

Unready for the Grave
Are you ready or unready?
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You will find the text this evening in 2 Timothy four and verses six to eight.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.¹

As I said this morning I do regard this as a very special privilege and joy to be invited to address you today. And I do repeat that I bring you the warmest Christian greetings of my congregation in Inverness in the highlands of Scotland. If ever you find yourself up there on holiday or vacation, please do look in. We would love to see you. We pray God's riches blessing upon you at this time as a nation when we and you are facing we know not what of possible conflict in war as the brethren have just said before me.

It is a critical moment in the history of the world once again.

May the Lord give great wisdom to your beloved president and government and to you all.

Now, my text. 2 Timothy is the apostle Paul's final letter. What a collection of writings we have from his pen.

Did you ever hear a list of books like this? The epistle to the Romans, what an earth shaking book that has proved to be. Corinthians one and two, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians one and two and so on. What books. What a contribution to the understanding of God's truth and gospel we have from this dear beloved apostle to the Gentiles, the apostle Paul.

We love his writings and we try to memorize them and lay them to our hearts and live by their teaching.

¹ 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

But now with this epistle to Timothy he comes to his final letter and, indeed, this fourth chapter, therefore, is the last chapter of his writings. There is something poignant in that thought. Here we have the last words of this great and wonderful man of God, his final farewell to his people and, indeed, to us.

You would have noticed in the final part of the chapter a reference to the lion. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."² You may have wondered what that reference was. I think we can safely say that what Paul means here is that he was delivered on the occasion of his first trial from the axe or the sword of the Roman Emperor Nero who well deserves the epithet of being a lion. He was a very brutal, very vicious tyrant.

If we were to give an epithet to Nero we would call him Nero the Terrible.

And talking of epithets, by the way, of kings and great men, they are fascinating things. You will have heard of a king, perhaps, whose name was Richard. They gave him an epithet. He was a very courageous man in the Middle Ages. He flinched before no man and they gave him this epithet: Richard the Lion Heart. What a title. And yet not all kinds have such a happy title as that.

Have you ever heard of a certain king in the Middle Ages whose name was Ethelred? Not so well remembered I dare say today. Ethelred, they gave him an epithet, too. Can you remember it? He was called Ethelred the unready. And they called him that, no doubt, because when his enemies were preparing for war and when he should have had his defenses in place he was unready.

Now I want to speak tonight about this whole subject of being unready.

And you may say to me, "Unready for what?"

Well, I will come to that just in a moment. But to most of the people I meet in this world if they were to receive the name they deserve, most of them should be called Ethelred, because more than 90 percent of the people that I meet in this world are truly unready.

You say, "Unready for what?"

Well, they are unready for the very thing that the apostle Paul was ready for, unready for death.

Most people live this world in this world as though there were no such thing as the grave. They live as though they were going to be here forever. Houses and cars and sports and music. They make preparation for everything except the one thing which is certain, that they are going soon to meet. And that is, of course, death and after death and above all to stand before the great and terrible God who is, indeed, terrible to those who meet him unready as the Bible often tells us when it reminds us that our God is a consuming fire.

² 2 Timothy 4:17.

Let me give you one or two references to somewhat famous men who met death and they were unready for it.

Did you ever hear of a man called Caesar Borgia? Now Caesar Borgia was the son of one of the popes. You may say, “That is a strange thing,” but it is also a fact. Caesar Borgia. Well, you check it for yourselves in the history books and you will find, I am sure, that I am absolutely correct.

He was a dreadful character as so many of those were that came from that source. And Caesar Borgia lived in pleasure and in lust and in brutality all his life. And when he came to the end of his life and was soon to die he said this about himself.

He said, “In the course of my life I have prepared for everything except for death and now, alas, I must die although entirely unprepared.”

Well, talk about Ethelred the Unready. He had made preparation for everything in life except the only one thing of which he could be certain.

Now then take this man. You will know his name. Cardinal Wolsey. He was a very powerful figure, again, a little bit later at the Reformation in England in the days of Henry VIII. Now Cardinal Wolsey rose to be a very powerful man. He used to have attendants walking in front of him all dressed in scarlet and carrying cushions of scarlet and they made way. “Make way for Cardinal Wolsey,” they would cry. And the Cardinal also dressed in scarlet would process through the midst of the people. He was a man to be reckoned with, a powerful dangerous man.

And Cardinal Wolsey, alas, also came to die. He fell out of favor with the king at the end and this is what he had to say for men.

“Had I but served my God as faithfully as I have served my king he would not have given me over in my gray hairs. It is my just reward,” he confessed.

Well, my very dear friends, I want to put it to you. Are you ready or are you unready tonight? If God were this night to summon your soul to appear before the throne of judgment are you ready? Are you prepared? That is my subject.

And I bring the subject before you in terms of what the apostle Paul tells us here. In these verses of my text, verses six, seven and eight, he tells us how he feels as he faces certain death. He is about to stand for the second time before Nero the Terrible, Emperor of Rome. And we know as a matter of history that Paul was put to death. He was martyred under that dreadful man. The year was roughly 64 AD.

And the apostle knew his time had come. He was not daunted. There is no self pity here. He doesn't crave another few years. No, no. He tells us how he feels.

Now, there are three things I want to show you here. You will find them all in my text. First of all, let me draw your attention to Paul's confidence in the past of his life. Second, let me draw attention to Paul's confidence for the future after this life. And, thirdly, let me draw your attention to Paul's confidence in that present hour when he was facing his certain martyrdom and death. Those three things are my subject from these words tonight.

First of all, then, Paul's confidence for the past. And here I refer you to what he says in verse six.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.³

All right, three things there. "I have fought a good fight,"⁴ he says. And he is referring, of course, to the fact that the Christian life is a fight. When a person becomes a Christian and is converted to the Lord Jesus Christ, they spend all their life fighting in this world. By that, of course, I refer to the fact that they have spiritual enemies.

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood," says the apostle Paul, "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."⁵

The devil becomes our adversary as soon as we come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you read the life of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles and when you supplement that with what we know from the epistles that he wrote, we see that the apostle Paul's life was a catalog of fightings and wrestlings and strugglings and sufferings and persecutions and stonings and beatings and shipwreckings and he is looking back over all of that and he says, "I have fought a good fight." Not only in that sense, but also in terms of the truth. He has fought for the gospel all his life.

He was a man who had to put the churches right. The churches are always sliding away from the truth. Every church does that. They are all right for 50 years maybe or 60 or 100 and then a generation rises up that is very tired of the truth.

"Why should we be so strict?" they say. "Why should we be old fashioned like our grandfathers keeping sabbath days and reading old black Bibles and dressing as though it was a funeral service. We want to lessen things, lighten things, make it more easy for the Christian to live in the world. One foot in the world, one in the church. Why be so sour and so severe?"

That is what happens.

³ 2 Timothy 4:6-7.

⁴ 2 Timothy 4:7.

⁵ Ephesians 6:12.

Well, all of that was beginning in the apostle's day and he tells us that in the beginning of this chapter.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.⁶

If you know anything at all about Church history and what happened in the Middle Ages before the Luther and Calvin, then you will know just what fables people turned unto. And all that was beginning in the apostle's day.

He had to fight for the truth.

There is a time in life when we are called to war as well as to peace and woe betide us when we fail to recognize that golden moment when we must stand against adversaries who stand against God. And the apostle Paul's life was spent in just that way, fighting against error.

So he says, "I have fought a good fight."⁷

Then he goes on. He says, "I have finished my course."⁸

That, of course, refers to the race. A course or race course refers to the great games that they had in the days of the Romans and more especially of the Greeks. The Greeks have these Olympic games. It was their idea. They had the huge stadiums and that they would run this way and then round the corner and back again and around again and back again. And the apostle is referring to his Christian life in terms of this race.

And, by dear friends, this is what the Christian life is. The Christian is always running.

You ask a minister, these dear ministers here and elders. They are always running. Why, you have hardly time to answer the phone before another phone call comes and somebody else is at the door, another sermon to prepare, another lecture to give, another journey to take. You are running all the time as a Christian. And the apostle was exactly in that condition.

"Ah," he says, "I have now finished my race. My running day are over." He puts it like that. "I have finished it. I am coming to the finishing line."

I can't say I ever came first in any race I ever ran, but I think it must be a wonderful exhilaration, don't you, to be running a race and to see the white line and the tape

⁶ 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

⁷ 2 Timothy 4:7.

⁸ Ibid.

measure in front of you and all the rest behind. Maybe some of you are [?] enough to know that experience.

So the apostle Paul sees that. He sees the white line. He sees the gold. He sees the end of his journey very close at hand. And he puts it in this way. "I have finished my course, my race."

Then he puts it again like this. "I have kept the faith."⁹

Now not everybody who begins in the Christian life and faith continues to the end, you know. He mentions somebody in this very chapter. Did you notice it? Demas.

Demas had been a Christian or at least he professed to be a Christian. He had sat at the Lord's Table no doubt. He had mingled with the apostle Paul. He had shaken Paul's hand. He had knelt in prayer with Paul. He had talked about the gospel with Paul. But now Demas had swerved back into the world. He had gone back like a dog to his vomit or like a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. He was back into his old sins.

My dear friends, there are people who do that. They come into churches. Sometimes they become very important and noted figures. And then they drop off sadly and away they go and you never see them again.

"Well," says the apostle Paul, "by the grace of God I have kept the faith."

And in the light of his past experience he says, "I am therefore ready. I am ready to go, ready to meet my maker and my judge. I am ready for death, for judgment, for eternity."

Allow me to put this to you my dearly beloved friends in this most beautiful congregation that I am so honored to address you. I put it to you, my friends, all of you. Are you ready? Or should you be given this name Ethelred that I spoke about before? Should that be your name? Isn't it a tragedy to be unready when God summons you and beckons to you?

I was preaching at a funeral service a few days ago and when I got to the church where I had to conduct the service up in the state of Michigan amongst dear beloved people like yourselves, Christian people, we knew that a young boy perhaps 18 or something had been in a car crash just a few days before. Certainly we have hope of that young man. But he was suddenly taken out of this world. Just in a moment he was driving his car and he didn't notice the lights were red. His mind, you see, was busy. He was going to college or something. He had his books to think about and his subjects. He went through a red light for the last time in life.

Oh, my friends, our life is so short and uncertain. Only a fool lives without thought of eternity to come. In a moment God's sickle may cut us all down. Who knows what

⁹ Ibid.

nasties are to come our way from Saddam Hussein? Who knows how sudden terrible death may strike whole populations? We don't know. And I am not to be alarmist, but I say if ever there was a moment in the history of the world where you and I ought to be prepared, now is that time.

Prepared, I say, to go and stand before the judge of all the earth. That is no small thing.

I hope you realize that if you are not a converted born again Christian, my friend, I have to tell you straight and honestly, you are not fit to leave this life. If you do not know what conversion means, if you have no Savior, no grace of God in your heart, I have to be honest with you, otherwise I am a liar in the pulpit. I have to tell you with all honesty you are not fit to die, nor to appear before God. If you have no new heart, no experience of the grace of God like as apostle Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."¹⁰

Now that was his confidence with regard to the past. Let me come now, secondly, to Paul's confidence with regard to the future. He puts it like this in verse eight.

"Henceforth," or in the future if you like, "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."¹¹

Now here we have the apostle Paul thinking of his death and what will happen to him after death. At death the soul of a Christian leaves the body. Instantaneously that soul goes to be in the presence of Christ and receives a private judgment. At death there has to be a private judgment in order to assign the soul its proper home and place between death and the resurrection day. There has to be that private judgment between the Lord and the soul of every one so that we may be allocated our proper space between death and the judgment day or the resurrection day which is the same.

And in that intermediate state the soul of the believer is in glory. The soul of the unbeliever is in hell fire.

You won't think me severe to say these things. My dearest friends, I don't say these things in order to sound severe, but because the Bible is full of this, full of it. You can't read the Bible without finding it on pretty well every page. There is such a thing as hell and fire. And we say these things not to alarm or frighten, but in order to show people they must be serious in preparation for death and judgment.

And the apostle Paul is. And he says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 2 Timothy 4:8.

¹² Ibid.

Now he is referring, again, to the games which were played in the Greek world of that day and we are familiar, aren't we, with Olympic games? They run and jump and fight and throw things and the one who does best with the gold medals when the games are finished, he is summoned up and in Greek times in the sight of thousands of spectators the champion walked up these steps and came to a place where the judge was there and in his hands he held this crown either made of pine or of laurel or of some other beautiful leaf. And in the sight of the ecstatic crowds clapping and shouting, he placed it upon his head.

"Well, done, thou victor," he would say.

And all the place would be arrayed with delight.

"Now," says Paul, "that is what the Christian will get when he leaves this world. Having kept the faith, having been faithful in his walk and work and service to God."

The Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous judge will give to me and to all like me who have kept the faith, this crown of glory.

He is not referring to anything, of course, which perishes. These beautiful flowers are delightful, but they won't last for 10 years, I dare say or even maybe 10 weeks. But the crown of glory which Christ will give is an imperishable crown.

What is he referring to by a crown?

He means that we shall see God face to face. We shall gaze in glory upon the uncreated God. We shall see the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. WE shall see the blessed three whom all angels delight to praise.

And God himself will summon the believer so and say to him, "Well, done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things. Now I will reward you with many things. Enter into the joy of thy Lord, into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Now, of course, the apostle Paul was not suggesting for a moment that our good deeds merit or earn for us this wonderful heavenly reward. Now, what he means is when a person is under the blood of Christ, saved by Christ, trusting in Christ, having the righteousness of Christ, being justified by Christ alone and through faith alone, but when he comes to his glorious condition of being judged, God will reward his earnest, sincere, faithful dutiful service to him in this world. And God will bless the Christian in that heavenly place with peace and joy and comfort.

And there his soul will be all throughout the ages to come until the Second Coming when the Lord shall return from heaven with the shout of an archangel, the trumpet of God and the dead shall arise and all of the souls and bodies come together again and both soul and

body of the Christian will go to the public judgment and there Christ will publicly own and acknowledge and reward all those who sit on and stand on the right side.

“Come, ye blessed of my Father,” he will say to them, “inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”¹³

There they will enter into their eternal reward, not simply their temporal place in the intermediate state, but into the everlasting kingdom, into that beautiful city mentioned in Revelation 21 and 22, the city now paved with gold.

There is no need for the light of the sun or of the moon by day or by night. God himself is the light of it and the Lamb is the lamp of it. And that is his reward.

“And not mine only,” says Paul, “but the reward of all those who have kept the faith as I have done.”

A place in heaven, a place at the banqueting seat, the banqueting table of Christ, a place beside the Lord Jesus, a place where you will gaze into this place, where you will see his smile of love and where he will talk to you and you will talk to him.

Now that is what the apostle was looking forward to. And he was ready to go.

Some years ago a friend of mine who was a minister in Scotland had a visit from an uncle of his who lived in, I think, Canada. And this Canadian uncle was not a Christian as you will see. And my dear friend who was a minister wanted to be respectful to his uncle, but also to alert him to his need for a spiritual experience of the grace of God.

So, my friend at a certain point as they were traveling on a train he said to his uncle, “Uncle, are you insured?”

“Oh, yes,” said the uncle. “I have so many thousand dollars on my life,” he said, “And so many more on my wife,” he said, “And so many on my son,” he said, “So many on my daughter, so many on my house. Oh,” he said, “I am fully insured.”

My friend turned to him with a smile of love. “Uncle, uncle,” he said, “You are traveling with your back to the engine. You are blind to the future. What about your soul? Are you insured for your soul?”

He had never thought of that. He had never imagined he had a soul. He was like Ethelred, completely unready.

My dear friends, isn't that sad? You may have so much and I hope you do. You can't have too much to make us glad to know it. But are you ready? Are you ready to leave what you have here below? Are you prepared my dearly beloved to go?

¹³ Matthew 25:34.

But you say, “What am I to do to make sure?”

Nothing but one thing. You are called upon to repent of your sins and to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ as your only Savior and your only hope in life and in death. Christ who died upon the cross is the object of faith. And I say to you to be prepared is to have Christ as your Savior. To be unprepared is not to have Christ as your Savior though you have everything else in the world.

Listen to the way he put it.

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul”¹⁴

One human soul is more valuable in the sight of God than 10 million worlds.

Oh, let’s talk about the universe and where it came from as if God hadn’t told us. All this talk about outer space and green men from Mars and who knows what there is in Jupiter and Saturn, all this exploration. Perhaps it is necessary, but let it not deceive us, my friend. It is in this life and in this world that God has placed man with an immortal soul.

The only universe that matters is the universe of your own immortal soul. And I say to you with all the love of my heart, believe me, we need to be ready when God says, “Your time has come.”

I don’t know if you know that here or whether you have the same expression, but in the Second World War in Britain we had this expression. “You won’t go until your number is called.” These are the soldiers on the battlefield. “You will be here,” they said, “until your number is called.” That is another way of putting it, isn’t it?

They knew that they wouldn’t be killed until God’s providence allowed it to happen. The day is going to come for you and me when our number is called. God will say, “Roberts, your time here is finished. Come.”

And then what I am will be known and what you are will be known. What we are before God is what matters, not what men think of us. And the apostle Paul tells us he was ready for the future.

Now, third and final notice this. His confidence for the present time. And this is in verse six.

“I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.”¹⁵

He is talking about the here and now, isn’t he? “I am now ready.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Mark 8:36.

¹⁵ 2 Timothy 4:6.

¹⁶ Ibid.

He has already spoken of the past and then of the future. He is now talking about the present, now. I am now ready to be offered.

Now this may not be so very easy to understand. I have to explain what he means by being offered. He is really using a word in the Greek New Testament which refers to the drink offering which was offered in Old Testament times at the end of every sacrifice. You will know your Bibles well enough to know that there were various sorts of sacrifices in the Old Testament. There were sin offerings and burnt offerings and peace offerings and trespass offerings. And they all had their own regulations.

It is worth revising them in Leviticus, one, two, three, four, five, those early chapters of Leviticus talk about them.

Now my point is this. Each of these offerings or sacrifices in Old Testament times involved this more or less. You had a little lamb or a bullock and you brought it along to the priest, to the altar that it was to be burnt. Then you cut its throat. You poured out the blood into a bowl. Some of it you sprinkled round the altar or you poured it at the altar depending on the sacrifice and then you cut up the lamb or the bullock into little pieces and put it on top of wood on the fire of the altar. And then you watched it burn.

And as it burned down to nothing but ashes the very last part of the sacrifice involved taking two or three or four pints of wine and you sprinkled this on top of it. This was pouring out the wine offering. When that was done the offering was complete.

And that is what Paul is saying.

“I am now ready to be offered,”¹⁷ to be poured out like a drink offering. “My life has been one great sacrifice of love to Jesus Christ. Now I breathe my last shortly. This is my drink offering.”

He is referring to death.

Now the next of these illustrations is very different.

“The time of my departure,” verse six, “is at hand.”¹⁸

He is talking about the same thing, going out of this world. Only he uses now a different illustration. What is this illustration?

Well, let me explain. In the days of the ancient Greeks and Romans the only sea that they knew much about was the Mediterranean. They knew little or nothing about the Atlantic. That lay too far to the west. They knew a little by reputation of other seas, but what they meant by the sea was the Mediterranean, surrounded by the countries of Europe and North Africa.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Now because the ships in these days were pretty precarious and anybody's life in these days was at risk in a ship, they were made of wood and what not. In the winter months they didn't sail. The boats were tied up against the quay or the harbor. And there they remained until the winter months were over—December, January, February. Towards the end of March the weather was warm, as it is today. And so the sailors would come down to their boats and they would untie the anchorage and pull up the anchor. They would get on the ropes and pull the sails and the sails would be unfurled. They would let go the ropes that tied them to the quay and away they went with the wind into the deep sea and enjoy the glories of being at sea.

Now that was their way of doing it. They didn't unloose the ship until the winter months were passed.

“So,” says Paul, “I am now ready to depart. The time of my sailing is at hand.”

Where was he sailing to? Well, of course, sailing into the sunset, into the glory, into the land of the kingdom of God, sailing into the land where Christ alone is King of kings and Lord of lords.

“I am sailing there,” he says.

And we know how he got there. It was because at the second of his trials in front of Nero the Terrible he was condemned to death. The axe fell upon his head or whatever it was, we don't know. And he was executed and put to death.

My old dearest friends, he was ready to go.

I must close shortly. I haven't much more to say. But let me say to you, isn't this a wonderful way to go? What a happy person a Christian is. He is ready to go.

This world is not the Christian's rest. However much he loves his home and wife and family and church and minister, but he is ready to go. He knows that soon he must go on this journey to meet the Lord and to bid farewell.

A dear lady in our church just a few weeks ago had a minor operation, just a routine operation. But the doctors found something they didn't like and they had to tell her, of course, that there was cancer, possibly evening the liver where we least want it to be.

Oh, she was quite content as so many of you will be content.

“That's all right,” she said. “That's all right.” She knew where she was going, nothing to worry about. “I have not lived for my own pleasure, but for his glory.”

She was ready.

The day will come when the doctor will say something like that to me, no doubt, and to you. My duty, my very dear friends, as I close is to point you to the one place where you will be ready. You don't need to pray for 10 years to get this blessing. You don't need to wait and work and labor and sweat night and day for 15 years to get it. You can have it right now. It is offered to you by God. Right now if you have never trusted in Jesus Christ before, then he tells you, "Come unto me and I will give you rest right now before you leave this very room."

You say, "What am I to do to get it?"

My dear friend, all you need to do is to want it. As soon as you want it, you will get it. And if you feel you don't want it, then you can pray to God to make you willing because God is so sweet he can turn the key that fits the lock of your heart and from being unwilling you can find yourself strangely willing and you can say, "Well, when I came into this building I wasn't very interested. I came because somebody invited me or somebody called me along to the service. But now I see something I never saw before. I see I need Christ as I never saw it before."

Oh, my dear friends, it is the beginning of all happiness to know the blessed Jesus. If you don't believe me, ask the dozens of people here who know him. They will tell you. There is no happiness conceivable upon earth like the happiness of knowing Jesus Christ as Lord, to trust in his death upon the cross, the shedding of his blood, because he shed his blood to take away our sins. And there is no other way to get rid of it. You can go into a monastery and that won't get rid of it as most monks will tell you if they are honest.

Incidentally, the Roman Catholic priests of whom we hear so much in Boston and elsewhere aren't really a very credible example of how to find peace, are they, sadly to say. Oh, no, no, no. The way to get peace is not to look to the Church, whatever the church's name. It is to look to Christ, to Christ crucified on the cross for sinners. In him there is life and peace and nowhere else.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth,"¹⁹ says God. And if you do you can leave this room tonight a new man or a new woman or a new young person or a new child. Because the youngest child needs to be saved as well as the oldest man or woman who is a sinner.

And talking of children, let me finish with something for the children tonight. It is wonderful to have children in this beautiful building. And I want to close with something for the children. I hope the others will forgive me and not think that I am demeaning their superior intelligence.

I came across this beautiful story in a little book that was handed to me by a lawyer recently. We had a lady who died and she had lots of old books and papers. And this little book had this story in it. It could have been related to Northern Ireland or something, but

¹⁹ Isaiah 45:22.

I suspect it was that sort of a little book and it had come from that source. And here was what I read in it.

Years ago in the Old Testament there was a thing called the Passover and in the Passover the father had to make sure that the lamb whom they had prepared was killed, his blood taken and sprinkled round the top and sides of the door, the main front door.

And God said, “When I pass over the house, if I see the blood, I will pass over you.”

If he saw no blood, he would kill the first born and the family would lose by death their first born.

Well, in this story there was a little girl and the little girl was sent to her bed on the night of the Passover and she knew that it was the duty of her father to make sure the blood was on the outside front door, on the lintels and side posts. But she couldn't go to sleep. She was afraid. So she got up and she ran to her father in his room and she said to him, “Father, are you sure the blood is on the door?”

“Yes, my dear,” he said. “I am sure.”

“How do you know, father” she said.

“I know,” he said, “because I gave it to the servant to do this duty. It is a responsibility that I gave to him. He is a faithful man.”

“But, father, he may have forgotten. Get up father and check that it has been done.”

Well, the father was not at all impressed and he tried to reason the little girl out of it, but she was not to be persuaded. And to appease her he got out of his bed and went to the front door and opened the door looking for the blood assuming it to be there. And there was none.

And with great haste he got the blood that had been shed from the lamb in the vessel and he took it with a brush and he daubed it quickly round the door posts and on the top of the door.

“Thank God, my little child,” he said, “That you have the wisdom to tell me so. God would have killed the first born of this home. Now,” he said, “we are safe.”

That is the gospel in a nutshell. As soon as you have the blood on your heart and on your life, you are safe. But if you are not covered by the blood, I have to tell you, you are unready. God help you to prepare.