

Dear guests, do not judge us by tonight's meeting. Do not say you ever visited the church in Isla Vista. You can't say that until you've been here for about six months. Because we're always different. Don't judge us by tonight. I do believe you can get something of our heart from what will be said this evening. Please turn with me to Ephesians 6.

I will begin by saying that I believe there is something basically innately wrong with Christianity. I believe that there is something basically innately wrong with just about everything that everybody has ever tried to do as Christians in the name of Jesus Christ. I would also add that this is enough to make the Lord angry: there is basically something missing, something wrong, something amiss, anywhere and everywhere. It's at this point I would like very much to get off the subject, and I'm biting my tongue...to keep from getting off the subject. So, I'm going to get off of it just a little bit.

Brothers and sisters, I challenge the whole concept of the Christian expression. I really do. I challenge everything that everybody's done. And everything that's being done. You'll have to excuse me, visitors. We usually give visitors a hard time. And most visitors never come back (laughter). I say this to all of you. I challenge what you grew up in. I don't care where you were born or where you were re-born. There were certain things you came into, and you never questioned. There are certain things people say that go without challenge. There are ways that we do things today that we assume and accept are correct. We do it because it's been done, and we assume somebody checked it out.

One real thought comes to my mind. For instance, we believe that men ought to live by faith. There are no scriptural grounds for men living by faith. I'm not talking about living by faith in Christ. I'm talking about living by faith financially. There are absolutely no scriptural grounds for that. I find absolutely no scriptural grounds for what is called the Great Commission, which says, "Go ye therefore and all who will preach the gospel to every creature." No, that's not what it says. It says, "You will go, and you will preach the gospel, and you will baptize." There's something that those men had in them that was the compunction, and they did it. I find no justification for men being justified in going out to preach the gospel all over the earth when that's the only thing they've got to take.

For one, I don't think a man has the right to go out and preach the gospel until he can back it up with everything else in the word of God. And I mean everything. And deliver not only salvation but deliver everything else a newborn believer has the right and heritage to expect. I'm not saying that when you save a man, that every man ought to receive that because I'm aware the eunuch did not, but I want you to know that Philip was prepared to give him everything. Or he had, in his past experience, the totality of the Christian experience.

We are not in a day when things are proper. We are in a day when things are absolutely totally wrong. They're cockeyed, fouled up. I can find nothing to sanction. And that

includes the church in Isla Vista. And if it includes the church in Isla Vista, which is closest to my heart, where my prejudice ought to be, then you cannot accuse me of being a prejudiced man. Therefore, I will say this is true of the entire Christian family: we do not need to go out to preach the gospel, but we're in desperate need of reconsidering the whole Christian concept.

Now I'm not talking about doctrine. I'm not talking about Jesus Christ being the Son of God or the Son of Man. Now that's been settled for 2,000 years. I'm not talking about doctrines; I'm talking about practice and experience. I believe that most Christians, no matter who they are, don't know beans about Jesus Christ. And most of the Christian faith today is held together by vocabulary. Most of the Christian experience today is held together by tradition, vocabulary, and... It's corrupt from the top to the bottom, and things are done without question that are utterly, totally, absolutely, completely unjustifiable in the sight of God. Now, if you want to go around and do that, that's fine, but for me and my house, we count on the recovery of the experience of Jesus Christ...in totality.

It's going to be a long, bloody war. And it's not going to be easily won. It's going to be a long winter. It's going to be a long spring. It's going to be a long summer. It's going to be a long fall. And speaking of the fall, this time next year, there'll be those of you who meet with us who don't meet with us. We're going to weep when you go, and I'm sorry you're going to leave here. Some of you are going to make it, and you don't think you will. I believe I am clear on what it is that the Lord wants. I am also keenly aware that it's going to take an awful lot of sacrifice and time. I'm glad you're young.

Four years ago, God sent a revival in this country that has since been called "The Jesus movement," or "The Jesus People." Some of you are part of that. It has pretty well dissipated in the south; it's dissipating in the north. I am grateful you're young. I've heard many, many men talk about what God was going to do. And I watched a lot of young people with young hearts give their hearts totally to things, believing God was going to do it and God was great enough to do it and God was doing a new thing and God was doing a great thing, and many are getting saved and the Lord's on the move and the Lord's going to come back. And today, with few exceptions, there is wreckage and carnage in the Christian family everywhere, because there was not enough to go the limit.

I believe in the last 10 years, I have seen or known firsthand of at least 100 groups of people in towns who got together to be the church, saying, "God will raise up His church and His full expression, the expression of the body here. He'll take care of all the problems, and He'll get it done." Over and over and over and over and over, they have all fallen apart, because they were expecting and hoping and believing in a spontaneous expression of the body of Christ. There is no such thing. The Lord's order can't be broken. There are those who have survived. Most have survived because of the outward structure applied to them, or because man's headship steps in to take over. Many have been corrupted. Some are still

holding on. Brothers, none of us has gotten anywhere near the mark of the Lord. And that certainly includes the church in Isla Vista.

Even the scantiest reading of church history shows men who have gone deeper. Men who have gone further. And men who have gone higher. And men with greater power. And men who have done greater things, and, if you please, men who have understood more. The question has been asked of me many times about how long it would take for the Lord to raise up a proper expression and a total recovery of all that he wants. I've heard men say that it could be done overnight. I've heard men say four years. I would like to present the possibility that it may take *three generations*.

I do not know how long it will take for God to raise up a true and pure prophet. I do not know how long it will take to move from what is called today a present-day evangelist. How many generations, how much faithfulness, how much prayer, how much fasting, how many years of waiting, and how long it will take before God has a true evangelist? I do not know what an apostle is here, or how long it will take to have one. I sincerely doubt that on this whole earth, God has over one, two, or three on the whole planet.

We're in for a long haul. Is there any scriptural basis for that? There are several. One of them is that there was a restoration in the Old Testament. All that David and Solomon brought forth...Moses in the tabernacle and David and Solomon in the temple were completely lost during the Babylonian captivity. And it took three generations for a complete recovery, a complete restoration of the temple, the grounds, the city, the nation, and the king. Praise the Lord.

So you got your work cut out for you, young brothers. I am not telling you it's going to take three generations. Don't you quote me as having said that; I'm just saying there's a possibility. Now I am telling you that we had better play like that; it may take a year, five years, or ten years at the most. And that's about all that the Lord is going to give you. No more. Don't plan on any more than your lifetime, would you? Would you throw the throning all the way to the fall forward and plan on no more than your lifetime? I want you all to know, I am planning on no more than my lifetime. I am assuming that that leaves me 29 years to live. I am walking in that. And that means that there must be an utter giving of your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. I think you're beginning to understand what that means in a small way. Praise His name.

I'd like to tell you what I believe the Lord wants. I believe the Lord wants something that does not exist on this earth. It doesn't exist in Isla Vista. It sure doesn't exist at the Lighthouse Ranch. Yet it can exist. Should exist. Has every right to exist. And I believe, quite frankly, that the Lord's more interested in that than He is in anything you and I are doing. I marvel at the capacity of the Christian family to get a Stradivarius violin, put one string on it, and play it for a hundred years. I marvel at the Christian family's ability to get

one truth, two truths, three practices, build a fence around it, and say it's the kingdom of God. I marvel at our ability to be born, raised, and become Christians and not question all that's around us. I want you to know I don't trust Christians. I will tell you what I said to you once before. Someone said, "Don't trust anybody over 30." Brothers, don't trust anybody over 20.

Well, I have learned how to do it the wrong way. And I know how to build empires and kingdoms. I know how to use the terminology, and I know how to use it on young people who don't know any better. And to put the veil over their eyes that they too might be blind. By the way, this introduction is for the brothers from Lighthouse Ranch. I know that the heart of God sometimes bleeds for what is to end, that he might have what ought to be.

Paul wrote an incredible book, possibly the highest point he ever reached in ministry to the churches, when he wrote the book of Ephesians. And then he finally came to "Finally. And he summed up the Himalayas, the Alps, and the Rockies. He started with verse 10 and said, "Finally." And it sounds...there are things in it that sound. Be strong. Put on the full armor of God. The full armor of God. Stand firm. Stand firm. Take the whole armor of God. Twice. All prayer, all petition for all the saints in spirit. With all perseverance and petition for the saints, all the saints and the...*all, all, bold, bold, full, full, total, total, complete, complete.*

I'll continue my attack for a bit longer, then try to move to something positive. When we began here in Isla Vista, many people were attracted here. They liked the pizzazz, the power, the joy, and the incredible, awesome amount of shouting, glory, and light that existed here. And with this came all the old traditional concepts, dragging their pitiful way in here, demanding a place. I don't mean for this to sound today like it sounded then, because we opened the doors to everybody and everything and never uttered a word. But the old wine could not find a place in a new wineskin. And the new wineskin had a hard time with old wine. I'll give you some ideas of what that meant. You're going to misunderstand me if you're new around here, and you'll really misunderstand my spirit. But I think the brothers here who've been here for a while will understand, because it needs to be so clear this evening.

Anytime a group of Christians meets together on this earth today, there are those from the old school of about 20 years ago, 30 years ago, and 40 years ago who will come and introduce the baptism of the Holy Ghost. They will feel that if they can give that to you, then you'll have it all, and away you go. And maybe they'll even come here and try to give that to you. We did not ever at any time do anything except to accept that. And we did accept it. But at that time, I said, and I will say again, that to speak in tongues does not bring you to full growth in Christ and totally equip you with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not the final end of all things.

I'm going to ask something I've never asked before in my life. How many people in this room speak in tongues? Will you raise your hand...or have spoken in tongues? I want you to hold them out and look around at that for a moment, would you? Okay, put them down for a moment. People started looking. You brothers ought not to lay down that gift. Where are you, Hagar? Hagar, I want to give you a charge. Stand up. On the night you arrived, you stood right beside me and spoke in tongues. Now, Hagar, I don't know what you've thought of us since then, but maybe you've been embarrassed, and you found out we weren't Pentecostals, and you quit speaking in tongues. You can't do that, sister. And I intend to stand by you again, and I intend to hear you speaking in tongues.

We did not give in to the centrality of tongues in our experience here...and it took a back seat. A very back seat. Now I would like to tell you something. Ten years from now, when everything else is in place, and I mean everything, I intend to deliver a sermon entitled, "How to speak in tongues." (laughter) We're going to lay hands on all the brothers and sisters in the church. Don't speak in tongues. We're going to find out whether they can speak in tongues. Is that fair? I trust it is fair.

It has been central. For almost 100 years, it has been given its day, its place, it has been judged and found wanting, and cannot live up to its billing. It has a small place in the beautiful and glorious Christian family, but it is not going to turn the world upside down or right side up. There was an incredible, enormous amount of pressure brought upon us to introduce healing into the meeting. And we didn't introduce healing as a central thing in the church. A brother said, "I have never been in a place in my life where there are so many sick people."

The sick, the blind, the weak, the infirm, the halt, and the lame. Everybody was down in bed all the time with colds, croup, or something. I stand here to tell you that four years ago when I walked into Isla Vista, I don't think there's a half a dozen things I know today that I did not know at that time about divine healing and about health. But we have not made healing central here. And I'd like to go on record tonight as saying that, per capita, I don't know a healthier bunch of people on earth. Now, what do you want? Do you want good health, or do you want divine healing? Now I don't mean that we're all well. There's been an incredible amount of pressure put upon us at different times to teach the Bible. Hang teaching the Bible. Now on this one I'll be flat-footed. Hang teaching the Bible.

I will stand with Paul and Simon Peter, who could not read nor write, and John and Andrew and Philip and Nathaniel and all the rest of them who did not teach the Bible. Now, if you believe they did, then you're going to have to imagine Paul of Tarsus walking into Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Rome, the city of Antioch, with one gigantic wheelbarrow. And when he got there with his one gigantic wheelbarrow, then the first thing you had to do was get everybody to go out and cut some papyrus and go into the

business of copying, and this would have taken several years. Then there would have been five or six more copies of the scriptures to pass around.

I am not coming out against the Bible, but I am telling you that the first-century Christians were a lively bunch of folks. And they did not have Scripture at hand. They had *the* Word of God. And teaching the Bible and knowing the Scripture isn't where it's at. And it has been at the center of the stage for 200 years, and it has been tried and found wanting. It has primarily caused nothing but pride, legalism, and ... Who is worthy to take the center of the stage, and that is Him. I know that many of you would say, well, sure, Gene, that's true. Jesus Christ...alone...is the center of this stage.

There was a time when I came to California. I still remember this, and it haunts me. I got in the car with a brother, who probably knew two ounces more about the scripture than I did, but he really pulled a fast one on me. I was sitting in the front seat, and he was sitting in the back seat, and he did have a little fellowship with the Lord. He said, "Gene, say something about Jesus Christ." Boy, there wasn't anything inside. I stuttered, I stammered, I crossed my eyes, I thought, and I mentally scratched my head, and I said, He's the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, the end, wonderful counselor. He said, Gene, "Tell me something about Jesus Christ." I said, "What in the world are you talking about?" I represented the Christian family that day. I could not have...I could not have conveyed Jesus Christ. I could have tied you up in knots with the Bible, but my Lord, my wonderful, loving, glorious, precious Lord, my incomparable, living, loving, passionate Lord...I hardly knew. And I was chasing all over the earth. To and fro...devouring...whatever came into my midst. I was preaching the Gospel everywhere.

Then, what, my brother, is important? Will you please tell me that? What is central? I cannot accept that answer tonight. I won't accept it because it's too easy. That's the right answer, but I won't accept it. Let's call it the total experience of Jesus Christ, and let's add one more. The total... Praise the Lord. That's really good, Jim. It's the total experience of Jesus Christ in the life of man...*fully expressed*. It is not just the experience, but also the full and total expression of that experience. There has to be an expression. That's not what Ephesians 6 is talking about. What Ephesians 6 is talking about is...the new man. And what is the new man? This...Finally, be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and put on the full armor of God...what is that? I, Gene Edwards, put on the full armor of God. Right? Absolutely not. That was not written to an individual. It is not applicable to an individual. It cannot be applied to or accepted by the individual. It was written to a church, and that church is the new man. And that church puts on the full armor of God.

He puts on the full armor of God. He stands firm. He has all prayer and all petition for all saints with all perseverance. He is the new man. What then is this talking about? This is talking about the alter ego of Jesus Christ. What is the alter ego of Jesus Christ? The church of Jesus Christ is His counterpart. He's the cookie-cutter, and she's the cookie. She's the

counterpart. The church of Jesus Christ is the new man. All that is said is said for her to fully experience. I am entitled to nothing outside the body of Christ. Nothing is given to me as an individual...or very little is beyond salvation. In its totality, nothing is given to me. I find the fullness of all things *in the body*. Now we are met with a paradox wrapped up in an enigma, but nonetheless, the bloodcurdling fact.

We don't have in the 20th century the practical expression, nor, surely we do not have, the total experience of Jesus Christ and His body. She ought to have it all. She ought to take that cup and drink from it fully. Say amen. We don't even know. It's a rich cup. Here stands a new man. He is a new species. He is not a dog. He is not a cat. He is not a pig. He is not a porpoise. Neither is he a man. He is a *new* man, and he does not have the parts that the man has. He is something totally new. If you please...God has introduced into the universe a new species, a different life form. And that species stands there...a new kind of creature. And around him lies armor, armor, armor, shoes, sword. What is the church of Jesus Christ? It's a corporate body of people in union with Jesus Christ. That's a new creature. There's a new species that is not a man, and that species is exhorted to put on the full armor of God, which is the first step. And then comes the all, the all, the all, the all.

Now, Father, I ask You, in the name of Jesus Christ, to release it. What is the Lord after? It is not so easy to explain. And yet you have heard it stand around here, but if God's spirit will allow it tonight, that you might have a deeper impression. That Jesus Christ is after a man for all seasons. One man for all seasons and in all seasons. I believe it is translated here at all times. In the Greek it is "in all seasons." Forgive me for referring to the Greek. In all seasons at all times. With all prayer, and all perseverance, for all the saints. Take up the full armor of God, in all seasons.

Name the seasons, would you? The season of joy. Give me another one. Sorrow. Travail. Prayer. No. Too much. Dryness. Persecution. Victory. Neutral. Suffering. Infirmity. Revival. Resurrection. Waiting. Death. Salvation. Confusion. Consecration. Healing. Abandonment. Teaching. Revelation. Signs and wonders. Service. Prophecy. Humility. Hospitality. Humility. Annihilation. Brother, prayer. Come back to prayer. Petition, supplication, intercession, declaration, travail, repentance, thanksgiving, surrender, and there is another, a big one, that you have left out. A man for all seasons...the hardest of all.

Fasting. Faith. Leaving all things. Crucifixion. The cross. I didn't think you were so impressed with this. I never heard any reference to it except a note I got from a dear sister who said, "Gene, it happened to me, and I never knew what it was till you spoke on." Then she said, "Do me a favor, please." And that's what her note was about. She said, "Gene, I beg you. Please tell the brothers to never ask for this and never seek it." It was an implore. Season of being forsaken. Are you a man for such a season? Are you a man for such a season? I'm not talking about that season; I mean, are you a man for all those seasons? Tell me, are you? And what season, what season can you make?

What I am saying to you tonight could have been delivered ten, eleven months ago; as far as that goes, I considered delivering this message as the next message after that message was delivered. And I waited this long to deliver it. There is the total spectrum of the experience of Jesus Christ. There is the total personality of your Lord. There is the total experience and the total expression of Jesus Christ. And what does Jesus Christ want? Say it.

Oh, yes. Everything. What does He want? He wants...a woman. It's nothing but a love story. An all-out passionate love story. He's waiting to walk out in the midst of a myriad of angels and step out...with His bride...who is His counterpart—a woman who can look Him straight in the face.

Now, the only thing she does not do. She will not know what it was like to die from sin. That is His, and He carries the scar to prove it. He will walk out and say to her, "Come here", and she will know. Now what will she know? She will know the experience of Jesus Christ, but what else will she know? She will know the expression. She will know the expression of the experience. Now, where do I get the expression of the experience? The Lord Jesus is the myriad, unlimited expression. When you see her, what will you see? You will see the image of her Lord...just as you see the Father. Just as you see...when you look at Him, you see the Father. When you look at her, you will see His image stamped so deeply.

For Jesus had created man, corporate man, to be what? The image of God. And how will man on the earth see the image of God? Through the church expressing Him. How? By mercy. By experiencing Him and expressing the experience. Have we got a long way to go. But there's not only a man for any season. I mean, a man when Jesus Christ throws a season at him. He doesn't flinch or cry out. He can go through that season. And when that season is over, He's got the good sense to know, and that's even harder. To know when a season is ending. I have never been present when I have seen a corporate group realize a season is over. I have watched seasons end, and I have never had the nerve to say that season is over; let's go on.

And there are Christians in the Lord's family who are still trying to keep a season going that ended 75 years ago. Have you ever tried to pump up a tire with a tube and a hose? Have you ever? You haven't? I have. It's hard work, brother. Brother, sister, if you could understand this about Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is not a season, and you cannot enthrone a season and worship it. Oh, you can...and I guess most of us do. But Jesus Christ is not any one thing. He is like a butterfly that cannot be caught. When you think you have Him, he has flown away. He will not lend Himself very long to one aspect of Himself. He will move on. You'll twist, and you'll drain, and you'll strain, and you'll ring...and He is gone. For you have enthroned an aspect, and not His totality. And if this is the full stature of Jesus Christ, most of us have only heard of this much of Him, and those on the inside

track, in the know, who really have it plastered down, know this much of Him. Only Christ knows the wealth of the length, the height, the depth, and the breadth of the knowledge of the experience of God in Christ.