

Put this together. I was once young, as difficult as that is to imagine. I was once very young and I was a dreamer, and I know what it's like to admire someone and look up to someone. And I definitely had a hero in my life, a Christian hero. And I know what it's like to feel that he's the most important person in the world, and that he knows more than anyone else knows and that he had something to say that few men have ever had to say, and that I ought to follow him. I've had that experience. I know that feeling and I can still feel it, and I know its strength, and I know what it does to you.

I've had lesser people in my life that I admired. I once attended a Bible class in Tyler, Texas under a lady whom I admired a great deal. I remember she came to our home one day. I was terribly embarrassed because I was cleaning my car and the front seat of the car was out in the front yard and I wondered how she thought about me. What she thought about me for my car seat out in the front yard. Well, that's kind of ridiculous, isn't it? But you understand, don't you? You identify. You really, and you're very sensitive. Oh boy. Uh, I have been there in spades.

I also know the feeling, uh, two feelings, unworthiness and insecurity. Unworthiness and insecurity. I felt that I was not fit or qualified to be caught up in this great drama. And I felt very insecure in being part of it and felt like for sure, I was going to flunk, and that the demands being made on me were greater than I could handle, and as much because I wanted to make it so bad that I wasn't going to make it. Anybody who would hope and dream of anything this much, you surely would never get it.

So, you got that stumbling feeling whenever you're around this person. You feel too sinful and too weak spiritually to be part of the crowd, and you're just sure you're going to fail. But tell me, you've never had any of those feelings, have you? Well, I've had those feelings, and I want you to know what I want you to try to do, but I doubt you can is to try to transfer that to the first century. And it's almost impossible to do because the men that we speak of are so legendary. But they didn't start out being legendary. They started out being ordinary people and they were insecure, and they were afraid, and they were all thumbs and they were falling all over themselves. And the more I look at their lives, the more I would say, "Well, you ought to, you dummy." Because the more I look at the men that the Lord Jesus Christ invited to be with Him, the more I'm impressed with two things. And that is they really were ordinary.

At best, they were ordinary. And the second one is that they were no more qualified than I am. And I can tell you I'm not very qualified. Of course, the third thing that impresses me is the genius of what the Lord did. The absolute and total genius of what He did. And it's a genius that is in desperate need of being reproduced. And I just want to talk to you a little bit about this. I'm afraid you're going to get weary. All of you, those of you out, y'all know, you're going to get weary of me repeating some of this, but I'm certain, I am certain you're not fully grasping everything I'm saying.

The Lord called some men to Him because He couldn't help it. The Lord called some men to Him because He couldn't help it. He had to. You know why He had to? Because He didn't know anything else. He absolutely was ignorant of any other possibility. He was only acting from the information and experience He had. And that's where we always act, from our information and our experience. And sometimes, we guess when we get out into the worlds

we don't know. But there was no such thing with Him. The only thing He could do was to do what had been done to Him. He couldn't do anything else.

And there comes what I consider to be one of the great leaps of divine and human and created and uncreated and visible and invisible history. The leap from God to fallen man, bringing fallen man into the realm of this previous fellowship that we've been talking about. Now, hear me. That was an honor. That was an honor. We look at this as being a time when it began. It's already ancient. As ancient as the ancient of days. It's been an exclusive thing, this fellowship of the Godhead, and it's wonderful. It has satisfied God. And now He's going to allow it to be enlarged. Not for a very long period of either. Just even if you count 2,000 years, not very long, a small little blurb, a little pin prick in the line of eternal history. He is going to enlarge the fellowship. Even if the fellowship is not enlarged, He's going to put it in a theater, let it be seen, beheld. He going to let somebody look at it and, and I'm awestruck frankly. I mean, I am amazed that He has done this.

Now I want you to know that if He did it, this raises the prospects for you. That raises the prospects for you. I want you to be encouraged with that. You can be even more encouraged when you see who He picked. But I will say it again and again and again. I am overwhelmed that He allowed this exclusive club to open its doors to all things fallen man, and fallen man is going to get a ringside seat at this glorious, indescribable, incomprehensible, inimitable, eternal. I wish I had words. This thing beyond all human glory, beyond all human experience and comprehension, God in eternal fellowship with God is about to have the doors open and let someone in. Can you be impressed? I want you to be impressed. Please be impressed. Try to be impressed and be encouraged.

Notice I haven't said very much about salvation in all these talks to you so far that I have hardly mentioned being saved. And I'm going to tell you why. This will probably get you hung, Gene. That's right. It will. This will get you burned at the stake, Gene. Don't say it, Gene. Just don't say it. I'm thinking it. I might as well say it. Because salvation's really not all that important. Well, sure it's important if you don't have it. But if you have it, surely it cost the death of my Lord and Savior. I am aware of the penalty He paid for my salvation. But He didn't do that just to get me saved from eternal damnation. He did it for something He was interested in.

He had a very personal uh stake in this matter. And don't get sidetracked on this everlasting obsession with getting people saved, and then getting people saved, and then and then getting some more people saved, and then after that getting some more people saved, and then save some more people. And that's all as far as you ever get. By the way, that's called a Baptist. That's what a Baptist is. That's all he knows and sees. And we always love when one of these, when a fellow Baptist, I'm one of them, says, "And why did God create the world? He created the world so He might come and save you from your sin." That's pretty good. That's quite a trick, because nobody had sinned when the world was created and no one had fallen. He has to have a reason beyond redeeming us. Redemption was to get us back to where He could go and do the things we're talking about. And I would, that you would consider this, the mind of God and His heartbeat and the thing that He wants and the fact that we fell was something He had to deal with to get us back to the point He could continue rushing after that which He wanted.

Okay. I'm touched with the fact that the Lord calls some men to live with Him, because I've been called. But I want you to look at two or three things you might overlook if you're not careful. How long had Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, pre-incarnated? How long had the Lord, our Savior, the Lord, been with the Father? Eternally. Would it be fair for me to say from the beginning? From the beginning. Now, you may say, "Well, that's terribly insignificant, Gene. Of course, He was there from the beginning." It's very important in the things of God to be there from the beginning. You got to be there at the beginning. One of the highest and greatest honors that life affords is to be there from the beginning.

And Joe, I'll pay any price, or almost any price for a good beginning. I don't want a lousy beginning. By the way, I like this. This would make a good beginning right here. This is not a bad beginning. A room full of single brothers, young and extremely dumb. This is a good beginning. This is a good place. This would be a good place to have a beginning. Say amen to that. This is a good, this is a good place for a beginning. I'll put all in order to have a beginning. I'll make some brothers sit until they think nothing's ever going to happen in order to be there from the beginning. It's important that you be there at the beginning. The Son was with the Father from the beginning.

Now, as far as the Christian life being introduced into this realm, Jesus Christ was there from the beginning. He was there at the birth in Bethlehem. The Lord Jesus was there from the beginning. Therefore, He knew, He knew all about it. And as far as the first total maturity of a Christian, and that's we'd call say is our Lord on the day He began His ministry, He's more or less a mature Christian. He had been there from the beginning and watched that. So He knows how a Christian grows up. That's an insignificant thing, but that's exciting, that your Lord knows what it like to grow up into maturity as a Christian. Say amen. That's exciting. That's exciting.

Don't think He's ignorant of that. It happened to Him. He started out as a little baby and grew up to be a mature Christian. He knows what a Christian has to go through because He is one. Isn't that wonderful that when you talk to your Lord and you fellowship with Him, He knows all about what you're going through, cuz He's once a human being and He had to grow up to be a Christian, too. I think that's very encouraging. It really is. All right. Now, we come to a beginning and there are those who are there from the beginning. In fact, how could you be ranked as one of the 12? If you will go to an obscure little verse in Acts, you will find that when they went to replace Judas, there was one condition to be numbered as one of the 12. Now, what was it? You don't know. You've never noticed.

You had to be there. You would have had to have been one of those who was there from the beginning. The only people from whom they selected out of a little group, well, they had about four or five men to choose from to take Judas's place. The only men who could get in that little group were men who had to be one of those early ones called. It's interesting that that there were more than 12 who were called to follow Him. Now He had a selectness in the fact that there were a few hundred and 70 and 20 and 12. But within that 20, you could hardly tell number 13 from number 12. They were people who had been with Him from the beginning.

Now this is not by their choice. This is by His choice. Now what's the advantage of having been there from the beginning? You didn't miss anything. That's right. Does that mean anything to you at all? Would you like to sit under someone who's been there from the

beginning? That way you know He went through everything there was to go through. Right. If you ever get a chance, you should be there from the beginning. Don't ever pass up an opportunity to be there from the very beginning. Be there at the beginning. Don't miss nothing. Even if even if you have to wait a year or two or three or four, be there at the beginning if you possibly can.

Then you get to see everything that happens. You get to know how it's done. Well, if you were to talk to one of the 12 and say to him, "Bro, what's the first thing you ever learned about Jesus Christ?" And he said, "Why?" The first thing, he'd say, "Why the first thing I ever learned about Jesus Christ was how to call a disciple, cuz that's the first thing that happened to me. I was sitting there minding my own business, paying attention to my own affairs, and walks up this man, and looks at me and says, "Put it down. Sell it. Get rid of it. Give it to your friends. Throw it away. Give it back to your daddy. Do something with it and come follow me. Praise the Lord. Has anyone ever done that to you?

I get, sometimes, I get, the overwhelming urge to do that. I really do because you are so stupid. Excuse me. You young brothers are so unutterably dumb. You will throw your life away on some of the most second grade stuff in the world. And I just want to walk by and say, "Forget the ethics of it, Gene. Forget that you don't do this. Forget the arrogance of it. Just do it. And I just sometimes want to say to a young brother, and I have this feeling lot, lots of brothers, but mostly to brothers who think they're going to grow up be a preacher or a Christian worker. I just want to look at him and say, "Leave the seminary, sell your car, and move here, and come follow me. I want to say it like that, and I don't and I should because those brothers make such unbelievable mistakes. Unbelievable mistakes.

Jimmy, are you back there? Jimmy, if I were to walk by you and say to you, Jimmy, sell it all. Come follow me. Come follow me. Don't give me an answer. Don't give me an answer. What would you do, Jimmy? Don't give me an answer now, just think about it. What would you do? I think Jimm would call a policeman. And yet, you know something, there was a time in my life when there was a man and I wanted him to say that to me and I think I would have done anything. I'd have shot my wife. I'd have given my children over to an orphanage. I would have burned my house down for the privilege of going with that brother. Don't take me too seriously. And I would have wanted to and I would have been scared doing it and afraid that I would fail. But I wanted that. And that to me is discipleship.

Now that word discipleship's been really hurt and ruined in in my generation. And I to me the proof that what is called discipleship today is not discipleship, is the Lord's numbers that it covers. True discipleship cannot number over 12 or 15. There are followers, but discipleship is something that is not in my judgment, not a thing for all Christians, but I think discipling is someone specifically following a Christian for a specific purpose. A specific purpose. Not hundreds of them. Try to find out how many people got called disciples in the New Testament. And I think you will be surprised. We are not all disciples. The word doesn't mean that. Anyway, I believe in discipling. I believe in in the very principles of it for all of us. But nonetheless, there was that tradition in the Hebrew faith in which a man gathered about him a small group of people. And Jesus Christ is doing this out of the organic nature that He has. He brings together a group of young men and some women, some young women or women. I don't know how young they were, and He brings them to Himself, and they all are there with Him from the beginning.

Now, why would it be important to be with the Lord Jesus from the beginning? Yes. To have His viewpoint. That's right. I will tell you why. So that, well, that's true, isn't it? If you missed a day you can drop back, you could you could miss a hundred years of ordinary human teaching and discipleship missing one day with Him. But I will tell you why. Because in their life, one day they too would be in a situation of beginning. And on the day that they are thrown into a beginning, they had better remember what the last beginning looked like and how it was done.

And when the Lord Jesus Christ said to those men, "Get rid of everything you've got and come follow me." He was essentially doing what the Father had done with Him in eternity past. Was the Father not saying, "Let me be Your all." Clothing did not exist, but He was essentially saying, "There's nothing else. I am the eternal One and I will be Your all. And the Lord Jesus was saying to those men, I will be your everything. Forget the clothes, forget the fame, forget your home, forget your parents, and come and follow me.

He was moving in the steps, the footsteps of His Father. I'm going to say it again. He had a habit He couldn't break, and He was reproducing it on earth with a group of men, and I am impressed. Now there is one great difference that I see here and that is when the Father picked His Son, He picked someone gloriously worthy. But when the Lord Jesus picked those 12 guys, He picked the bottom of barrel, and I think that also was a glory to the Son. Um, they were there from the beginning.

There is something else I want you to notice. They were called. I've already said that, but I want to repeat it now in a different way. They learned how to call others because they themselves had been called. But just write this down. They had been called. Isn't that simple? Well, Gene, that is so simple. Yes, it is. But it's often overlooked. Jesus uses a word when He speaks of His relationship with His Father. He uses it again and again and again. He says, "My Father has sent Me." My Father has sent Me. And you ought to be able to figure this out by now. The habit of divinity. If the Father has sent the Son, what can you just about bet the Son will one day do? He will send somebody else because it's divine. It's organic to His species. It's His habit. It's His experience. It's His information. It's His way.

Well, He was now calling the ones He would one day send. What is missed? One of the things that are missed in our generation is we don't have any sent men. Oh, brothers, we've got called men by the bucket loads. But we don't have men sent. They have not been sent. Uh, if I have anything in my life I cherish, it's something that's really rare. I really feel that my God has not only called me but sent me. It's an overwhelming drive within me. I know whether I'm mistaken or not is immaterial. I know I have been sent. And you know something else? I have the courage. I may not have the courage to call, I may not have the courage to say come follow me. But I have the courage to send men. Be warned. I have the courage to send men. But we'll learn why that can be done by a human and not just by the Lord. It can be done by a human. I'm getting ahead of myself.

They were all called. They were called by the Lord. By the way, He ascended into heaven, but I'm here to tell you, I got called by the Lord. I got called. Gene, come. And I got sent. Hallelujah. That's the greatest honor ever, ever given me. One day I got sent. As far as I know, that's never been taken back. Yes, brother.

Member Audience: Being chosen. It's not like the mayor call you chosen.

No, different. Not the mayor's call if you were chosen. I don't even know what that means. I don't even know what that means. I'm really speaking here of those men in their relationship to Him. Apostleship. Those who would build the church. They would be the church builders.

Okay. Now then, I want to look at this one great difference between them and the Son who has been called and sent and His calling of them. He has called people that were unworthy and unqualified. And that's the big jump. That's the great gap that's filled. But praise the Lord, that's redemption. He didn't have anybody who was qualified. He picked the pick of the litter and even in picking the pick of the litter, He picked the bottom of the barrel. I hope you will, you followed that. The pick of the litter was at the bottom of the barrel. And you are the pick of the litter, and you are the bottom of the barrel. You can't get any better and you can't get any worse. You are bad off. How would you like for Jesus Christ to invite you to live with Him for a while here on this earth? Wouldn't that make all I have to look at these men? I want to look at their sorted side, the bad side.

Okay, He's just told them to leave everything. You'd think that would be settled, wouldn't you? Well, it wasn't. He tells them to deny themselves. You'd think that would be settled, wouldn't you? Don't kid yourself. That's just so many words to them like it's so many words to you and me. Those things have to be made experiential. All right. You have an unworthy group of people following the Lord. Here are some things you need to know about them.

Picky, picky, picky. That's what they were. Now, you can't sit there. I'm sitting there. Get out of my way. I got here first. They literally fought over who would sit beside the Lord. And I'll tell you something else. If that this particular morning you got up and you made it and you were the one sitting beside the Lord, if you would look, or let's say you're walking and today you're getting to walk right beside Him, you look back over your shoulder and you got 11 men with a, "Who does He think is?" I cannot imagine anything more immature than a mommy. A mommy coming over with one of with two children, one in each hand, two children in tow, coming up to Jesus and saying, "When You finally invade and take over the city Jerusalem and Your army surrounds the town and You have pushed the Romans back into the sea and You have established this new kingdom of Yours. I want You to promise me that this son of mine and that son of mine are going to sit on Your right and left hands.

How would you have felt one of those if you'd been one of those two young men? Embarrassed. Embarrassed as all get out. I get the distinct impression they were not embarrassed at all, but like two pouty little kids, they were saying, "Yeah, yeah, Lord, that's what we want, too." I mean, how immature can you get? How dumb can you be? If anyone knows, the brothers in this room should know how dumb you can. You're not like this, are you? You're not like that. I'm sure you are not like that. I have lived with men who have vied for the attention of a godly leader. And I know what picky, and I know what sullen, and I know what vying for. And I know what infighting and deliberate sabotaging of a brother is like.

Imagine this kind of cruelty. I want you to imagine this kind of cruelty on the basis of pure unadulterated ego. In fact, I see in this all the all the attitudes of all the denominations who have ever existed since that hour. I want you to see two men pushing their way. Two of the disciples pushing their way, arming their way through the through the other men,, and getting over to the Lord and saying, "Lord, we got something we want to talk to you about." That last town we were in, the people didn't come out. There were very few people there. You

were here to heal, and they didn't even come out to get healed, and they didn't listen to Your message, and the few that were there were not interested and some of them were even asleep, and they rejected You, the Lord of Israel, the true King. They did. Lord, would you let us rain fire and brimstone on that whole town and wipe it out? The men, the women, the children, the cattle, and even the flies and the insects. Could you do that, Lord?

Do you know what's really going on here? These guys are interested in seeing if they could get a hold of heavenly power, and if they could see a fireball fall out of heaven at their instigation, at their word. That's what's really going on here. And they are so jazzed, so, what am I trying to say? So caught up with the idea of power that they don't care about little babies being burned to death. Is that true? Am I being am I giving you an honest picture here?

Now, if that isn't the ultimate end of arrogance, if that isn't the ultimate end of peevishness, and if that isn't the ultimate end of man wanting power with God, and the Lord put up with that. How do you think the Lord felt about that? Do you know what I think I'd have done if I was the Lord? I said, "Yeah, all 12 of you stand right over there, and there's the village," call down the fire, and then I would have just stepped back and said, "Now, keep calling for it and watch where it falls." I think I'd have given up on them. That's really being thick-headed. Do you not agree? It's just not getting through to them, is it? No, it is not getting through to them. Do you think that's bad? I want you to watch these denominationalists. Again, these are the things the Lord had to get out of them.

Now, have you ever heard of the term exclusive? And do you know the term exclusive Christians? Do you know what it means to be exclusive Christians? That means you exclude everyone else because you are so cotton-picking perfect, right or something. I am about to show you the end of exclusiveness. These brothers have lived with Him, and you'd think they'd learn better and know better. Sometimes when I read the accounts, I think you guys never did learn, did you? I mean, he's just not making any progress with y'all. I feel like grabbing the book and shaking it and saying, "Can't you guys get any further along than this?" And yet, I see myself and I see you. I see all of us as Christians here.

What happened was that one day as the Lord's ministry grew and more people became acquainted with Him and began a little bit to understand what He was doing, somebody successfully, some unknown human being successfully cast out a demon in the name of Jesus. And were they grateful? Why they were so grateful? Why they threw their hands up and praised God? They were overjoyed that someone else had cast out a demon in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were thrilled, weren't they?

One night I was, well, I will just tell you the story. I went to seminary with a young man who later became a very well-known minister. And the first time he ever preached before the convention of some 15,000 people, he said, "You preachers, when you hear about the church, you know the other Baptist church that's nearest to you, and you hear they had a revival and they had a hundred people who were baptized and in the last month another hundred people have come and moved, there, and had joined that church and that it is now the fastest growing church in the city. Aren't you glad?" And, of course, the entire room broke out in laughter. Any Baptist preacher can give you the answer to that. Of course not. In fact, you're about ready to say, "He's growing that fast. He must have a demon." No, you're jealous. You're in this and you start criticizing him for his methods. Sensationalism. That's what it is.

He couldn't do it. Well, it's the community. It's a new community. Lots of people are moving in there. They're the young rich, and he's built a church there with an image of what you have to be if you're one of the young up-and-coming rich. Something to take away from the fact the guy's up there doing something right. You won't ever do this, will you? Will you ever do this? You go back to Beaumont and there's another brother over there who, like Andy, pulls out of the religious system, and it just blesses and grows while your little group gets smaller and smaller. You're really going to praise the Lord for that, brethren, for what's going on over there, aren't you? You're going to do one or two things. You're either going to pout or you're going to leave and go join it. It's what you're going to do.

The Lord told those men something that none of us seems to have ever heard. He says, "If a human being is not against Me, he is for Me. If a human being is not against Me, he is for Me." Do you realize what that means? That the only people who are against Jesus Christ are those who are against Him, that the neutral are automatically for Him. If somebody is not opposing the Lord Jesus Christ, as far as the Lord is concerned, that's favoring Him. Yeah. Amen. What grace, what a what a wonderful big attitude on the Lord's part.

And He said to those men, "Let him go. If demons are being cast out in my name, that's fine." Well, they went off and pouted. What they didn't understand, or maybe I should say what was happening was, you know why they were pouting? Because they had tried to cast out some demons in the Lord's name and hadn't made it. And there's some Neophyte over there who's not paid the price they have paid. Just went out and said, "In the name of the Lord, come out, in the name of the Lord Jesus come out, and they came out." Well, boy, that guy should know better. He's got to fast and pray and he's got to live with the Lord and he's got to do all these things. Sectarian, theologically stupid. I just changed the subject. They cannot get through their thick heads what the resurrection is. Seems the whole Christian family cannot get through their heads the meaning the true meaning of the resurrection.

These men really weren't, no I have to be careful here. Every one of us follow the Lord for two reasons. One because we love Him and the other one is because of what we're going to get out of it. And sometimes this was so much more dominant in these men. They were really looking for a physical kingdom with 12 thrones and a 13th at the head. And every one of them were trying to figure out what was where His throne was going to be. And He is going to get His name carved on it. And how far away from the head throne would he be? These guys have got all the makings of another group of Sanhedrin, of Pharisees.

They'd be head-loppers. That's what they'd be. Do you understand what a head-lopper is? They'd be lopping off heads pretty soon. This was their way. This is you. This is me. And this is what the Lord has to contend with. And this is just about what He has to contend with. And this is just about that's what He got the in first 12 and that's what He'll get when He gets the last 12 He ever gets. You know where my gratitude rests, it rests here, that my Lord Jesus is already practiced in dealing with young dumb single brothers, with disciples that, when I came along and fell into the train, and He saw me and I became part of this great parade and the Lord saw me. He said, "Yes, I've seen that kind before and I know how to work with Him, deal with Him and relate with Him."

Brothers, will you take a little courage in that? Okay. I've tried to give you some of their bad qualities and I want you to understand them. Now, can I tell you a few of their good points?

As religious as they were, they weren't religious. Not like most people. You know what else they were? They were layman. And throughout history, it is the layman who tears up the world, it is not the professional. It's the unorthodox who have not been properly trained who come along. And you know the story told by Christian Anderson, the story of the emperor who had no clothes on, a little boy who didn't know any better. Everybody else was wise. A little boy was just a little boy. And he and he alone have the courage to say that's the king. Yes, sir. That's king. Papa, he's naked. He doesn't have any clothes on. And the amateur comes along and looks at the system and says, "It's naked. It doesn't have any clothes on." They were amateurs. They seem to have had a healthy disrespect for the system and that's very important. If you don't have a healthy disrespect for the system, you probably will not grow a great deal as a Christian. And there are exceptions, but those exceptions, if you will look underneath, you'll find out that they were clustered rebels, secret revolutionaries.

You have to have a healthy disrespect for systemization. Well, you may feel that up until right now I have, by the way there's something else there. They had a love for Him and that was about it. Those are all their good qualities. You may feel that I'm not quite following tonight what I have been following in the other meetings. But I've just been talking to you about who got called. They have not yet been sent. I want you to look at their qualifications. And now I want you before I go any further, I want you to be encouraged to believe if He can, if that's the kind of people He chose to follow Him, and that's the way they acted and that's the that's the pizzazz they had and that's how much insight they showed, can you have a little hope for yourself? Can you have a little hope for yourself? I take a lot of comfort in how unqualified these men were. Unqualified to do what? That's my question.

They've been called to a task. What is the task? What are they unqualified to do? Will you tell me? Sometimes I think that their task was greater than the Lord's. When you look at who they were, their task is in some ways greater than the Lord's because they're fallen. Do you know what God has decided to do? He has decided to put in the hands of those 12 men the carrying out and the fulfilment of the very purpose of creation itself. I will repeat that, the Lord has decided to put in the hands of those 12 men the carrying out and the fulfilment of the very purpose for which He created the visible universe. It now rests with those, it will, in three short years, it will rest with those 12 men.

Listen to me. If those 12 men had gotten killed by a bolt of lightning the day after the Lord rose from the dead, there wouldn't be any Christians. There'd be no church. Everything rested with those men. Everything rested with those men. Everything. Do not think that the foundation of your faith is built on the Lord Jesus Christ. It's built on those 12 apostles. You say the Bible says that the foundation of our faith is the Lord Jesus. That's absolutely true. But the foundation of the new Jerusalem is those 12 men. He is the rock and there are 12 rocks sitting on top of that rock. And in, those 12 men was built the Christian faith. Without them, there would have been no Christian faith.

They are the guys who gave us the four Gospels. Those four Gospels are what tell us about the Lord. Their proclamation of Him, the way they proclaimed Him is the truth once delivered. What if they'd gotten it wrong? What if they hadn't gotten it right? What if they have said things crazy or opposite or not true or unreal or, what if they'd gone off into Gnosticism or were half-witted or who knows what they could have taught us? Now, everything that we know goes back to Him. You know, I've heard it said that if you go trace your lineage back far

enough, you will eventually come to Adam. You'll come to one man, Adam. That's not true. If every one of us traced our lineage back far enough, the first time we would come to one human being would not be when we got to Adam. It'd be when we got to Noah. I bet you never thought about that, did you? You ever thought about that? Okay. Well, this is the way it is with us.

Before you, if we traced our lineage back before we got to the Lord Jesus Christ, we'd get to 12 men and there wouldn't be anybody else. It's those 12 men. And now, now I come to my point of the evening. What did the Lord Jesus Christ do in the light of redemption? His willingness to die on the cross to save us. His determination to bring forth among fallen men and redeemed men, to bring to them the fellowship of the Godhead. That is the church. To allow them to enter into this thing called the Christian life. That is to let them partake of the very life of God the Father and live by that life. That's the Christian life. The life of the Christian, the fellowship of the Godhead, the church.

How will He prepare them? He's got three jobs. He's got to show them what a Christian is and how to be one. And I don't mean live a good life and take care of your fellow man. He's got to show them how to be a Christian. He's got to teach them what the church is. And He's got to raise them up to be workers the way He was raised up to be a worker. I can tell you how He did it. And I'm going to tell you something this time that's interesting. What happened was organic, but boy, this time it's organic from both directions. It's organic. God is doing that which is organic to Him. And those three men are going to do what's organic to them.

Now, you can't guess what I'm saying, can you? Can't imagine what it is I'm trying to communicate. Would you like to make a stab at it? Okay. I'm not sure what you said because of the fan, but let me get just tell you. Tom, how old were you when you got saved?

Member Audience: 21.

21, so before you were 21, did you ever have a hero? You must have had. A who? Lots of them. It was a singer. A singer. All right. Uh, an actor. No, a singer. Did you ever sing one of the songs the singer sang? You did. Did you by any chance try to sound like him? You did. And you still do. Any of you ever have an actor for a hero? Movie star. Oh, I know you did good and well. A movie star is a hero when you were young or even now. Yeah. Did you ever try to walk like him or talk like him?

When I was when a young boy, Errol Flynn was one of the heroes. You can't imagine how many of us were trying to jump over balconies like Errol Flynn. That's natural to the beast. It is the natural tendency. I think one of the wisest statements I ever heard in my life, a dear friend of mine in Tyler, Texas, said, "When we admire someone, we tend to imitate them, but what we tend to imitate the most is their worst characteristics." Because you can't imitate the good ones. It's true. For instance, if there's a godly person, the one thing you can't do is be godly. So, what can you do? He talks with a lisp. You can talk with a lisp, right? He walks funny. You can walk funny. You may not be able to teach like him or preach like him or pray like him, but you can walk funny. If he has a southern accent, but of course, nobody in here has a southern accent. You can always imitate a southern accent.

When Billy Graham first became famous, you can't imagine how many young men sounded identical to Billy Graham. For two or three years, half the preachers, half the young preachers coming up, you couldn't tell the difference. They were tossing their Bible like him.

And one of them was Gene Edwards. And one of them was Gene Edwards saying, "You better believe it.

I want you to know this. They watched him as a hawk watches the bug." I would have said from the moment he woke up they watched him but that's not true. Even while he slept, they watched him. Watched how he slept. Watched how he breathed while he slept. Sat there and ate their food, but out of the corner of their eye, they watched how he ate his food. And if he ate it a little different from them, then they ate that way. They watched when he got tired and that's when they allowed themselves to get tired. If he got angry about something, finally they had a place to get angry. When he laughed, they all laughed. And I'm sure when he caught them doing this, in some way exposed them, they got very embarrassed, but I'm trying to make a point here and that this point is not small.

They were doing exactly what He wanted them to do. They were watching Him, and that's why he called them to be with Him. He wanted them to watch Him. It was almost a dare. Watch Me. Watch Me talk. Watch Me think. Watch Me not think. Watch Me see when no others can see. Watch Me handle this situation. Watch Me handle that situation. Watch Me pray. Watch Me not pray. Watch Me fast. Watch Me revel. Watch Me laugh. Watch Me cry.

Behold My every ways, but most of all, watch Me carry on a daily relationship with My Father in here. Praise the Lord. Watch Me carry on fellowship with my Father right in here for three years. Watch the fact that what's going on is inside, not outside. That it's not the cup, it's what's in the cup. It's not the coffin, it's what's in the coffin. It's not the kingdom. It's the kingdom. It's not the Father. It's the Father. It's not prayer. It's prayer. It's not hearing. It's hearing. It's not seeing. It's seeing. It's not listening. It's listening. It's not a big voice. It's a little voice. It's not righteousness. It's righteousness. It's not life and strength and will. It's life and strength and will. It's not water. It's water. It's not a river. It's a river. It's not a well springing up. It's a well springing up. Praise the Lord. Thank you, David. I believe you're understanding. It's not my Father, it's my Father. It's not love, it's love, and the kingdom is within you and the heavens are within you. And they kept watching this and they finally began to figure something else out. He is not totally here. Part of Him is somewhere else.

You know when Jesus talked to Nicodemus, I am certain that John was present. Can you imagine how John's mouth must have fallen open when the Lord Jesus said, "The Son of Man who came out of the heavenlies, the Son of Man who is now in the heavenlies," jaw lip, and probably a light turned on. They began to figure out all sorts of things, that this One lived in another realm while He lived in this one, that His body and His soul might be here, but His spirit was somewhere else. And they began to learn that He was living by life sources of which they had no privilege, that there were things were going on inside of Him that opened up into whole different realms, that they were dealing with a species not their own. And this is exactly what He wanted them to do.

Now, tell me what they were doing for three and a half years. What were they doing? I'm going to tell you what they were doing. It's just as simple as it could be. They were watching the Son of God. Can I change that just a little bit? They were beholding the Son of God. Now, can I change that just a little bit? They were fellowshipping with the Son of God. Praise the Lord. Did you get my point? It has been brought out of heaven, and it is on the earth.

What was their introduction to the Christian life? Fellowshipping with the Son of God. What was their introduction to the church? Fellowshipping with the Son of God. And what was His preparation? How did He prepare them for the ministry, for the work, for being sent? By having them to fellowship with the Son of God. And will you please tell me what was the Son of God doing? They were fellowshipping with Him. What was He doing? All right. All right. Say it loudly. You got it, Robert. That's right. If you'd have said the Father, I'd have said you left half of it out. He was fellowshipping with the Father and with them. Praise the lord.

Do you have any idea what that implies? It implies that the fellowship is broadening. It's getting bigger. That is glorious. That's wonderful. He has joined two realms. He's like a ladder. He is like a ladder that has joined the heavenly realms with the earthly realms. He has joined earth to heaven. He has brought the Father to man and man to the Father. He fellowships with the Father and He fellowships with them. They fellowship with Him. He fellowships with the Father. The Father fellowships with Him and He fellowships with them. And one of these days, in the resurrection, He is going to join. Well, boy, I am beginning to understand the Christianship with a Father. I am beginning to understand the churchship and I am beginning to understand what it means what I'm supposed to do in order to be a Christian worker. Praise the Lord. I'm getting clear. Are you getting clear? Praise the Lord.

I say this again. Let's say a year has passed. You walk up to one of the disciples and you say to them, "What's the neatest thing in the world?" And they'd say, "Being with Him, fellowshipping with Him." That's the second neatest thing in the world. Fellowshipping with them, fellowshipping with Him. Do you understand? Fellowshipping with them, fellowshipping with Him.

What would you like to give the world? What would you like to give the world? What would you like to give the world? I'd like to give the world my fellowship with Him. And I'd like to have with the world the fellowship with Him while they're fellowshipping with Him. That's what they had said. They wouldn't have said, "Well, I'd like to give Him this great big old dispensational chart on how the Lord's going to come." Well, I'd like to give them to get the tongues and speak in the other languages. I'd like to heal. No. Honest to goodness, brothers, if you live, if you live with God, if you live God, I want to give them a Bible and let them learn the Bible.

You live with Jesus Christ long enough, I'll bet you a nickel that what you'd like to give other people is Jesus Christ. I just have the overpowering sense that would be your obsession. Would you argue with me? If you do, you will lose. Don't tell me that living with the Lord Jesus Christ would find second place. The thrill of being with Him and in fellowship with Him.

I think one of the most incredible things in the world was the intimacy to which this fellowship grew. How intimate did it get? I have one thing in mind. Tell me just how intimate the fellowship of those 13 people got. I believe I can tell you of an intimacy between those 13 people fellowshipping together, more intimate than most of you have ever had with another human being, because you're single. How many people have you known well enough that you could use their chest for a pillow? That you could just kind of back up to and lay your head down on their chest. How many people have you known that well in your life? I can tell you there's only one person in the world, other than my wife, I've ever done that with and that was my dad. That's it. I never known anybody else that well.

John lay on the breast of His Lord and ate His dinner. Oh, his Lord. Consider that, and you would go teach him the Bible. You would get him out to save the world. John wanted to tell him about his fellowship. That which I have seen and heard, I declare to you that you have fellowship with me. And my fellowship was so evident that I lay my head on the breast of God. How intimate was that fellowship? No wonder the book of John is so Christ-centered. No wonder it just saturated and oozes with the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew Him that well. That was some close intimate relationship. That was very close fellowship. Will you agree with me? Well, that's how the Lord prepared John to be a Christian and a member of the church and a worker.

I'm going to say this again. If those men by the time it was over with had anything they would have liked to give the world, it was the fellowship they had with Him and the fellowship they had with one another fellowshipping with Him. What's another word for that? It's one world, you missed it completely and I thought you all got it. It's called the church. That's what they wanted to give the world. What did they give the world? They gave the world the church.

Right after Pentecost, did they give the world a Bible school, an evangelistic crusade? Praying and fasting, tithing. Yeah, they didn't give any of that. You know what they gave those people? They gave those people fellowship with Him and fellowship with them fellowshipping with Him, and they're fellowshipping together and they're fellowshipping with Him. What do you think? I'm getting ahead of myself. What do you think those 3,000 people saw? For goodness sake, they saw 12 men running around still fellowshipping with somebody who was gone. They saw 12 men so intimately related to and so one with their God that even though He was gone, they were still fellowshipping with Him.

Now, if you think that those 12 men had eyeballed the Lord for four years, think what those 3,000 people did watching those 12 men. I don't want to get into that, but I am going to tell you that those men burned to give the world the fellowship they had with Him and the fellowship they had with one another, fellowshipping with Him. It's called the church. They also wanted to give them the Christian life. And what is the Christian life? Well, for the Son, it was the, for Jesus Christ, it was the Father indwelling Him. For the eternal Son, it was the Son, the eternal Son fellowshipping in God, in the Godhead. And for 12 men it was living with Jesus Christ and now Jesus Christ living in them. That was the Christian life. And if they were going to have anybody who were going to be workers, they knew what to do about that, too. Because they had been made workers and they knew how because they had been there from the beginning. And from the beginning there had been the indwelling Father in the Son and they had seen it.

From the beginning there had been fellowship with Him who fellowshipped with the Father. From the beginning there had been church life among them. From the beginning, they knew what it was to be called. And then, they in the end knew what it was to be sent. And when those men got to the day of Pentecost, they couldn't do anything differently than what Jesus Christ had done.

You tend to give what has been your habit. You tend to share that which is your experience and your habit. And what they gave was nothing more than the habit that had been passed on to them. They were doing what came naturally. They were doing that which was organic to them. I wish I could have a two weeks, three weeks, make it a month, a clear month.

