

The Sudden, Secret Going Away Of The Church

E-1 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.

Lord, as we say like those of old, "I was happy when they said, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" We could 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.

E-2 We would ask special blessing this morning on those who were unable to get to the service. Many perhaps would've 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.

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.

E-3 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. 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 the—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 doing. 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. And speak to us

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

E-4 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 request 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 I Thessalonians the 5th chapter and read just for a few moments. I am sorry, while you are opening your Bible, it is. . . The children have 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.

And while. . . If you can now read, or open your Bibles to I Thessalonians the 5th chapter.

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 Deacon's 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 Deacon's office.

E-5 Now, for a text, I want to take this for a text this morning, "The Sudden Secret Going Away Of The Church." 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 I 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 the 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.

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 I 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.

May the Lord add His blessings to the reading of His Holy Word.

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.

E-6 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.

And then, I thinking today on this subject of "The Sudden And Secret. . ." I like that. God is. . . People live today as though just before the coming of the Lord Jesus that 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.

E-7 But God has said in His Word that it would be like a thief in the night coming. 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.

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. . .

E-8 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 it. . . 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.

What if one of your loved ones, 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.

E-9 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.

You know, the enemy always uses the tactic that the—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—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. And he does it out in military life.

E-10 I was reading an article sometime 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.

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 it. . . You can't blame Him.

E-11 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, "Oh, nonsense. You gloom builders, you worrywarts, all you think about is some trouble."

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.

E-12 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?"

E-13 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. 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 failed to hear the warning.

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.

"Oh, they say something about a Japanese fleet being coming this way."

And then someone else drops in on the conversation. And a young silly girl bounces up there, sticks her foot up on the bar, and said, "You gloomy headed warts, don't you know that we're here for having a good time and not talk about a war?"

E-14 That isn't just about the way the world is the same 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.

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.

And then the next morning when the man 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 upset the next morning from the big party until they were caught asleep on the job.

E-15 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.

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.

Oh, if there ever was a time that this America was ever at its lowest ebb right now of its immorality, of its indifference. . . The Gospel's 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.

E-16 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's 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.

But today too many of our ministers are afraid to say those things. They are 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—go out perhaps, maybe 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. We need men like John Wesley of the early reformation, Martin Luther. We need people like Paul, who's 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.

E-17 What it is today, that education, and societies, and little frantical, delicate things of societies, and their own feelings has took the place of the Holy Ghost in the church. What we need today to cry out to America is God sent, God filled men with the power of the Holy Ghost, who's not afraid to cry out against the thing that's wrong and to warn the people of the oncoming judgment.

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 a 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.

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's nothing to rely upon but the Word of the living God. We can't rely upon nothing, not on politics.

E-18 I have been in trial 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.

I said, "What is that word wrote over our—our courthouses, 'justice.' It means no more than it wasn't even wrote there, that when every thing that your own people told me to do, I have did it. And now you say that they're not with the government any more."

E-19 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.

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. 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."

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

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.

E-20 Men such as Billy Graham, and Jack Shuler, 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.

Those old men, those men who tried to do right is the men that our own government tries to tear to pieces.

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.”

That means no more to them than the 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 man be?”

He said, “You gave people gifts when their homes burnt. Here’s 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?”

I said, “The Lord told me in His Word, ‘Don’t let your right—your left hand know what your right’s a doing.’”

Said, “Then you’re trying to plead your case by a Bible, and we’re judging you by a law.”

I said, “Which is the highest law, man’s or God’s?” I’ll take God’s law.

E-21 Just a few—two years ago, I’d been on my vacation, was on my road back. 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.

And on my road back after setting in a snow drift for several days, in a blizzard. And I’d 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.

And I crossed out of Wyoming, 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.

E-22 And I noticed sixty miles an hour; I looked back and he continued to stay behind me. And I just watched, 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. I got out of the car; I thought, “Maybe it’s some message that I didn’t pick up on a radio, maybe at home my wife or family.” I got out of that car just as innocent as I could be.

He said, “I guess you wonder why I stopped you.”

I said, “I do, sir.”

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, “It— isn’t it sixty-five in . . .”

“No, sir,” said, it’s fifty-five here. You’re doing five miles over the speed limit.”

“Oh,” I said, “I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean . . .”

Said, “Give me your drivers license; just show me your license.”

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.”

He said, “Oh, there’s a sign right outside the state line. You should’ve seen it.”

“Well,” I said, “I’m been setting in a four—snow drift 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."

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

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 bonafide statement that I would send them the money.

E-23 When I got home I wrote the judge that—of the little city that—little squire that I was to send it to, and I told him, I said, "Sir, I've 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 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 it at all, which I—maybe he's 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."

Brother, he just signed his name across it and took it cold bloodedly. Why? Why? And done through rotten politics, and religious prejudice. . . Some of them get by with murder. There it is. 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.

E-24 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, 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 any way they want to and—and everything, and still go on just the same, compromising preachers.

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 and—this wicked condition that we're living in.

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 our nation, it's the only remedy for our Church; it's the only remedy for the people.

E-25 Here some time ago, I guess many of you people who travel has been there; I've stayed all night there many times in my journey out west, which I have to go next week and reliv—get relief from the government to go...They're holding me here, where if they 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 delude, 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.

I said you..."I have brothers who's been in federal prison."

And one of the said—attorneys said, "You've got brothers in the federal prison?"

I said, "I did have."

Said, "Who were they?"

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. And Brother Joseph, because that he'd 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, they had to shave him to take him before Pharaoh." Sure.

What for? Anything wrong? For the cause of Christ, exactly. 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. . .

E-26 But the Arkansas people done something about it. Every church, I think nine or ten different denominations in that 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 an hour, and night in an hour. 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.

E-27 I don't care how rotten the world is, how rotten our country is, our nation is, our people are, prayer changes things. But we're not interested in prayer meeting no more. We got so many other things we have to do, so we think.

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 any more for years and years to come. Why? Because the people that are called by His Name assembled themselves together and prayed.

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. 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.

E-28 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 in you, or 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. 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.

E-29 Sometime ago, a minister was preaching. And—and there was a man who'd been attending his church for a, 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."

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 had been very wicked. And we know you have mistreated your family. You gambled away your money, and you drank it up, and lived 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."

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

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 choirs singing or the specials, though as good as they were."

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

He said, "I worked with a man who is a Christian, and I've said everything to him. I've called him a holy-roller. I've 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 that I ask him to lead me to Christ. I want the Christ that he serves."

E-30 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. 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'd say to the director, the one who has the music, "Don't let them sing no more. They just make me nervous to sing."

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, when around your way without knowing about Jesus. What type of life do you live? One of those types that's mean, and 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.

E-31 I was showing 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's had thunderbolt prophets, and signs and wonders to condemn the thing in the midst of all popularity and stand alone for God.

Not only that, but what if I would speak of the time of little Stephen: 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 stiffnecks, 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. 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. 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 in the battleships of God's wrath coming, how we escape this?

E-32 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. 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 a 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.

E-33 Sometime ago, a story, just before closing, that struck me as I heard it many, many years ago. . . This secret coming of the Lord, sudden secret going of the church. . . "Watch, it'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 it'll be universal. One will be in the field working: daytime, the other one in the bed sleeping on the other side of the world. It'll be a universal rapture. And it'll 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 will be caught away secretly. Oh, I love that. The great Bridegroom coming, and the bride that got Herself ready, waiting for that secret moment that she doesn't even know herself, but she's ready and dressed, and waiting for it.

E-34 We see 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.

E-35 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, everyone people that you couldn't put your finger on for anything wrong. They everyone believed in the coming of the Lord. They were ready to go meet Him, but some of them let their oil go out.

Don't let that be your case. Keep oil in your lamp. Oil is the 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.

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. There's only One we can bring now, that's the Lord Jesus. Let's make ready for His coming.

E-36 I want to tell you a little story that I heard some years ago, in the close. The sudden, quick, rapture of the Church . . . 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. 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 churches; 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 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.

E-37 There was a great rancher, and he owned a mammoth big ranch, way in the northern part of Colorado near the mountain section.

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: sounded like a Voice said, "Adam, where are you?" As I looked up towards the stars and 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.

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 . . .

E-38 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. 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.

And those girls, that they was in those fancy type of frilly frocks, you know, 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 fingernails and manicure, the stuff on their lips, and all fixed up, you know, just prissy. 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 deck out in good clothes. Oh, how and did they dress and make ready for his coming.

E-39 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.

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've got to have Oil in your lamp. See? Just your dressing, saying, “We'll build a big church. We'll belong to a better denomination. We'll—we'll give them a pipe organ to the Lord. We'll make plush seats.”

That isn't what God requires. Righteousness is what God requires, of 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.”

E-40 So she—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.

Now, that’s about the true picture of the real Church today before the denominations: not even considered, a bunch of interdenominational, a bunch of outcasts.

So the poor little fellow just went ahead working. And when the young man arrived, they didn’t know it. . . [Blank spot on tape—Ed.] 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 will go out west and hunt me a—a real girl, that will be a real mother to my babies, and something who will 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.

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 board, but He wants you with Oil. He’s coming to catch that Oily Bride away.

E-41 And as he, this boy looked upon, he was disheartened. And that night they were having something on the order of, in them days, it’s been a 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, I. . . it was called Charleston and Black Bottom, that’s what they were calling

it.) And they had them two tone clothes, and they were going to—to do these dances and. . .

E-42 But this boy was sick of that stuff. He was hunting for a real girl. So he slipped out of their party. He's watching them; he went in to look at them.

So is another Son that I know of. Another Son will come to your church, He will—Son of God, He will come there. He will look around; He will see your fine dress. He will—He will know that you're a good member. But He's looking for something different from just the regular trend of church.

So as he looked around, after while, he was so discouraged, he walked out the door. And going back, walking in the moonlight towards the bunkhouse, he heard somebody kind of humming. And he looked around, and here went this little girl with a great big pan of dishwater, way in the night, bare-footed, to throw the dishwater out. And as soon as he saw her, something another said, "That's her; that's the one."

So he put hisself in the way. And when she. . . Well, when she come back along the corral fence, why, he was standing there. And she almost fainted. 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?"

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

E-43 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, friends. See, it's something different; it's your character; that's what God's 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.

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

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 thrown off.

E-44 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 things that's mean, to be thrown at it. But she's the great speckled bird. All the other birds gather around and flock at her. That's all right. Her name's on the Lamb's Book of Life. She'll spread Her great wings someday for a flight. She's ready. Them speckles meant the Blood of Christ sprinkled on her. You've read it in your Book, the Bible.

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? Just imagine how those girls must've felt when they looked out the window and saw holding hands with that little despised cousin, the man that they tried to beg 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."

E-45 That's the way the real church feels about it. "I'm not worthy, I can. . . If I can 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? 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, and she walks like. . . down through the town; she's not. . . She won't join our circles and. . ." 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. . ."

E-46 So when he left, he told her he'd be back at a certain time. Said, "When you begin to see. . ." There's a 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 springtime."

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 bunkhouse, or whatmore. She was engaged to the boss of the ranch.

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's a coming one day, and we're going to a wedding supper. What difference does it make to us, if you love His appearing?

E-47 After it was all. . . The days passed. The little daughters, the little cousins, made fun of her, danced around her and done everything else. Why, said, "You poor silly kid. Do you not know if he. . . Why, he was just like all other men. He was just teasing you."

But the Son of God doesn't tease. "Except a man be borned 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 borned again, you'll not enter. . . And these signs shall follow them that believe." I'm only quoting His Word.

E-48 Finally, when the hour come, she begin to see the—the buds begin to come on the trees. She knew he'd be there at any time.

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'd go and get—make herself all ready, get her little wedding garment on and wait at the gate. 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 is the president or—or of the company, that his boy would marry a dishwasher."

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

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.

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's 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."

E-49 That's to be the Church someday. 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."

God's 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.

He said, "And he has told me that you've waited, and you worked, and you've labored patiently, waiting for me to come. Now, you've 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 his new big palace on Outer Drive in Chicago, the selected of the nation, where she could live as his bride.

E-50 Why? She was ready. She lived and been the kind of a woman that he wanted. It happened just in the spare of a moment.

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.

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

E-51 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 Who you cannot see with your eyes, 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 have—I'm taking the way with His despised people. How I want to go. I want to be ready, and I—I want to be ready right now, because He may come before this service is over.”

Nations are breaking,
 Israel's awakening,
 The signs that the prophets foretold;
 The Gentile days numbered,
 With horrors 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's restoring. . .

E-52 Oh, 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. 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 the homeland to die in the homeland?”

He said, “No, we come to see the Messiah.”

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.

E-53 Lord God, in this great moment where I look upon this little congregation and see red faces and tear-stained cheeks, we're aware that the great secret Agent is standing near, the Holy Spirit. 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 any more. 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 up 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.” Let that ring deep in the hearts of this congregation this morning. We'll praise Thee, in Jesus' Name. Amen.