

## Title: LIFT UP NOW THINE EYES

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At the Los Angeles University Cathedral

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## LIFT UP NOW THINE EYES

Now this is the first Sunday I get to talk to my people—this class of students—the regular way we do it every Sunday. No special day, no special subject—for the subject that I return to periodically, Genesis 13. Now, my usual 3 hours will be cut down to about 30–40 minutes so relax. This will be the first time I’ve heard those Bible leaves ripple in this building.

Genesis 13. Now let me tell you the context. Abram has just really messed-up down in Egypt. And this ‘Father of faith’—both the Hebrew and the Christian to which the Scriptures looks for its spring of beginning—if he doesn’t prove anything else, he proves that God is kind of used to dealing with “bleep-ups”. My editors out there in the truck will feel real good about that; I saved them all the work.

Faith. What is FAITH? “A”—action, based upon Belief, sustained by Confidence. We have a problem in the English language. This is old-hat to you, but I’m going to lay it down for the two or three that are here. We have a problem in the English language that when they translated both the Old Testament Hebrew words and the New Testament words that we call “faith”. They picked a noun in the English language and totally destroyed the meaning of trust and faith as the Biblical words communicated. You know this too.

Faith or trust, in the Old Testament, comes from two words. One word means: “to run to the shelter of a rock or a mother bird’s wings for shelter.” Now you can stand all day and look at the rock and know it will shelter you, but it’s not trust or faith, as the Old Testament word conveyed the meaning, until you hang your body on that belief and confidence, and run to that shelter. The other Old Testament word is “to lean your weight upon a staff.” You can believe the staff will hold you, but until you put your weight on it, you are not trusting, or as I would make the word up, “*faith-ing*”.

The New Testament word is *pisteo* in the Greek (in English letters)... I had somebody say last week, “Could...could you drop the shade or something, or write a little bigger? We can’t see.” It must have been a stranger. When have you ever been able to read anything I write on the board? I don’t go write on it for you to read. Let’s get that straight. It’s to organize my thoughts—and I can read what I write, and you already know what I’ve said thus far.

*Pisteo* is where we get that full meaning: “A”—action, based upon Belief, sustained by Confidence. When they translated that word and the other two Old Testament words as “belief”, they destroyed the meaning. And they reduce FAITH down to something you can park in the corner of your cranium, and if it’s accurate you have faith. Not in the Old or the New Testament! Faith is an action where you hang your body on a belief, sustained by confidence, and put yourself at risk on that which you believe and have confidence in.

Now the whole world had gone awry under Nimrod the great rebel. The Apocryphal Scriptures have a prophecy of Abram’s birth that frightened Nimrod. His father Terah sent him away, (I believe and the Apocryphal Scripture supports) to be trained by Shem and Noah who were still alive. Be that as it

may—and it may provide an explanation of why the whole world had gone awry, and God could find one man that would trust Him.

And He called Abraham to leave his family and his city, and go to a place that God had called him to—but He hadn't yet identified. By this definitions, he had enough faith in God's promise of a place to which he was called that he would grab-up his family. He didn't forsake them as he should have to follow the full order; but he travels out of Ur three to four months across desert land, and settled at a place that got its name because he halted there—Haran, which means "halting".

Then his dad died. With the death of his father, he moved on, but he still took a relative named Lot with him.

He came to a place called Nablus (sometimes called Luz in the Bible); renamed by Jacob in later years Bethel, "House of God". Because the record of these goings-on is written after the name Bethel comes in view, its name is projected back to the place. It is between two mountains that subsequently would be named mount of Blessing and mount of Cursing—Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. "Blessing" and "Cursing" on each side of this valley where Abram came; these uplands of Samaria are not very attractive at best. Yet, God said to him—if you believe the record, "This is the place."

Immediately after that promise, Abram had the faith for the big effort to leave his home not knowing where he was going. Now he got the promise: "This is the place." Now I really want to put flesh and blood on this story today because this church is characterized as always being willing to make the big sacrifice; and then, when victory is in our hand and a little bit of pressure comes, we fade out. That's not new.

In my judgment... and if you think about it and put flesh and blood on these Bible characters, instead of that corner of your brain that we normally park them in, so we can think about something else—it took a lot more courage (which is 90% of faith, and tenacity which is 9%, and 1%'s all that other stuff)... to uproot himself... on the promise of God that he was being called to a place across those desert lands he didn't even yet know where to go, than it did to stay in the place at the first hint of trouble, that God had said, "This is the place." But immediately after God said, "This is the place," famine hit the land.

Now do you remember a few months ago when I started preaching on giving God's way? I pointed out to you—as my answer to those that say, "You give a dollar to God, and He'll make you rich"... the first giver that God approved—Abel, who brought his offerings the right way, and Cain brought his the wrong way—he got killed for his efforts.

We get a lot of fairytale stuff in the name of God in current peddled Christianity. What is going to happen to Abram is normal for the course. The moment that God consummated His first promise—going to take him to a place that he didn't know where he's going—when he got there, God let him know: God says at Bethel, "This is the place"—and immediately he was tested. Famine came and hit the land. What have I told you? If you start believing God's Word and acting on it, what is going to happen to you? Huh? Huh? Now all these preachers tell you, "Walk down that aisle, kneel here, blubber 5 minutes. Heaven gets rosy, your bank account goes up automatically, and if you got warts they fall off, and you get the skin of a baby. If you get into a fight, God will help you win."

What do I tell you? You come to God and start practicing His Word, and all hell is going to break loose on you.

There's only one legal tender that will spend in eternity: Faith tried in the fire. How many times have you heard me say if you want a simple definition of Christianity, ask yourself.... (Don't listen to these people that tell you God is a resident policeman trying to find you having a good time so He can stop it.) ... Ask yourself what do you want from your kids? Trust, or perfection. What do you want from your loved one, your wife or your husband, your girlfriend, your guy? Trust, or perfection.

Well, you've just given the best definition of what God has been trying to get from day one from His people. And the root activity of Christianity, once you cross those threshold points that we have been covering the last two weeks as the basis of faith: God is looking for *faith-ers*.

I'm sorry, He's got a host of them He made—angels that never miss a beat. They are perfect enough Jimmy Swaggart couldn't make one even close. God can provide most of the things that the church is trying to do, so they can say, "Here God, look what we did for you." The one thing God can't make... which is the derivative of that freedom that He gave that unloosed or unleashed sin (the root of which is "misuse of freedom") ... is freely given trust and devotion. And the whole searching look of God through history has been to find that man or woman that will trust Him.

All you got to do is go back to the Garden. I don't care whether you believe it is a myth encompassing deeper truths or whether it is genuine fact of history. The fundamental problem was God spoke of life and warned of death. Lucifer, whatever he may be, came and said, "He doesn't mean it; God won't do it." And they believed the "father of lies" and doubted God. And from that day until now, God has been looking for children that will trust Him, who when they find His Word won't just crank it up here in a databank, but will hang their body in action and belief sustained by confidence that He who spoke and nothing became everything... will back His Word.

That's why this church exists. I don't have any other purpose on these Sundays than try to inspire faith on the premise that: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"—like seed that is planted; and said Word demonstrates God's faithfulness to His Word and His ability to carry it out. God is looking for *faith-ers*—people who will trust Him. That doesn't mean you have to take the cookie cutter of some institutional church; and it doesn't mean you have to fit the image that Scott might project, but somewhere in your walk of faith you put on the glasses and decide to hang your body on something you can believe in.... God is looking for those gems that will trust Him and believe when He says something He'll do it.

Abram was His first developed product from the world gone awry after the flood, if you believe the Word. But his faith wasn't perfect at the outset; he only went part way. I want you to see that, so you don't get the idea until you are fully perfect, you are not even in the game. He was to trust God and forsake family and city. He only went halfway. It is said he halted at Haran. He still wouldn't separate from Lot. And then when he finally got to the place and God said, "This is the place," and when a little famine came, he totally lost his faith in that moment. A "little famine." "Well either God doesn't know what He's doing, or this is not the place..." and he went down to Egypt.

Then I want you see what a crafty son-of-a-gun he was. Abram, the hero... comes to mature faith and is tested to the maximum. But Abram was a scoundrel. The famine came and he said, "I don't care if God said it; it'll still be here when I get back. Famine is here; I'm leaving." Faith is tested. And this scoundrel said, "We're going down to Egypt." But he looked over his wife Sarai and he says to her, "Honey, you're so pretty. When we get down there with those guys and they lay eyes on you and they find out you're married to me, they're going to kill me—get me out of the way, so they can have you."

Now this is the “Father of faith,” man! You see if this guy can get on a fundamentalist church board! He says to Sarai, “Honey, whatever they do to you, you’ll survive and probably be just as pretty when they’re done; but if they find out I’m your husband.... Well, dead is dead. So I tell you what, if you see one of those guys eye-balling you, and they ask if you’re married to me you say, ‘Nope, nope. No, no...nope! That’s my brother.’ And I’ll say, ‘Take her—she’s my sister.’ I’ll be there to pick up the pieces when they’re done with you, honey; and if they kill me, who is going to rescue you when they’re done?” I can just hear the rationalization. This is the “Father of faith”.

This ain’t some accidental lie in the pressure of the moment. This is: premeditated, well-thought out, connived, devious, damnable lying behavior that turned the stomach of the heathen king when he ultimately found out about it.

They went down to Egypt and—you read the chapter about the one we’re focusing on. When I get there it says... they treated Abram real good because of his sister. Their eyes fell on Sarai, not yet named Sarah; and it was love at first sight. And a way to make sure that he had all the things going his way, he just heaped treasures on Abram. You give to God the right way like Abel did, and you get killed. You lie, and you get rich. At another sermon, I might take you with Habakkuk to the watchtower [in the Old Testament minor prophets where he puzzled over that problem]. But Abram got filthy rich for lying.

See, I’ve tried these many years to not peddle Christianity under false pretenses with a magazine that says if you serve God, then everything is right; but if you don’t get right, everything is going to go wrong. I’ve seen too many scoundrels getting good things done who pick 10 or 12 out of 400,000 that the caricatured formula works with, and feature them in their magazine.

This real world doesn’t always appreciate goodness. A clever liar with a pretty sister who is really his wife—who ain’t his sister, can go places in this world. But in this case, even the heathen had more character than Abram. He found out, and he said, “What would have happened if I had carried this courting all the way and married her and then found out she was your wife?” He kicked Abram out, but he left rich. Abram left rich—full of cattle and servants, gold and much goods.

And the Bible says—and we’re coming to my text... he came back to the place of the altar... (which quite simply means—a place where you die a little to yourself and offer more of yourself to God in recognizing His rights; and the place of the tent which characterized him as willing to hang his body and move wherever God led him to go.) And when he came back to that place, lo and behold the failure to go all the way with his commitment at the outset rose up to haunt him—which is a point I’m making redundantly today.

Lot, his nephew was still with him. And Lot’s herdsmen and Abram’s herdsmen got into a fight over their respective greedy claims in the limited sparse grass for their stock in that Bethel area. Abram showed some character; maybe he had learned something in Egypt that what he had done there didn’t work. But he says, “Let there be no strife between us; we be brethren”; and said, “Here Lot, the whole land is in front of us. You pick the place you want to go, and I’ll stay out of it.” Scripture says Lot looked and saw the well-watered plains of Jordan and the Jordan Rift flowing down to Sodom and Gomorrah, and he said, “I’ll take that.” It reminds me of the two brothers picking cats and one of them grabbed the choice Siamese cat, and the other alley cat was still sitting there, and he says, “Now you choose.” Lot took the best.

Now get the picture. They have returned from failure in Egypt. He now has lost the best part of this land to the greedy nephew he never should of brought with him when he left in the first place. And now

I'm sure, standing in that remorseful situation... (and I'm now to the point of this message where I hope it can come down where we live), he gets a chance to start over.

And in the 14th verse of this 13th chapter, God says, "And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, southward, eastward, westward: For all the land which thou seest...." He could look north clear up to the snowy mountains peaks of Mount Herman; west to the plains of Sharon along the Mediterranean coast from those highlands; south it would climb toward the uplands of Judea; east to the Jordan Rift and the watered plains that Lot had already chosen. "Look north, south, east, west: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." "Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee." Then Abram removed his tent and started walking.

Now what's this message got to say to us today? [Am I boring you?] That is all introduction. The message is very short.

We've had an interesting journey these 14 years. I told you the first Sunday I never really thought we would be—for simply taking a First Amendment stand—we would be yanked off of Channel 30. I remember the night. In fact, I think we made every news media in town as they wrote from the *Lawyers Weekly* to every other newspaper what they called: "The Last Hour on Channel 30."

And I remember as they pulled that plug.... All we had done was take a stand on the First Amendment, that has subsequently been vindicated over and over again. And that TV screen.... I was looking at the monitor as the plug was pulled, and it went black; and I said—because we were simulcast on radio at that time, so I was still talking on radio... and I said to many of you that were there the same message I'm saying today.

We don't have any choice but to move forward in faith in God's promises that "He'll build His church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"...and a host of other promises that we've selected from God's Book and claimed as ours on the authority of II Corinthians 1:20. And I asked you to declare your faith that night. How many were listening that are here? Over 10 million dollars was pledged, after we went black; but it was three years before we came back on. And to those that have collector's copies of "The Last Hour on 30", we are on channel 30 right now, and the last hour is a long way away—I can tell you that!

For three years—three hard years tested our faith! But the worst test was as I drove to our sanctuary in Glendale that next Sunday—because in spite of what I've learned from these Bible characters..., that it's not an easy road to have faith in God's promises and seize them and reach up through the midst of time and grab hold of something that you know God has said that can apply to you in your situation; and hang onto it like a rocket shaking loose from gravity—but in the reverse sense you are pulling down that promise of eternity until it effects time.

As I drove to Glendale, I wondered as I drove how I'm going to stand in front of this congregation that I've been saying, "You trust in God, and He'll see you through"—what am I going to preach now that they pulled that plug because I never really thought it would happen? I really didn't. Well, you that were there know what I preached—the same thing I'm preaching today.

I had the same feeling when we accepted the challenge to move downtown. You know how many epitaphs have been written over us? You that are here from San Francisco... San Francisco, before the ink dried on the epitaphs there, they pulled the plug on Sunday night for the same reason. We were back on Monday night. And in between all the newspapers wrote our obituary, so God acted faster that time.

The point for this message is: It's par for the course. If you are going to reach into God's Book... (not everything that happens in the Bible is for our example), but if you're going to reach into this Book for the promises that are given, and I could name a lot of them: "The Lord will provide"... God never promised everybody would be rich, but He says, "He's never seen His seed begging bread". I tell my congregation there is nobody in Christ's camp that is poor. You may be broke on occasions, but you are not poor if you have faith in God. "Broke" is a condition of fact; "poor" is a state of mind. And God has said, He will provide.

The promises... (I could catalog them; I preach them every Sunday), "As thy day, so shall thy strength be"; don't ever quit at the end of the day; God measures strength out individually. Now how many of you have had an occasion in your life to think you wouldn't make it through a day? Anybody? You are here aren't you? Don't ever quit at the end of the day. God's promise, practical and real in God's Book are outlined again and again. Don't let go of your faith! Moaning, groaning Christians have never broken through to what God is looking for: trust. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." Elijah never got a barrel of oil; he just had enough to keep him day after day.

I could go on ten hours with promises. That's not the issue today—you know the promises. The message today is in "pursuing" those promises. You don't have to be perfect because Abram sure wasn't, and you are going to have setbacks and the wrong reactions. And wherever you may be today and whatever your situation... (and this church which is back downtown again because of the premise I'm teaching today), you got the option and the opportunity whatever your condition; whatever might be breaking you; whatever mistakes that you and God know you have made—and I'm not needing to know, you are no worse than Abraham.

And II Corinthians 1:20 says "All the promises of God in him are yea"—that's "yes" to you—"and amen"—or "so be it unto you". And by faith you can mentally reach out and grab this promise given to Abram and make it yours.

And what is the promise? "Lift up now thine eyes." The presupposition is a circumstance has got you downcast.

Whatever your circumstance that is beating you down.... Every circumstance that this church has faced could have crushed us, and we could have dug a pit and a grave and laid down in it and prayed for God to come because we can't go any further forward. Yes, you can! Wherever you are today, whatever you're doing... that which we are doing by coming down here, we're "lifting up now our eyes from the place that we are." "Well if God would change my circumstance, get me out of this spot I'm in, I could do that; I could hang my body in that action, believe God would help me, and have the confidence to lift mine eyes up."

"Lift up now thine eyes from the place that thou art." I don't peddle mysticism. I've said it already, obliquely. Faith is 90% courage—guts; 9% tenacity; 1% all that other stuff. I'm hoping to bring down to this city people that will not be cowed by any circumstance. Whatever your problem today, God gives you the simple opportunity to grab hold of your guts, and "lift up now thine eyes from the place that thou art." If you wait for your circumstance to change to start practicing faith, you are never going to get out of your mess. As Gideon wasn't out of his vineyard when he made his peace with God; Abram, from the place that he was, shall lift up his eyes.

"Well, I'm going to think about that—maybe, maybe that's what I need to do. Whatever circumstance I'm in that is about to crush me—and in fact, I got so many problems I wish you would shut up, so I

could go solve them. I'm going to think about this a while now, and maybe if I can get it in my head. Then, I will lift my head and try this faith business." Nuh-ah! "Lift up now thine eyes."

I never make altar calls. I believe that truth is like turning on a light in a darkened room and you see. If there is any kind of reaction to what I'm communicating, it is going to happen right here and now where you sit.

I don't know your problems. I know I have my own personal problems, and I also have the responsibility to keep the eyes of this church looking up; and I said we came downtown to keep the upward look down here. Whatever your circumstance, this promise is yours to claim: "Lift up now"—right inside you is where it starts, the level of confidence and belief. "Is it possible that God might really respond to me as an individual doing this?"

How many of you know the New Testament passage God promises: "He will never tempt you beyond what you are able"? How many know that? In the next phrase, the Greek says, "but with the temptation provideth a way of escape". Remember that? The Greek has it that as particular and as individualistic as the temptation, God's promise has already worked out the escape route particularized to each and every temptation. That means even if you are in a mess, and you can't get your eyes up, the escape route has already been worked out.

You ain't giving God any option—if you don't take the way of escape, it stands wanting. But Jesus says the God that "numbers the hairs of your head", so particularizes His "play on the keyboard of humanity" that every problem you are facing today (that would take you a week to tell me), He has already got the escape route worked out.

All you got to do is, "Lift up now thine eyes from the place that thou art." It starts with that attitude. Quit whining, quit saying, "I'll serve God if He changes my circumstance and when I'm out of this or that problem, I'll think about it." "Now from the place that thou art"—that's the promise. And look..., in his case it gets very particularized. God hasn't said to me that I can walk and wherever I walk the territory is mine—at least my belief level hasn't reached that yet, or I would be walking up and down Broadway and have you guys with a map going various directions. That promise was particularized to Abram, but God made him seize it.

He said, "Look north, south, east, west: as far as you look I'm going to give it to you." Then comes the "action-part" that hangs the body a little beyond looking. He says, "Arise, right now, and start walking, and everywhere the sole of your feet touch is going to be yours. You just keep walking. If you want your descendants to have a lot of land, take big steps and keep going. If you want a little bit... if you want a little ol' potato patch for what I've already promised you, for your seed or descendants that you can count like the stars—then, go in circles."

Now I don't take sides in the political arena. When I get to heaven the first thing I'm going to do is punch Adam out, if he's there—and I think I'm going to the right place because God is going to give it to *faith-ers*. And you know Jimmy is going to go up there and say to Him, "When you consider all else that I've done, what is this little motel-thing got to do with where I get in this place?" That's all based on performance. I've said for years the only thing Jimmy revealed at his motel was bad taste. What I still haven't heard him apologize for is that impossible perfectionist, hypocritical doctrine he preached that he himself couldn't live as he beat everybody else on the head with it. God is not after that kind of perfection.

Christ died for our imperfection. He broke the barrier that our sin created and covered it all that He might freely give us all His promised riches of His life because we trust Him, for faith.

Now Abram's command was to walk. I don't take sides. I said I'd punch Adam out because he listened to his silly wife. I mean, I know women are superior. I don't listen to them. Women... women prove their superiority to me by sending their messages through a man because they know that is the only way I'm going to take it—because I'm a chauvinist. You can invent the word with me, but I know they are superior. I'm just not going to give an inch. And you know I tell you that every time, and you can figure out if I'm telling you truth or not. I'm telling you the truth—women are superior! And you stupid men that are on this feminist kick and want to give it all away. Don't come crying to me when you are changing the diapers and tending the kitchen and listening to all this "fairness" crap. Nothing is fair in this world and the right place for a woman is under a man.

Now, now that I woke you up with that oft-confessed prejudice, "I'm going to smack Adam," I think a lot of people that have been laboring in slavery ought to beat the tar out of Ham for what he did right after the Flood.

Facts are facts. All I know is everywhere Abram walked, down through the centuries they have been getting it back; and that's the record of God's Book. If he had not gotten up and walked, I'm not sure at all that David's kingdom would have stretched in the territories that it stretched to.

Now what about us? We don't have the promise—at least I don't; I have too much Cherokee Indian in me to claim Abram's descendancy. I don't claim that promise, but I named a couple and I could name hours full of promises; and I'm not here today to tell you the promises. I've been doing that for 14 years. I am here today to say what is norm for the faith walk is: every time you think you have made it and you sit down to take it easy, God is going to make sure a test comes along—because Hebrews 12 says, "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth"—the *King James* says. *Paideia* is the word in the Greek; it means "to child train" or "to coach train".

We know that with horses, you make them run around a track once, before you make them go five times. We don't bring a horse out of the stall that has been with a lame leg for six months and only been hand-walked, and suddenly decide to go five gaits, seven directions. You train them if you care for them, and you get them ready through applied endurance tests to pass the test. My Bible says that you are proven not an illegitimate child of God if He treats you this way, as He trains you to trust Him...as He leads you on the path to eternity.

And my message today is that this church... and I've been telling you since we moved in this building even if we don't accept it, that the test comes right after the victory. We are not going to pass right on through this test. I've been telling my congregation I would be a lot more happy with you if you were packing out this place today the way you did the first day. On special days, I ought to have to issue passes. We have not won this war of bringing the upward look to the downtown. We have just declared the war, and everything that you probably think are events of chance that are happening to you, and those that are watching on television, have nothing to do with chance as we have seen God retrace the steps—and I've embarrassedly confessed that God's choice is so much better than the one that I made four years ago.

If I could, I would expunge the historic record that indicates we ever went to Hope Street, but on the other hand it becomes a proof of what I'm saying to you today. All we knew, as faint as the call of Abram, is that if no one else would tackle this city, the upward look of faith had to be brought to the heart of this city.



As Tom Bradley said three weeks ago, we tried it one place and didn't make it; but we didn't give up and it got awful tough. We are now downtown again. What is true of this church is true of your personal life and your personal ambitions, and God's calling on your life individually. Don't expect it to be a bed of roses.

But today, whatever your circumstance, you can take any one of the promises that you have claimed these last several years: "provision"; "I'm the Lord that healeth thee"; if you are confused about your walk or what you are doing—"The Lord is my shepherd; he leadeth me."

Our problem is that when we commit our way to God, if He doesn't follow the path that we determine, we think He is not leading. This faith business; trust God that when you claim one of those promises, be it: "The Lord is my shepherd" or "God is my peace" at a time of anxiety..., you hang onto it; and you lift up your eyes today from the circumstances that have beaten you down. "Lift them up now in the place that thou art."

And the passage: "Arise and walk" means "get your body moving". Quit thinking about it and start hanging your body in action that believes that God will do what He said, instead of beating yourself down with doubt and waiting for God to once again prove He will do what He said—when His Book from cover to cover is that demonstration. And that's enough!

My message is: Quit moaning around... quit coasting... quit acting like somebody has offered this faith walk as something easy. We didn't produce a championship horse team by going up and praying over the horses. Too many Christians are worthless praying mantises. The Word says, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave in the sea driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything from God." Well, faith has just been defined, and is defined that way through all of God's Book as more than belief. It is action! I'm tired of people that pray and wait for God to reveal Himself and then they act. Pray and then start acting—and let God catch you on a dead run and correct you like a missile that has gotten off the target. But hang your body on this testimony!

To those that are out there that have been applauding... I get this message on the TV all week long: "Oh how wonderful we're downtown! I'm coming down there one of these days"... get your asteroid down here!

Now, now... my 45 minutes is gone and I don't preach these messages to entertain. There are people sitting here that have taken steps of faith, that have listened to a promise from God, and all of you have read the Scripture at times and something leaps out—as Karl Barth said he was reading a passage and it leaped out at him like a live animal and grabbed him; and he knew that that promise in a moment of truth was a Word from God to him. When you are sure of that, when you've claimed the promise and you've started acting, and you've stumbled around—and plenty of you have lost faith....

I have people that claim the promise of tithing; they started tithing and then they quit for about eight months. Then they call up and say, "I'm going to pay all my back tithes." If I had Sarge's pistol, I'd dent my TV! I mean, you couldn't do it a piece at a time, and now you going to pay it all back? Be sure and lay a burden on yourself so heavy that.... God will understand why you can't do it. Wherever you are in your faith journey today, if you've messed up, you are in pretty good company—like Abram. If you're downcast and you've just lost the best part of what you thought you should be able to retain, quit moaning. This is a church full of *faith-ers*.

“Lift up now thine eyes from the place that thou art and arise”—and grab hold of that promise and start walking in it; and start acting like you believe God’s Word is going to be more true than anything in your circumstance. And if you have to die hanging onto that promise, you ain’t backing up! Quit defensive posturing in the things of God. George Patton is my kind of Christian; he said, “Retreat? Retreat, hell! We’re advancing to the rear.”

That is what FAITH is. It is not some mystical “Woo-woo-woo”. It is grabbing a promise of God and saying, “I’ll see You in heaven with it still in my hand asking ‘why didn’t You do it?’” Or, it will happen right here.

That’s what FAITH is; and I’d like to see you do it.

Come on and sing it. And I’m going to take the second offering lest you “boo” me. See you next Sunday. Enjoy your building!

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