

We stayed up all night talking and had breakfast. I could tell those men did not want me in that meeting, and I was perfectly willing not to go. I had nothing there. They didn't owe me anything, and I didn't owe them anything. And one of them very foolishly said, "Gene, why don't you go to the meeting?" I said, "No, I think not. I appreciate it, brothers, but I think I'd better go on. I'm not sure that I belong here." And boy, you know, they all perked up...So, I was going to a meeting of the honchos who had left Campus Crusade and were leading God's people back to something called "body life" because they had read a book about it. So, I was sitting there, and if you want to talk about changing the course of history, it was a course of history for all of us. I was sitting next to Ray, and I don't know who was supposed to speak, but they had made the mistake of turning the program over to some college student named Clayton, I guess. So, this young man came out, and he said, "Well, this morning we've got so and so speaker, and this afternoon we're going to have so and so speaker."

I remember that this young man was telling me about a book he had just written. He wasn't really sure of the title, but he thought he'd name it *The Late Great Planet Earth*, and he spoke that afternoon. I remember Walker, whose name I forgot, spoke that afternoon, too. But anyway, I'm sitting there just as cool as a cucumber, and Clyde said, "And now Gene Edward is going to speak." I didn't even know that guy knew my name. So I turned to Ray and said, "Ray, I can't do this." And he said, "Gene, go do it." I looked at him again, and I stood out in the hall, out in the aisle, and I had three thoughts that came to me, and I said to myself, there's no way in this world I can put all those three thoughts together and make one message out of it. It can't be done. I don't remember anything that happened after that. I really don't. I remember bringing a message, but I will tell you what happened when I got through. Neither you nor I nor anybody else in this world has ever seen that.

When I finished, the entire audience got up, except for about three people. Guess which ones. The entire audience moved over. I came off the platform and downstairs that way, and when I got to the bottom of that staircase, every person in that room was at that staircase, and they were reaching out, touching me like that. It was crazy. It was awful. Let me use that word again. It was awful. It was a stunner of stunners, and I could see Ray pushing his way through that crowd of kids, because that was their kids, and those young college students trying to get through, and he finally got a hold of my arm, and he just started pulling me out of there. I went home and forgot all about it, but y'all didn't.

And it became, I suppose, the most listened-to Christian tape over the next 10 years. It got duplicated worldwide. One brother, whose name is on the edge of my tongue, is still single. He's over 60 years old. He's tall, and he's redheaded. He memorized the entire message. Who? Judd. I understand he did better than I did. He'd go around and preach that word for word. And the story goes that Bob Emory and Lance Thollander were on the verge of shutting the place down, and they were somewhere, I believe, in San Diego, and they said to Ray, "We're tired of listening to you guys, and we don't know what to do." And Ray said, "Well, why don't you try Gene?" You know how I feel about that? That's exactly how I feel about it. God couldn't find anybody else on this

earth. He went to his index, and there were no names left. There's a little note on the back of the box that says, "If all else fails, try Gene." So, I got a letter from them.

I think I was 36 then. 35 or 36, and I got that letter. When Petri called me, I hung up the phone. Now, I turned around and sat down, and I said to my wife, "Sweetheart, it started. Nothing's going to stop it." And it didn't have anything to do with Petri or those men; it was just that we were in the 60s now, and everything was ripping and tearing apart. I picked up the phone and called Witness Lee. I said, "I've been invited to Goleta, California, to speak to a group of college students. Would it be all right with you if I went?" It doesn't mean anything. I said, "Brother Lee, I want to ask you to go with me. You have no idea what I had passed through, and what had happened to me, but I still understood authority, even if it's Saul's.

Please listen to me, all of you, and anyone who will ever hear this again as long as you live. Please keep in mind that I am the person who called this conference and asked you to make a decision for the rest of your life. I've got about 35 years behind this. I went down Stark Road, scared as a kid could be. But you know something? The kid was also Gene Edwards at the same moment. Now, that may not be possible for you to understand that that kid was also Gene Edwards. I pulled out onto the vacant lot off Stark Road, probably 30, 40, 50 feet off the road, and I opened the door, and I got on my knees, and this is what I said to the Lord. "Lord, this is not my work. I never met you. This is not anything of mine. Please come and get it if it's not your will. Whatever happens here, it goes to the cross, here tonight, and it stays there, forever."

You didn't stand a prayer in hell of existing, and you don't know that. Well, you do now. I got up, brushed the dirt off my legs and feet, and found my way over to that building. Does either of you have any idea what the name of that apartment building is? It was purple or blue. I know that, as you walk into the courtyard, it is upstairs and in the corner building. Bob and Lance lived there. Well, we're going to go there someday. We're going to put a plaque there. In fact, I think I'll just let you figure out how to do that. I don't know how we do it. I have to get permission, but we're going to put a plaque there.

I walked in and met Bob and Lance, and Lance cooked a chicken dinner. The meeting was supposed to start at 7. Somebody showed up at 9:00. I think we started about 9:30 or 10. I started that day knowing that I would not be with you very long, that this work was on the cross, and I wasn't going to survive it. I had already taken it to the cross when I picked up that phone, and I threw the dice and gambled. I expected him to say something other than what he did. He had no idea what he was doing that day, but he made a tremendous mistake. I was just waiting for the local church, those people, to come get you, and I wasn't going to fight. I would not, did not, and never have, and never will. If God will extend grace, I have never protected anything I've ever done. Not for a minute.

My heart was full. The vision was clear. I was clearer than Watchman Nee and the other fellow put together as to what we needed and what had to be. I also knew that I would never do what those men did. I would not fight to keep what I had begun, ever. On the other hand, I was not a

coward. God sovereignly brings you into my life and me into yours. You were crazy. You were known as a group of Christian hippies. You were not, but you sure looked like them. I came back. By the way, there's one thing I did do. I invited myself back. I'm going to tell you, brothers, that you should never try to get a job or a group of people to make a decision. I don't care if they're all for it. They'll talk about it, and they'll never do it. Tell them what to do, and they'll thank you forever. I said, "I'll be back." And I came back. I came back, and then I came back, and then came July 4th. I'll quit with this story, although we are not finished by any means.

Bob could be so wonderful and so dumb. He discovered the local church and told all of us we were going to get in the car and visit it for a weekend. Boy, were you waiting for me. I gave you up to God, and I cried and cried and cried and cried. I didn't sleep because I was having my guts pulled out of me. I loved you folks, and you loved me. I fell asleep on the sofa, and it was a deep, deep, deep, deep sleep. This is the kind you rarely ever have, but I was so exhausted. And even in that deep sleep, I heard someone crying, calling out, and crying and crying. I had no idea who it was because I was too deep asleep to know. I forced myself to awake and remembered who was crying. It was me.

I went to Bob and Sandy's wedding on the third, I believe. I went there to say goodbye, and Bob walked up to me and said, "You know, Gene, we changed our minds about going to LA to be with those people. We want to see what God can do with us." And it's what I answered that will stand forever, "Bob, that's the greatest news I ever heard in my life." They had a running bet on when you didn't show up. I'm going to give you an illustration. The present state of the Lord's witness.

Mike, you know how upset they could get over absolutely nothing? They became outraged because they had rented 30 chairs and nobody showed up. They raged, had fits, and threw fits for days, weeks, and months. We rented 30 chairs, and they didn't show up. Now, the point is, and you'll have to hear the rest of the story to understand. Mike, that was their way. They could get so outraged over absolutely nothing; tear their clothes and throw dirt in the air because of something that just was, to ordinary human beings, would not mean anything. This is not a pretty story, is it? Well, it's the present state of work of God.

I'm going to pose this as a question. Can anybody remember the last sentence I spoke at UCLA? You listen to me because this was embedded in my soul as strongly in that moment as it is today. In light of all the garbage I had seen, I was about to say, "And it starts here now, today, and we will never divide." Isn't it wonderful? And we have never broken that ever. We have never been engaged in defending our work or standing against opposition. Now, many years later, we have sought to build a foundation every day of our lives on Christ alone, knowing Him and never picking up any weapon to use against the enemy. It was that early, brothers, and man, did you get tested. Boy, did you ever get tested. It got really bad. You were there, Jay, and you came out of fire sparkling like diamonds, and that's the story you tell. But I'm not through talking to you about the present work of God on the earth. We are here for such a time as this; we're going back to the way

the Moravian has been, and we're going to do a hop, skip, and a jump over this parable, distorted tragedy story, and conduct.

I want to apologize once more, but if I don't tell this story, it'll never get told, and I think we are good. Now it's time for you to step up to the plate and build on this foundation, or we'll quit now, and I'm going to go home and write books.

Look, it's time for a question. Yes, brother.

Audience: What were the three thoughts you had in your mind before the UCLA message?

I thought that there's the line of the old man, there's the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have no idea what the third one was, but any one of them would have easily kept me busy for an hour and a half as an introduction. I got all that done in a little over an hour. Even to this day, someone can be listening to tapes and come up against the UCLA tape, and it just stops them cold. We have a beautiful history, saints. It's a beautiful thing, and we have been through that, and everything else, and I am going to tell you again: when I stepped into Isla Vista, I was clearer than anybody else on this earth. What the present testimony of God on this earth needed, still is, and will be till I die. If I were you, I would give some real serious thought to not going any further, because by the time you hear the rest of the story, you'll probably want to catch the next plane out.