Bible, study, and seek the face of God, and pray and ask Him to use me then I will have all kinds of stuff to do. Stuff that will bring glory to His name. Zeal will never take the place of a devotional life. It won't do it. You can't do it. You can have all the zeal in the world. You can run up and down the road until you wear yourself out and if you don't spend some time alone with God and God's Word and seek the face of God then you are going to be one big spiritual zero.

The last miracle that Jesus does, while He is here on earth; is putting this guy's ear back on his head that an apostle, someone that God had called, someone that a few months earlier said this is the Christ, had cut off—the last miracle that Jesus did on earth was put this ear back on this guy's head. That is the last thing He did. Peter gets a little farther away.

Peter probably thought everything I do is wrong. We think that way sometimes. Do you know why? Because it is wrong. The decisions we make sometimes when we are living too far away from Jesus—the decisions we make are not right. When we try to substitute zeal for being who we need to be then things are not right. Peter gets rebuked. Caesarea Philippi, he gets rebuked here now.

Get this. Here is what happens. They take Jesus; they head back up towards the city with Him. The Bible says this...

Mark 14:54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

Here he is. Jesus has called him. He saved him. He has called him into full-time ministry, when you read the book. Peter gets rebuked. He does not like what the Lord is doing. He thinks the Lord is wrong. He boasts and brags how smart and how brave and how tough that he is. He tries to substitute for his devotional life. He gets farther and farther and farther away. Now they are taking Jesus up the city where He is going to go Annas and Caiaphas. They are going to condemn Him to die. Peter is following afar off. Peter is not close to the crowd. He is following afar off. He is lagging behind. He is not following like he used to. He does not have the zeal that he used to have. He does not have the desire that he used to have because things are not going like he wanted them to go.

He has bragged. He has boasted. He has done all this stuff.

When you read 68 through 70...

Mark 14:68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

Mark 14:69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them.

Mark 14:70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilaeen, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

Mark 14:71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

Mark 14:72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

He said, "I don't know who this guy is." Here is what happens. He comes up from the Kidron Valley. They have Jesus, at Annas and Caiaphas' place. They have a fire outside. Out in the courtyard, they have a fire. It is cold. It is the spring of the year. No doubt, it is cold; there is a chill in the air. Here no doubt, stood some of the soldiers that arrested Jesus. They are standing around a fire, trying to keep warm.

Do you know what Peter did? Peter just strolls on in with them. He starts warming himself.

I love to do that. Don't you? I love to be around the fire pit. Years ago, we used to have big old barrels that we would put wood in and burn. You would turn this way and get hot and turn the other way.

Here Peter is—get this—a guy that used to be close is now following afar off and he is standing at a fire with the enemies of Jesus trying to get warm.

Get this. When you get too far away from Jesus, when you don't want to follow Him and you think that He does not know what He is doing, and you boast how big and how strong you are and you start following afar off. Do you know what you will do? You will go to the world and try to get warm. That is really what Peter was doing here. He was trying to get warm. However, he was trying to get warm at the wrong place. His outer body may get warm and no doubt, that it did. But what Peter really needed was renewal. He needed forgiveness. He needed to get back on track with Jesus Christ.

You see, when you walk away from God and you get farther away from God, you forget your prayer life. You forget your devotional life. You forget about coming to church and you let everything in the world take precedence over that. Do you know what you do? Instead of coming back where you need to be; you get closer to the world and closer to the world's fire.

I thought about this today, as I was thinking about all of this. Years ago, Deb and I used to have a little old fireplace, a little stove. It had a little thing that would roll on the inside when you plugged it up and turned it on. It would like fire but there was no fire in it. You could put your hand on it and it was cold. There was no fire but it looked like fire.

This world, to a lot of us, when we start walking away from God; it just looks like that fireplace. It looks like there should be heat in it. It looks like there should be a fire in it. It looks like it should do something for us, but there is nothing there. We try. We go to a different stove. We go to a different fire. We go to a different place. Do you know what? When you are following the Lord, and you are following Him a long way; the only thing that is going to warm up...

Do you remember the story the day Jesus arose from the dead? The guys were on their way to Emaeus. Do you remember that story? They were going down the road talking. They get to Emaeus, and they said come on in and eat with us... Jesus goes in and blesses the food and when He does, He is gone. Do you remember what they said? Get this. Do you remember what they said after Jesus was gone? Get this. "Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked with us? Did not our hearts burn within us, as He spoke unto us?"

Listen. When God speaks and when we are listening; it will do something for you. It will warm up your soul. The world cannot do that. However, God does.

Listen. Don't boast and brag how smart you are, how tough you are, how spiritual you are, and you are better than this crowd and that crowd. You are not better than anyone and I am not either. If you are saved, you have been saved by the grace of God. If you have not been saved, you need to be saved by the grace of God. When we get that way, and we boast how good we are, and we try to substitute zeal for devotion; we get too far. We go to the world and try to get warm. We get farther and farther and farther... We come to church. The church does not mean anything to us. We sit. We talk about how dead our church was. How the preacher did the worst job in history. The choir did not sing a lick. It had nothing to do with me, the choir or anything else. If you are in that shape, it has to do with you. Amen!

Listen. It is time we change. It is time that we get back to where we used to be. It is time that we get back so that we can have the fire of Almighty God in our soul. I challenge you; read your Bible. You know we are reading two chapters a day through the book of Proverbs and if you can't get but just one chapter in then read one chapter. However, take some time to read and to pray. Read it out loud. I know you are busy with your kids, your job and all of that. However, there is nothing more important in your life, as you raise your children; your relationship with God is the most important thing in your life, as you raise your kids. Husbands and wives the most important thing, if your husband or wife don't get along; is your relationship with God. Kids—I know you think mom and dad are crazy and sometimes we are. However, the greatest thing you can

do to get along with your parents, and parents get along with kids is have a relationship with God. Amen!

I don't know where you are at tonight. I don't know where you stand with God, but if you need to pray, it would be a great time to come and pray. It would be a great time to call upon the God of heaven. He is real. He is listening tonight. He is here this evening. He loves you and cares about you.

If you don't know Him, if you have been walking too far from Him, if the fire has gone out in your life and you want the fire rekindled, if that relationship that you used to have with God, used to burn, and you used to love to pray, and you used to love for God to bless you; it would be a great time for you to come. Come this evening.

Come and pray—